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TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT ACCEPTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY AT SCHOOL AND FACTORS THAT MAY INFLUENCE THOSE PERCEPTIONS: A MIXED METHOD ANALYSIS

Steven Postiglione
Saint John's University, Jamaica New York

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Steven R. Postiglione

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Steven R. Postiglione Dr. Elizabeth Gil

ABSTRACT

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT ACCEPTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY AT SCHOOL AND FACTORS THAT MAY INFLUENCE THOSE PERCEPTIONS: A MIXED METHOD ANALYSIS

Steven R. Postiglione

The purpose of the current mixed method study was to determine whether there were statistically significant relationships between teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and (a) student gender, (b) student grade level, (c) student socio-economic status, (d) teacher gender, (e) number of years of teaching experience, and (f) teacher access to adequate resources to support students. The researcher collected and explored quantitative data via perceptions of six teacher-participants through a 5-point, 15-item Likert scale called the teacher's rating scale, which was a measure of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school. Teacher-participants were volunteers via email recruitment. The student-data of this study was selected via random cluster sampling by the teacher-participants. The data pertained to students in three third-grade classes and three fifth-grade classes (90 students in total). The researcher was not, at any time, privy to any of the students' names or personal information, as this information was substituted for numerical designations by the teacher-participants. The researcher also collected and explored qualitative data by utilizing a phenomenological method. Data was collected and coded from a semi-structured, 16-item interview protocol. The qualitative phase of the current study focused on understanding the subjective, lived experiences and perspectives of the six teacher-participants (Creswell, 2013). The results of the quantitative phase showed significant

relationships between teacher perceptions and student gender, student grade level, teacher gender, and number of years of teaching experience. From the qualitative phase, four broad themes emerged from the data; indicating that parents and families influence student acceptance of individual responsibility, teacher rapport and connectedness with students influence student acceptance of individual responsibility, school programs, activities, and supports influence student acceptance of individual responsibility, and student acceptance of individual responsibility at school plays a role in their own academic success. The current study examined factors that may influence teacher perceptions, as well as the potential impact of those perceptions on students. The findings could be pivotal for future research into the concept of students taking more ownership and responsibility for their own learning as well as how teacher perceptions of students may play a role.

DEDICATION

The current study is dedicated to my father Richard, who showed me timeless and boundless encouragement. My dad taught me patience and guided me toward the true purpose of my life. Ever since I was a child, I always wondered what my purpose was. I was always a bit of an existentialist. It wasn't until I became a father that I realized why I was here. My purpose was to teach my children to be good, moral, loving, and responsible individuals who can leave this world having made a positive impact; to have lived their best lives. As a parent, I realized that they would have to learn this through my example. This is the gift my dad gave to me. He taught me that I had to work for everything I wished to be and earn everything I wished to achieve. And even in his passing, my dad remains an unending inspiration, a teacher, a mentor, and my best friend. Also, to my wife Lauren, our children, Emily, John, Lyla, Michael, and Norina and my mother Linda for their encouragement and support throughout this process. I can truly say it would not have been possible without them.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

It is not uncommon to question one's purpose. It is not uncommon to replay life events and question decisions made. It is not uncommon to recall feeling out of control with hindsight steeped in regret. These feelings may come from a lack of purpose and individual responsibility. The locus of moral responsibility lies within the individual (Teo, 1973). Over the past few decades, it seems that responsibility as a character trait for students has dissolved. What used to be once regarded by society with utmost esteem has been cast aside by the moral decline of modern-day youth. It appears that the trend today is to be less responsible for one's actions (Compagnone, 1995).

Presently, there are accountability measures in place at the school-building, district, state, and federal level. There is a national focus on equitable academic achievement within our school system, as evidenced by programs such as "No Child Left Behind" and "Race to the Top". Typically, when data show that students are underperforming academically, it is the system and its faculty, not the student, who are blamed. As educators, we are held responsible by the state, as well as parents, communities, and other stakeholders to ensure our students' success. While many policies and programs set standards for equitable academic achievement, there seems to be no "standard" for student responsibility. As a key stakeholder in our education system, the student should be held accountable for the decisions he or she makes concerning his or her own academic success. The failure of the individual student to make responsible decisions for the good of the individual student may render insufficient progress according to the national standards in place.

Respectfully, an individual student's perceived self-efficacy and sense of self-regulation may be disingenuous, where it could be easier to blame others for failure. There is a notable chance however, that others familiar with the individual student may contribute to his/her irresponsible behaviors. McLeod (1994) states that the key is to foster a learning environment where both student and teacher have a clear notion of their own perceptions of responsibility. The study conducted by McLeod (1994) specifically examined student perceptions of their own accountability in the secondary classroom, with a sample of 1,403 high school students. Data revealed that students ranked "staying on task, bringing class materials, making an effort, following directions, and meeting deadlines" as the highest level of attributes concerning student responsibility (McLeod, 1994, p. 565). "Asking questions, completing homework, showing respect for teachers, desire to learn, attending class daily, respect for fellow classmates, keeping up grade point average, bringing materials for class projects, and good study habits" were ranked as second highest level of attributes concerning individual student responsibility (McLeod, 1994, p. 565). "Completing work immediately before and after an absence, good attitude, being open-minded, working collaboratively in groups, being motivated and seeking help outside of the classroom" were ranked as third highest level of attributes concerning individual student responsibility (McLeod, 1994, p. 565). While "being enthusiastic, notifying an instructor before an absence occurs, and being curious" ranked last regarding attributes of individual student responsibility (McLeod, 1994, p. 565).

Schaeffer (1999) contends that students are consistently pressured by dilemmas in which they are faced with making responsible choices while growing up in increasingly worsening environments not conducive to doing so. While the most

prominent aspects of No Child Left Behind focus on accountability via standardized testing, the inclusion of character education and responsible decision-making is also notable. The No Child Left Behind Act called for additional support for character education to train teachers to incorporate lessons and methods to increase, among many things, responsibility in students (McGuinn, 2006). Despite the focal resurgence on character education in the early 2000s with character-building programs such as Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS), significant amounts of research literature indicate that it is not enough. Kohn (1997) states that forcing or manipulating students to believe something, will be ineffective and ultimately will not benefit the development of the students. Kohn believes that responsible decision-making is something students must do on their own. Famed diarist, Anne Frank said, "…the final forming of a person's character lies in their own hands" (as cited in Frank, Mooyaart-Doubleday, & Roosevelt, 1993, p. 260).

According to Steele-Dadzie (2004), motivation for a student to do his or her part toward his or her own academic success means persisting in the face of challenging academic demands despite factors like physical, social, and economic constraints, or despite social distractions. Active engagement and persistence on academic tasks can lead to success, and non-persistence or avoidance behaviors can result in academic failure or low performance levels (Steele-Dadzie, 2004). Steele-Dadzie (2004) also argues that teachers and students reciprocally influence each other's motivation.

Educators have long been concerned with conclusive elements that influence student achievement. In academic settings, attributions for success and failure affect expectations for success as well as performance on academic tasks (Dweck & Repucci,

1973). Clinical psychologist, Dr. Jordan Peterson has argued in favor of the importance of accepting one's own responsibility. According to Peterson, it is in responsibility that most people find the meaning that sustains them through life (Peterson, 2018). Traditionally, living a meaningful life has required making responsible decisions, with the fundamental expectation of having successful outcomes. The current study examined students' acceptance of individual responsibility at school as perceived by their teachers, as well as factors that may influence those teacher perceptions, and the potential impact those perceptions may have on student decision-making.

There are numerous factors that may influence the perceptions that teachers have of their students. Even when individuals have little information about another, they naturally form perceptions about them, some of which might be based on stereotypes. At times, this can lead to misconceptions. It can also lead to accurate assessments of an individual. Research has shown, when teachers have high expectations, students are more likely to demonstrate high academic achievement. In contrast, when teachers have low expectations, students tend not to perform up to their potential (De Boer, Bosker, & Van der Werf, 2010). Rosenthal and Jacobson (2003) investigated the effect of teacher expectations on student achievement. The authors coined the self-fulfilling prophecy effect: Expectations about future performance, even when inaccurate, tend to come true. Jussim (1989) found that teacher expectations most often predicted achievement because the expectations were accurate, but only inaccurate and thus biased expectations can cause self-fulfilling prophecy effects. Brophy (1983) found that teacher expectations do not always automatically function as self-fulfilling prophecies. He suggested that student characteristics such as socioeconomic status, age, and motivation influence the

susceptibility to biased teacher expectations. Jussim, Eccles, and Madon (1996) found that self-fulfilling prophecy effects were stronger for students with a lower socio-economic status. Miller, Jr., Kuykendall, and Thomas (2013) found that teachers' perceptions are significantly lower in schools that serve relatively more economically disadvantaged students. The authors stated that when a greater proportion of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, teachers have significantly lower perceptions of the character and academic development of those students. The authors also found teachers serving disadvantaged populations may not be meeting their own career expectations, which manifests as negative perceptions of their students and lowered teachers' motivation. Ekici (2013) found that teachers' motivation had a significant relationship to their own self- efficacy perceptions which were affected by experience, and supports afforded to them, or the lack thereof.

Statement of the Problem

While studies on student perceptions of teachers' methods and effectiveness or even teacher perceptions of themselves are numerous, fewer studies have explored teacher perceptions of students' acceptance of individual responsibility at school, as well as factors that may influence those teacher perceptions, and the potential impact those perceptions may have on student decision-making. Problematic behavior and irresponsible decision-making by students appear to be on the rise nationally, while academic achievement and attainment of targeted goals are significantly decreasing (Patalay, 2015). The current study was designed to examine the voice of the teachers, as the burden of student academic success falls heavier than ever upon their shoulders. The unique vantage point of the teacher regarding student acceptance of individual

responsibility at school can provide significant data, but factors influencing teacher perceptions from their vantage point must be considered.

Purpose of the Study

The current study was a non-experimental, correlational analysis of a phenomenon. This type of study aims "to understand an experience from the participants' point of view" (Leedy & Omrod, 2001, p. 157). The focus was to understand the subjective, lived experiences and perspectives of the teacher-participants. The research methodology for the current study was a mixed method analysis using a sequential explanatory design (Creswell, 2003). The purpose of the current mixed method study was to determine whether there were statistically significant relationships between teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and (a) student gender, (b) student grade level, (c) student socio-economic status, (d) teacher gender, (e) number of years of teaching experience, and (f) teacher access to adequate resources to support students. The predominant phase that guided the current study was quantitative. However, findings from the qualitative phase were used to possibly explain and contextualize the results from the quantitative phase (Creswell, 2003).

Theoretical/Conceptual Frameworks

The current study was guided through the combined lenses of the theory of planned behavior and attribution theory.

Theory of planned behavior. Developed in 1985, Icek Ajzen's theory of planned behavior (TPB) is an extension of his theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975). Both models are based on the premise that individuals make logical, reasoned

decisions to engage in specific behaviors by evaluating the information available to them. The theory of planned behavior includes the addition of perceived behavioral control which takes into account if an individual believes he or she has control over the behavior he or she may carry out (Hack, 2019). The performance of a behavior is determined by the individual's intention to engage in said behavior (influenced by the value the individual places on the behavior, the ease with which it can be performed, and the views of significant others) and the perception that the behavior is within his/her control (Ryan & Carr, 2010). Therefore, while teachers can lend guidance, it is ultimately the sole decision of the individual student to either accept or reject individual responsibility for his/her own learning and then act on said decision.

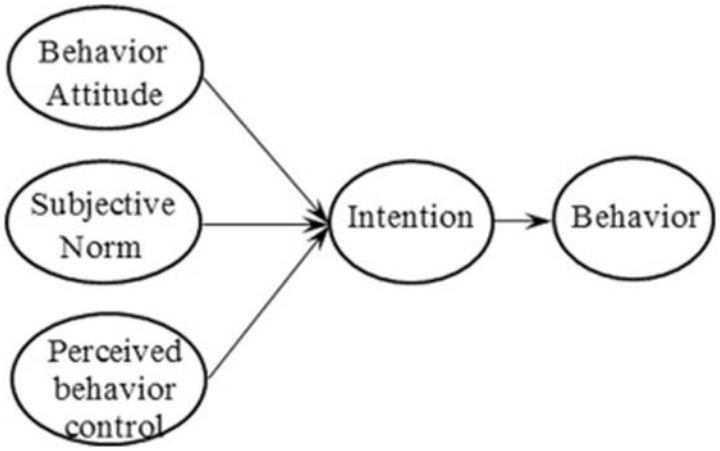

Figure 1. Theory of Planned Behavior Conceptual Framework Adapted from Ajzen (1991).

Attribution theory. Heider (1958) was the first to propose a psychological theory of attribution, but Weiner (1974, 1986) developed a theoretical framework that has

become a major research paradigm of social psychology. Attribution theory explains the connection between perceived causes of situations and the psychological consequences of these perceptions. The main idea of the theory is that all causes share three basic, underlying properties: locus, controllability, and stability (Weiner, 1986). These properties determine the psychological consequences of perceived causes. Perceived causes have crucial emotional and behavioral consequences, including those related to the context of achievement motivation (Frey, 2018). For the purposes of the current study, these underlying properties were defined by their roles in developing teacher perceptions.

Locus refers to the location of a cause, that is, whether the cause is internal or external to the student. For example, both low effort and low ability are likely to be perceived by the teacher as internal to a student; something that is associated with the student rather than with the situation or someone else (Frey, 2018). Controllability refers to the degree to which the cause is subject to volitional change, that is, the extent to which the cause is controllable or uncontrollable. Thus, low effort is within the student's control because a student can decide how much effort to invest in studying for an exam. By contrast, low ability is more likely to be perceived by the teacher as an uncontrollable factor, as a student cannot control the extent to which he/she is endowed with skills or abilities (Frey, 2018). Stability pertains to the relative endurance of a cause over time. Whereas enduring causes are seen as stable, transitory ones are seen as unstable. Low effort is likely to be perceived by the teacher as unstable as on a different occasion, in principle, the student may invest more effort in studying for an exam. Alternatively, low ability is stable because basic traits and skills are perceived as being unlikely to change much or at all over time (Frey, 2018). The current study examined the connection

between factors which may form teachers' perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and the psychological consequences of these perceptions on students.

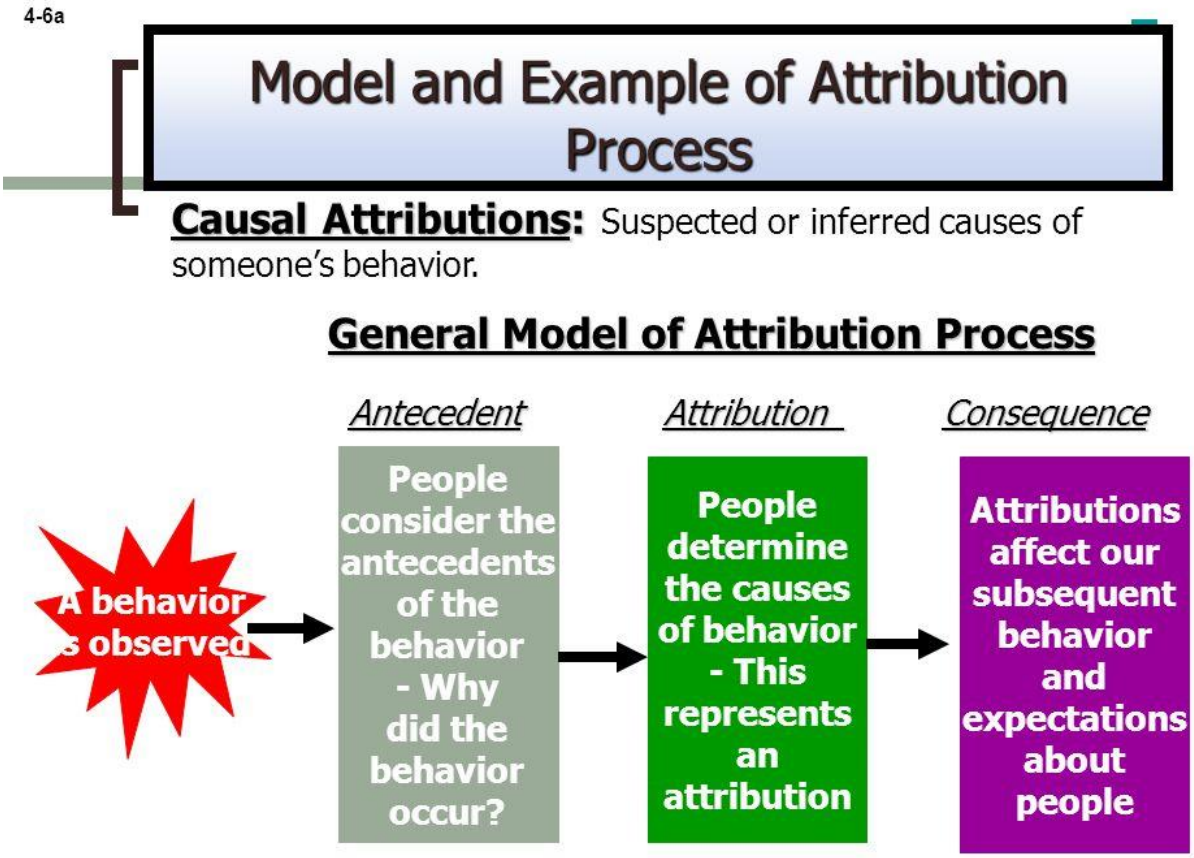

Figure 2. Attribution Theory Conceptual Framework Adapted from Young (2019).

The current study combined the theory of planned behavior, as it pertains to the student process of responsible decision-making at school, and attribution theory, as it pertains to factors that may influence teacher perceptions of students. These perceptions can potentially affect (positively, negatively, or not at all) student decision-making at school. Figure 3 is a representation of the combined theories in a conceptual framework developed by the researcher for the current study.

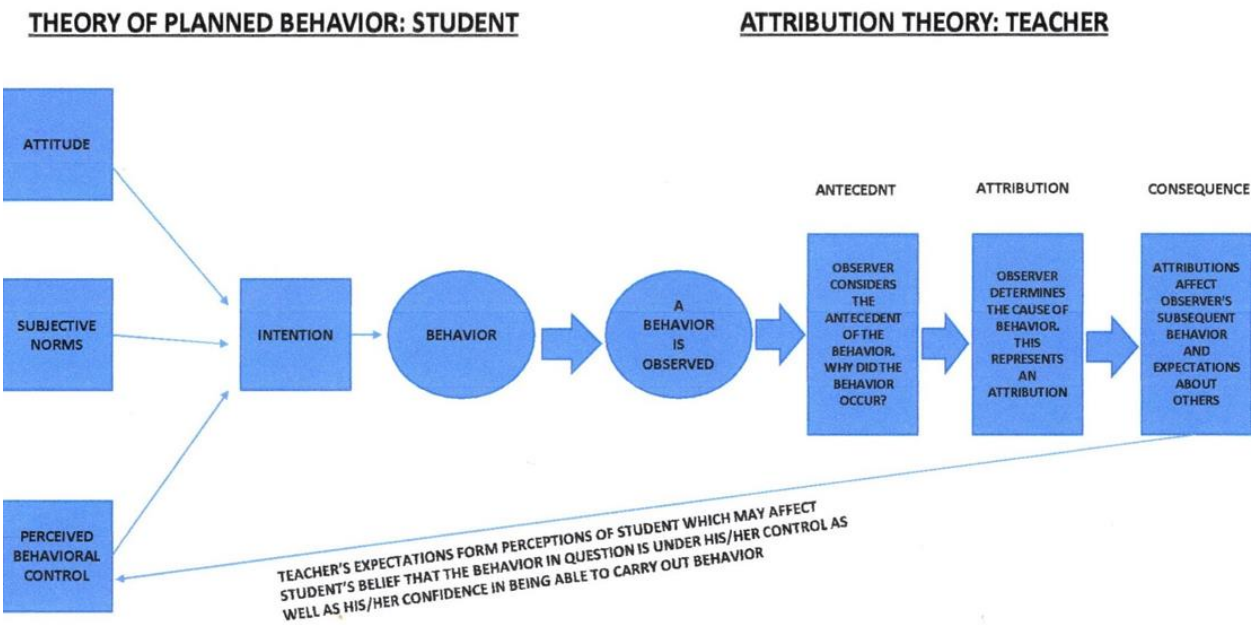

Figure 3. Conceptual Framework for the Current Study.

Significance/Importance of the Study

Few studies have explored teacher perceptions of students' acceptance of individual responsibility at school and factors that influence those teacher perceptions. For the purposes of the current study, responsible decision-making was defined as decisions made by the individual student for the good of the individual student. Both the acceptance and rejection of responsible decision-making by the individual student among groups of his/her peers in school settings affords teachers a unique vantage point where their perceptions might provide useful data. Factors influencing teacher perceptions from their vantage point must be considered. The goal of the current study was to provide

evidence for supporting or refuting the concept of a statistically significant relationship between teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and (a) student gender, (b) student grade level, (c) student socio-economic status, (d) teacher gender, (e) number of years of teaching experience, and (f) teacher access to adequate resources to support students.

Quantitative Research Questions

RQ1. To what extent do differences exist in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon (a) student gender, (b) student grade level, (c) student socio-economic status, (d) teacher gender, (e) number of years of teaching experience, and (f) teacher access to adequate resources to support students.

Qualitative Research Question

RQ2. How do teachers perceive the students' role in their own academic success in terms of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and what factors influence these perceptions?

Mixed Method Research Question

RQ3. To what extent do the qualitative results validate the quantitative findings?

Hypotheses

1. $H_{0:}$ There will be no significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon student gender.

   $H_{1:}$ There will be significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon student gender.

2. $H_{0:}$ There will be no significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon student grade level.

   $H_{1:}$ There will be significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon student grade level.

3. $H_{0:}$ There will be no significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon student socio-economic status.

   $H_{1:}$ There will be significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon student socio-economic status.

4. $H_{0:}$ There will be no significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon teacher gender.

   $H_{1:}$ There will be significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon teacher gender.

5. $H_{0:}$ There will be no significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon number of years of teaching experience.

   $H_{1:}$ There will be significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon number of years of teaching experience.

6. $H_{0:}$ There will be no significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon access to adequate resources to support students.

$H_{1:}$ There will be significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon access to adequate resource to support students.

Definition of Terms

Terms relevant to the current study are defined as follows:

Responsibility. For the purpose of the current study, responsibility is defined as "the habit of doing our duties and living with the consequences of our decisions and mistakes" (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999, p. 209).

Individual Responsibility. For the purpose of the current study, individual responsibility is defined as performing one's duty and being accountable for one's choices and actions.

Responsibility at School. For the purpose of the current study, responsibility at school is defined as behaviors performed by the student that will enable him/her to function successfully in the academic setting such as: Completes assignments, has the necessary supplies for schoolwork (paper, pencil, text, etc.), follows class rules even when teacher is not present, gets along well with classmates during group work, willingly does his/her share in group projects, is ready to begin classwork with the group, can be counted on to help maintain the classroom's appearance, participates in his/her own independent reading, will ask a question if directions or instructions are not understood, and is willing to help others in class.

Irresponsibility at School. For the purpose of the current study, irresponsibility at school is defined as behaviors performed by the student that will not enable him/her to function successfully in the academic setting such as: Makes excuses for not completing schoolwork, completes schoolwork after several reminders, blames others for classroom

disturbances or group failures, must be reminded to start his/her classwork, and must be told exactly what to do most of the time.

Student Socio-Economic Status (SES). In most education research studies, SES is defined solely by the free or reduced-price lunch (FRL) variable (Harwell & LeBeau, 2010). For the purpose of the current study, student socio-economic status will be defined in the same manner.

Access to adequate resources to support students. For the purpose of the current study, access to adequate resources to support students will entail a *yes* or *no* opinion by the teacher participants regarding whether they believe to have said access.

Perceived Self-Efficacy. People's belief about their capabilities to produce effects (Bandura, 1994).

Self-Regulation. Exercise of influence over one's own motivation, thought processes, emotional states and patterns of behavior (Bandura, 1994).

Perceived Behavioral Control. A person's expectancy that performance of a behavior is within his/her control (Ajzen, 1985).

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Rationale

Horner and Ngalwa (2004), as cited by (Foncha, Ngoqo, Mafumo, & Maruma, 2017) found that poor decision-making by students has a negative impact on the academic performance of learners. The lack of responsible decision-making and diffusion of responsibility by the individual student among groups of his/her peers in school settings affords teachers a unique and distinct vantage point. However, factors that may influence teachers' perceptions of their students must be considered. The current study examined the potential connection between factors which may form teachers' perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and the psychological consequences of these perceptions on students.

Review of Related Research

In this chapter, the literature exploring the construct of individual responsibility and documenting predictors of its development was reviewed. This review covered literature emerging from both social-cognitive and behavioral studies and sets this literature in the broader context of general concepts of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and factors that may influence the formation of teachers' perceptions of their students. A combined framework of student behavioral intent (theory of planned behavior) and the psychological consequences of teacher perceptions on their students (attribution theory) was the foundation and theoretical basis from which the current study was built.

Theory of Planned Behavior

The theory of planned behavior is an extension of the theory of reasoned action. The difference between these two theories is that the theory of planned behavior has added perceived behavioral control as the determinant of behavioral intention as well as control beliefs that affect the perceived behavioral control. Both theories assume that human beings are basically rational and make systematic use of information available to them when making decisions. The theory of reasoned action also assumes that the behavior being studied is under total volitional control of the performer (Madden, Ellen, & Ajzen, 1992).

The theory of reasoned action is based on the proposition that an individual's behavior is determined by the individual's behavioral intention to perform that behavior, which provides the most accurate prediction of behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Behavioral intention is a function of two factors: one's attitude toward the behavior (personal) and subjective norms (social).

Attitude toward the behavior is defined as a person's general feeling of favorableness or unfavorableness for that behavior (Ajzen, Heilbroner, Fishbein, & Thurow 1980). Subjective Norm is defined as a person's perception that most people who are important to him think he should or should not perform the behavior in question (Ajzen et al., 1980). Attitude toward behavior is a function of the product of one's salient belief that performing the behavior will lead to certain outcomes, as well as an evaluation of said outcomes (a rating of desirability).

The theory of reasoned action has been successfully applied to a large number of situations in predicting the performance of behavior and intentions, such as predicting

turnover (Prestholdt, Lane, & Matthews, 1987), education (Fredricks & Dossett, 1983), and breast cancer examination (Timko, 1987). In a meta-analysis of research on the theory of reasoned action, Sheppard, Hartwick, and Warshaw (1988) concluded that the predictive utility of the theory of reasoned action was strong across conditions.

However, the predictive validity of the theory of reasoned action becomes problematic if the behavior under study is not under full volitional control. Sheppard et al. (1988) pointed out two problems. First, the prediction of behavior from intention is problematic because a variety of factors in addition to one's intentions determine whether the behavior is performed. Second, there is no provision in the model for considering either the probability of failing to perform one's behavior or the consequences of such failure in determining one's intentions. Ajzen (1985) extended the theory of reasoned action by including another construct, perceived behavioral control (PBC), to predict behavioral intentions and behavior. The extended model is the theory of planned behavior. Perceived behavioral control refers to people's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behavior of interest (Ajzen, 1991). If behavior is not under complete volitional control, the performers need to have the requisite resources and opportunities in order to perform the behavior. The perception of whether they have the resources will affect their intention to perform the behavior as well as the successful performance of the behavior.

Perceived behavioral control is a function of control beliefs and perceived facilitation. Control belief is the perception of the presence or absence of requisite resources and opportunities needed to carry out the behavior. Perceived facilitation is one's assessment of the importance of those resources to the achievement of outcomes

(Ajzen & Madden, 1986). Ultimately, if one lacks these resources, one must decide to find ways to obtain them or not. The theory of planned behavior has been successfully applied to various situations in predicting the performance of behavior and intentions such as predicting user intentions to use a new software (Mathieson, 1991), to perform a breast self-examination (Young, Lierman, Powell-Cope, Kasprzyk, & Benoliel, 1991), and to avoid caffeine (Madden, Ellen, & Ajzen, 1992). Madden, Ellen, and Ajzen (1992) found that the theory of planned behavior has a better predictive power of behavior than the theory of reasoned action.

Since the current study was partially guided through the lens of the theory of planned behavior, the researcher focused on attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and behavioral intention when considering the choices of the individual student. The researcher did not include the prediction of actual behavior in the current research design. This study did not attempt to test components of the theory of reasoned action or the theory of planned behavior; it instead applied its conceptual elements as a foundation from which individual responsibility in school is viewed. Predicting the performance of behavior and intentions is a noble and interesting aspect of behavioral studies and may be applied to future research.

Attribution Theory

Much of the existing understanding of the process explained by attribution theory comes from research conducted in the context of school achievement. Educators' attempts to understand

the causes of achievement or lack of achievement in school often determines their reactions and attributions to these causes (Frey, 2018). It is important to consider the psychological consequences for the students from said attributions.

Because the understanding of the reasons for an outcome or event helps people manage their lives, is has important emotional and behavioral consequences. For example, the teacher of a student who failed an exam may conclude that this failure was caused by insufficient efforts to study for the exam. In consequence, the teacher's perception of the student and subsequent interactions with the student may make the student feel guilty and decide to invest more effort when studying for a future exam. By contrast, if the teacher's subsequent interactions with the student makes the student think that the failure was caused by a lack of ability, this student is likely to feel shame and may decide to quit or significantly reduce efforts to succeed. As this example suggests, the cause the teacher attributes to the outcome may determine which emotions are likely to arise in the student and what type of behavior may result from it.

Ajzen's introduction of the construct 'perceived behavioral control' into his theory of planned behavior was a determinant of both behavioral intention and the behavior itself. On a conceptual basis, perceived behavioral control is similar to self-efficacy in that both constructs refer to the person's belief that the behavior in question is under his or her control. However, operationally, perceived behavioral control is often assessed by the ease or difficulty of the behavior (i.e., "I find it difficult to study three times a week because I work after school"). While self-efficacy is operationalized by the individual's confidence in being able to carry out the behavior in the face of extenuating circumstances (i.e., "I am confident that I can study three times a week, even though I

work after school") (Bandura, 1994 p.74). Through the combined lenses of theory of planned behavior and attribution theory, the current study examined how teachers perceive the outcomes of student decision-making; attribute said outcomes; develop expectations from said outcomes; and form perceptions from said expectations. The current study investigated how teacher perceptions may affect the student's perceived behavioral control for future behavioral decisions at school.

Individual Responsibility

Individual responsibility is best understood in the context of more general theories of responsibility. However, universally accepted definitions of responsibility are nonexistent, in part because scholarly perspectives come from fields as diverse as philosophy, law, public policy, and psychology, and in part because responsibility is such a frequently and casually used word in our vernacular.

Many philosophical and legal definitions of responsibility focus on an individual's acceptance of blame for a past misdeed or oversight (Bennett, 1993; Brickman et al., 1982; Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983). Other philosophical and psychological definitions of responsibility zero in on prospective acts of competent behavior (Fingarette, 1967; Owens, 1982). Morris (1961, cited in Bacon, 1993) articulated this distinction as the difference between being held responsible and being responsible. Some of the accounts of being responsible emphasize cognitive aspects of responsibility: a person's own perceptions of being in charge of something (Maruyama, Fraser, & Miller, 1982; Warton & Goodnow, 1991). Other authors focus on behavioral aspects of responsibility: judgments by others of whether a person typically acts in a manner consistent with social expectations (Bronfenbrenner, 1961 as cited in Petrullo,

1961; Wentzel, 1991). Some theorists (Keith, Nelson, Schlabach, & Thompson, 1990; Warton & Goodnow, 1991) distinguish personal responsibility (caring for self), and social responsibility (caring for others); other authors use one term or the other without articulating that boundary (Ford, Wentzel, Wood, Stevens, & Siesfeld, 1989).

Fingarette (1967) devoted considerable attention to the idea of acceptance of responsibility. He contended that in social interactions, acceptance of responsibility may be explicit, but more often, it is implicit, and is thus "often overlooked" (p. 30). Owens (1982) noted a distinction between responsibility associated with particular tasks or roles and responsibility as a character trait—a "consistent pattern of responding in a reliable manner" (p. 4). Owens (citing Twiss, 1977) also differentiated between causal responsibility in the sense of an individual triggering a particular event (I dropped the vase; therefore, I am responsible for dropping it), normative responsibility as defined by a moral standard (I dropped the vase; therefore, I should pay for it), and role responsibility—the "fulfillment of duties" in an ongoing relationship (p. 5). Owens (1982) noted that individuals are judged as responsible or irresponsible according to their behavior across situations, but many situational factors affect the extent to which a person acts responsibly. These include the expectations of others, the motivation of the individual, and the freedom inherent in the situation.

Owens' (1982) framework is helpful for analyzing several streams of psychological research on responsibility. For example, Warton and Goodnow (1991) explored task-related responsibility, hypothesizing that children's sense of obligation to different household chores may be governed by principles regarding self-care (if you made the mess, you clean it up), self-regulation (if the job is yours, no one should have to

pay you or tell you to do it), and continuing responsibility (if you pass off the job to someone else, it's still your responsibility to make sure it gets done). The authors' presentation of hypothetical vignettes to children ages 8–14 suggested different developmental paths for the three principles rather than "a unitary sense of responsibility" (Warton & Goodnow, 1991 p. 156).

Hartup and Van Lieshout (1995) summarized the results of investigations into responsibility, via Owens' sense of normative, or moral responsibility in ongoing relationships. The authors cited research showing that cultural variations and aspects of parent-child relationships (attachment, parental demandingness and responsiveness, and parenting style) are related to the development of socially responsible behavior in young children.

Gilligan (1982), also viewing responsibility as understanding and adhering to moral standards, contended that gender is an important factor in the development of children's understanding of responsibility. Boys, she argued, tend to define responsibility as inhibiting an action that would infringe on others' rights; girls are more likely to think of responsibility as initiating an action to meet the needs of others. A set of small-scale, qualitative studies in which researchers presented hypothetical moral dilemmas to adolescents and adults provided support for these ideas (Gilligan & Attanucci 1988).

Harris, Clark, Rose, and Valasek (1954) combined several components, influential to Owens' framework, in their investigation of responsibility in children, including responsibility as an abstract moral standard and responsibility as the fulfillment of duties associated with a particular role. However, their investigation did not support this broad formulation of the construct. In a large sample of 10–15 year-olds, the authors

found only small correlations between teacher ratings of student responsibility and student ratings of their own citizenship attitudes. The teacher checklist consisted of student behaviors such as “dawdles at his work” and “sees jobs to be done and does them without waiting to be asked,” while the citizenship measure contained attitudinal items about moral standards such as “I would sneak into a movie if I could do it without being caught,” and "We ought to let Europe get out of its own mess” (p. 22).

Relationship to academic achievement. Academic achievement is another major factor that has been investigated by several researchers for its relationship to student responsibility (Crandall, Katkovsky, & Crandall, 1965; Steinberg & Elmen, 1986). Correlational data provide fairly strong evidence for a link between social-cognitive measures of student responsibility (academic locus of control, use of volitional strategies, and self-regulated learning) and academic achievement. Correlational data also show a link between behavioral manifestations of student responsibility and academic achievement. However, the processes linking these constructs are not known.

Martel, McKelvie, and Standing (1987) found that an important single predictor of academic achievement among students is the extent to which they are held formally and individually responsible for their actions. Aside from the currently popular cooperative learning and restorative justice approaches to instructional effectiveness and behavioral accountability, individual responsibility plays a major role in current measures of intelligence. According to developmental psychologist, Howard Gardner (2019), there are not just two types of intelligence. Gardner believed that IQ tests capture not only language and logic but should also consider multiple intelligences (as his theory suggests). Specifically, individual responsibility is measured in differing degrees in two

types of intelligences named by Gardner: interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence. These measures provide additional support for the importance of an individual responsibility component to potentially effective educational approaches (Gardner, 2019).

It is commonly assumed that students who take greater responsibility for their learning achieve greater results (Frymier, 1992), but Steinberg and Elmen (1986) believed that responsibility is merely a correlate of academic achievement and not a cause of it. In their study of 120 adolescents, these authors used a somewhat unusual measure of responsibility that included dimensions of self-reliance, work orientation, resistance to peer pressure, and involvement in household responsibilities. While cross-sectional data showed a correlation between adolescent responsibility and school grades, longitudinal data analysis showed that only one component of the measure of responsibility (resistance to peer pressure) actually predicted later academic achievement. The authors also found interactions with student age: In the cross-sectional analysis, work orientation was more highly correlated with grades for older students.

Social-cognitive aspects of student responsibility have been examined as a function of student gender and age. In a cross-sectional study, Crandall, Katkovsky, and Crandall (1965) found that from 3rd through 12th grade, girls report a stronger sense of responsibility for negative academic events than boys do. While internality scores for students of both genders increase with age, girls' scores for negative events were higher in 6th grade than boys' scores in 12th. Boys' internality scores were higher than girls' for positive events, but the differences were not as outright (Crandall et al., 1965).

Individual responsibility strategies have proven to be potentially effective ways to increase the percentage of class time that students are actively engaged in the content and

to promote increases in academic achievement. While much more research remains, relative successes regarding the acceptance of individual responsibility on academic achievement exists and needs to be further examined.

Responsibility has been conceptualized in a number of different ways. Different authors have emphasized being responsible or being held responsible; perceiving responsibility or acting responsibly in the context of particular situations, tasks, roles, and relationships, or responsibility as a general character trait. Research results, in the form of qualitative interviews, surveys, and rating-scale data, support some integration of these concepts but fail to support a very broad, fully inclusive construct.

Additional factors linked to student responsibility are somewhat limited, particularly in comparison with the volumes of research available on other indicators of school performance. However, the literature is sufficient to suggest that student responsibility is a theoretically important construct and that social-cognitive and behavioral aspects of student responsibility can be measured with some degree of reliability and validity. Nonetheless, for educators, parents, school psychologists, and education researchers, the important question remains: How is it that children become or fail to become responsible students? Previous research links one or more factors such as student gender, student grade level, and student socio-economic status to the development of student responsibility. However, a review of the literature suggests that these and other factors have been examined in the absence of an overarching theoretical framework to guide the research. Little attention has been paid to how these factors may interact with each other in developmental processes like the theory of planned behavior and attribution theory.

Teacher Perceptions

Many factors influence the educational success that children have in school. A student's relationship with his or her teacher and school is one of the more powerful connections that youth may experience during their education (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003). Just as there are many factors that impact the overall educational success of students outside of the classroom, there are also factors that influence how well children do in school. Factors such as a student's confidence in the teacher and the teacher's perceptions of a student are key to addressing various aspects of student learning (Miller, Jr., Kuykendall, & Thomas, 2013).

Changes in teacher expectations and perceptions can produce changes in student achievement. When teachers expect students to do well, students tend to do well; when teachers expect students to fail, they tend to fail (Brookover, Rosenthal, & Jacobson, 1969). Teachers' perceptions may be impacted by several factors outside a specific student. Miller, Jr. et al. (2013) explored how teacher and school characteristics impact teachers' perceptions. According to the authors, teachers are likely to have a certain perception or perceptive value placement on the children they teach based on the teachers' own characteristics and those of the neighborhoods in which they teach.

Relationship to student socio-economic status (SES). White (1982) argued that though it is widely believed that socioeconomic status (SES) is strongly correlated with measures of academic achievement, weak and moderate correlations have been frequently reported. Cruse & Powers (2006) explored the use of free and reduced-price lunch (FRPL) eligibility counts for estimating poverty in school districts. The authors found a significant positive association between school district FRPL counts and Census

2000 child poverty estimates. Recent literature shows that poverty proves to be strongly correlated with academic achievement (Randolph & Prejean-Harris, 2016). A review of the literature shows that there has long been debate over the relationship between student socio-economic status and academic achievement. However, fewer studies directly examine teachers' perceptions of student socio-economic status and how those perceptions affect the decisions and academic performance of students.

Miller, Jr. et al. (2013) observed through a regression analysis that a comprehensive index of teacher perceptions is influenced by several individual and institutional characteristics. Perceptions did not vary significantly across gender or marital status lines; however, perceptions were significantly more positive among minority and experienced educators. Further, teachers with more extensive education and those teaching advanced grades exhibited significantly lower perceptions of their learning community (Miller, Jr. et al., 2013). This may indicate that teachers with their own higher levels of education may hold higher levels of expectations and standards which are not being met by their students. This calls into question whether said expectations are realistic or not.

Miller, Jr. et al. (2013) results suggested that teachers' perceptions are significantly lower in schools that serve relatively more economically disadvantaged students. When a greater proportion of students are eligible for free or reduced-cost lunches, teachers have significantly lower perceptions of the character and academic development of students, of communications and associations with parents, and of the overall school climate. According to the authors, these findings support prior literature in suggesting that socioeconomic status is a critical predictor of teachers' expectations and

perceptions of families (Miller, Jr. et al., 2013). However, the authors did mention the possibility that such findings are the result of a selection effect by which teachers with a more negative outlook or those less adept at working with socially and culturally diverse populations are more likely to secure employment in economically disadvantaged schools. Further, teachers serving disadvantaged populations may not be meeting their own career expectations, which manifests as negative perceptions of their school, students, and parents (Miller, Jr. et al., 2013). This relates to the current study by calling into question the validity of teacher perceptions of their students and whether such perceptions can be objective and potential factors that threaten objectivity.

Sorhagen (2013) used prospective longitudinal data to examine the associations between first-grade teachers' over- and underestimation of their students' math abilities, basic reading abilities, and language skills and the students' high school academic performance. The author found teachers' inaccurate expectations in first grade predicted students' math, reading comprehension, vocabulary knowledge, and verbal reasoning standardized test scores at age 15. Significant interactions between students' family income and teachers' misperceptions of students' math and language skills were found, such that teachers' over- and underestimation of abilities had a stronger impact on students from lower income families (as determined by students receiving free or reduced price lunch) than on students from more affluent homes.

Preliminary regression analyses were conducted to assess whether child demographic (student socio-economic status), cognitive, and non-cognitive characteristics predicted teacher misperceptions of students' abilities. The results showed that students' academic achievements in high school are affected by early teacher

expectations, such that high school students whose first-grade teachers underestimated their abilities performed significantly worse on standardized tests of math, reading comprehension, vocabulary knowledge and verbal reasoning than would have been predicted on the basis of their early test scores. Conversely, when early abilities were overestimated, high school students performed better than expected. The findings of the study demonstrate that misperceptions of abilities early in students' schooling continue to exert an effect on academic achievement 10 years later. This confirms the durability of self-fulfilling prophecies in the classroom reported by Alvidrez and Weinstein (1999).

Sorhagen's (2013) findings add insight to the relation between family income and children's academic achievement and abilities, in terms of teacher expectations and interactions with these students. Based on converging literature on resiliency and on mediating mechanisms of SES on child outcomes, Bradley and Corwyn (2002) suggested that external support systems and access to additional resources are potential moderators of the association between SES and children's academic outcomes, which are similar to possible mechanisms of self-fulfilling prophecies in the classroom. This points to the importance of using integrated theoretical perspectives that consider the relations between mediation and moderation when investigating the developmental effects of SES (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Lerner, 2003).

Lane, Wehby, and Cooley (2006) found teachers working in schools with high rates of poverty, student absenteeism, disruptive behavior, student mobility, as well as low achievement scores may focus their attention on expectations related to minimizing disruptions to instruction (e.g., managing inappropriate behavior, coming to class on time). Consequently, it may be that teachers in more at-risk environments emphasize the

importance of self-control or cooperation skills and deemphasize the importance of assertion skills in an effort to maintain harmony, avoid conflict, and focus on instructional activities (Lane et al., 2006). The authors also suggest that it may be just the opposite. Perhaps teachers in more at-risk environments may expect and reinforce higher levels of assertiveness in an effort to help students access educational experiences that may not be typically available in low-performing and high-risk schools with the goal of encouraging students to obtain a strong education (Lane et al., 2006).

In contrast, teachers working in high-performing, affluent schools with low rates of student absenteeism and high rates of achievement may articulate expectations related to maximizing instructional opportunities (e.g., working cooperatively on assignments, participating in extracurricular activities) (Lane et al., 2006). Perhaps these more affluent schools have the resources to provide students with a more comprehensive educational experience. Students in these environments may not have to learn assertion skills to obtain these experiences. Also, it is possible that self-control skills may not be viewed as critical by these teachers as these students may face fewer potential incidences of conflict within and beyond the school setting (Lane et al., 2006).

Lane, Pierson, Stang, and Carter (2010) examined the potential role of school-related risk factors in influencing teacher expectations. The authors stated that school characteristics such as poverty, student mobility, school safety, and the number of students enrolled in school may influence the expectations teachers hold for student behavior. School risk was defined based on only one index of risk: free or reduced-price lunch status. The study investigated the relation between school level (elementary vs. middle vs. high school) and type of program (general vs. special education) to teachers'

perceptions and expectations by examining these relationships across schools serving more economically diverse students. Lane et al. (2010) findings suggest that teacher expectations do not appear to be influenced by the level of school risk and instead, differences appear to be related mainly to the age of the students served. Typically, the absence of significant findings also has the potential to inform research and practice.

There is some evidence that socio-economic status (SES) may influence teacher ratings of child characteristics. Alvidrez and Weinstein (1999) reported that after controlling for IQ, teachers overestimated the academic skills of children who were living in higher socio-economic situations and underestimated the ability of students who resided in lower socio-economic situations. Similarly, in a study of inclusive teachers' attitudes toward students with disabilities, Cook (2004) reported that teachers in high SES school districts were more likely to identify children with disabilities as needing more attention than teachers in lower SES school systems. Likewise, teachers in high SES districts were more likely to reject included students with disabilities than teachers in low SES districts. Given the disparity in findings between this study and other studies, further research is necessary to better understand the relation between school factors (such as SES) and teacher expectations.

Relationship to student grade level. Erdem (2016) examined the opinions of teachers as to what kind of students they prefer in class. The study was descriptive and was conducted via the survey model. The population of the research consisted of teachers of first, second, third, and fourth grades in public and private primary schools in different districts of Ankara province, Turkey in the 2014–2015 academic year. The sample consisted of 286 primary school teachers chosen by random sampling in public

and private primary schools in different districts of the Ankara province. The author created a survey geared toward his teacher sample. The survey consisted of open-ended questions used to examine the similarities and differences of their responses. Each question in the survey fits within themes developed through content analysis. Themes developed were illustrated with frequency and percent values in the submitted tables. According to the data obtained in the study, a majority of teacher-participants indicated that they are pleased when students are successful in their lessons, listen to teachers while they teach the lesson, obey the rules, fulfill their responsibilities, attend the lesson actively, come to the lesson prepared, and do their homework on time. Admittedly, as part of their expectations, teachers want their students to be respectful, establish good relationships with classmates, pay attention to directives and instructions, realize their mistakes and offer an apology, be helpful, share, and find solutions to problems.

The results of the data collected in Erdem (2016) reveal that a majority of the teachers stated that they are pleased when students are successful in their lessons, listen to teachers while they teach the lesson, obey the rules, fulfill their responsibilities, attend the lesson actively, and come to the lesson as prepared or willing and do the homework on time. Regarding the personal characteristics of students, teachers indicated that they want their students to share their feelings and opinions with the teacher; be clean, neat, tidy, and self-confident; love their teacher and school; be honest; be environmentally conscious; and read a lot. A majority of teacher-participants indicated that they want their students to be successful and hardworking, to be honest and reliable, to be warm-hearted, with high self-confidence, to achieve their objectives, to demonstrate responsibility, and to respect herself/himself and the learning environment. Some

teacher-participants wanted students to be individuals who can express their feelings and opinions freely, are environmentally conscious, and can find solutions to problems in the future. The teacher-participants outlined specific values that they expect for their students in order to secure their best future. Additionally, most of the teacher-participants wanted their students to become individuals who are self-supporting, who are willing to learn and improve, who are well-informed, who know their rights and are civic-minded, and who will make a difference for the future.

According to Erdem (2016), 84% of the teacher-participants stated that they love their students, encourage open discourse, and treat their students equally. Approximately 80% of the teacher-participants indicated that they genuinely and actively listen to their students, encourage student interest and motivation for the lesson, learn how their students learn, evaluate the students apart from the exams, and collaboratively problem-solve in class. This qualitative research may have implications for the current study as the researcher applied a semi-structured, open-ended interview protocol as part of the mixed analysis in determining teacher perceptions on what characteristics, among other things, they believe apply to the responsible and irresponsible student. Erdem (2016), though rudimentary at first glance, uncovered something very rich in significance as it applies to the current study. The majority of teacher-participants (286) in his research advocated for a happy, engaged, future-minded student, respectful of what needs to be done now for the sake of later. Responsibility on the part of the student was key in his findings in that it would be the perpetual force that keeps the students on the right track.

McLeod (2012) examined 1,403 student perceptions of accountability in the secondary classroom. Specifically, high school students from a secondary school located

in the southeastern portion of the United States were asked to complete surveys based on five critical questions: (1) What are the qualities and attributes of today's students (the millennial generation)? (2) What are student interpretations of our current grading system? (3) What characteristics describe student accountability? (4) What characteristics describe teacher accountability? (5) How do the students describe themselves? According to the author, results indicated that students were confident in their interpretations of accountability; however, there were discrepancies among student responses. The results also showed that student interpretations of accountability did not always match student behavior or performance. The author determined that it is evident that there is a need for schools to set clear and defined procedures, standards, and goals for accountability in the classroom in order for students to become academically successful and future productive citizens in our society (McLeod, 2012 p. 561).

McLeod (2012) argued that students are expected to be responsible to their teacher but also must be responsible to themselves through self-efficacy. It is the responsibility of the teacher to incorporate accountability measures to include the student. By doing so, educators can create a strong sense of efficacy within their students. Introducing assignments that demonstrate the relationship between the students' level of performance and its influence on academic accomplishments presents students with the power to take ownership of their academic progress. Once students understand that they can take command of their academics and have absolute influence over their achievements, accountability standards will be viewed as motivational tools that aid in student success (McLeod, 2012).

In order to quantify accountability when setting student standards, McLeod (2012) argued that it is important to understand the generation of the students being taught. Teachers may find this easier said than done considering the generation gap between themselves and their students. Generations are often defined by time period and shared experiences, which leads to a common sense of values and shared behaviors. Depending on the events and social influences of the time, teachers may find themselves in what seems to be a multitude of cultural differences between themselves and their students. Today's students may recognize the values of the generations before them but will adjust some ideas and completely reject others that are not relative to the current environment in which they live. Because of this, teacher and student may assume the responsibilities required of one another but truly have no concept of actual liability. It is imperative that educators become aware of their students' ways of being and develop expectations of all parties within their classrooms to ensure academic success (McLeod, 2012). Establishing a respectful working relationship like this requires teachers to have objective perceptions of their students and vice versa.

McLeod's (2012) findings support the notion that accountability cannot be measured only by considering students' grades. It can also be assessed by observing the classroom environment. The emphasis of accountability in the classroom must not be solely based on the educator but should also include student accountability. The key to fostering a classroom environment where both student and teacher have clear expectations of their own and one another's responsibilities is to look at student perceptions of student and teacher accountability in the classroom. By understanding student views of classroom accountability, we can then begin the process of

implementing strategies that foster the development of students as responsible learners and self-managers (McLeod, 2012). In time, this may have an impact on teachers' perceptions of their students as self-managers, whose differing degrees of self-responsibility may directly impact their academic achievement.

It seems that student failure to accept individual responsibility in school is evident in secondary education, where rampant grade inflation teaches students that their grades are not necessarily tied to their performance (Gaultney & Cann, 2001). This increase in grades without a corresponding increase in effort leads "students to believe that for a class to be considered appropriate it should not require much effort and should result in high grades for most students" (Ansburg, 2001, p. 4). Edwards (2000) argued that other consequences include lower academic standards, students' distorted views of their academic abilities, undermining the credibility of academic institutions, and the devaluing of degrees. Gaultney and Cann (2001) further argued that this inflation is a direct consequence of seeing students as customers entitled to a product (credits) that they have either paid for (private education) or are owed (public education) rather than as apprentices working toward a craft or skill. The result is a weakening of standards and a skewing of instructor and student accountability.

Delucchi and Smith (1997) described the erosion of the legitimacy of higher education as a symptom of postmodernism, arguing that media such as television news, documentaries, and radio talk shows have gained as much authority as universities and that they compete with the rationality and disciplinary standards upon which much of higher education is based. The collapse of boundaries between the inside and outside of

the academy delegitimizes the belief in professors as experts, particularly as ultimate authorities on the subjects they teach. (Delucchi & Smith, 1997)

The College Board documented this phenomenon in a 1997 study, noting that since 1987, the population of students with A plus, A, and A minus grade-point averages has grown from 28 percent to a record 37 percent, while their SAT scores have fallen an average of 13 points on verbal and 1 point on math. (College Board, 1997). Previous research indicates that students in their senior year in high school spend only an hour per day studying outside of class and plan to spend only an hour studying per hour of class at the college level, an assumption that is reinforced when students arrive at college. Although most college instructors tell their students to expect at least two hours of homework for every hour they spend in class, the reality is that "most students are quite successful in terms of GPA while working considerably less than faculty assert is necessary" (Schilling & Schilling 1999, p. 4).

In fact, current trends in the literature have continued to validate the notion that academic motivation for school tasks tend to decrease throughout schooling but are already beginning in the early years of middle school (Rosário, Valle, Gonzalez-Pienda, & Lourenco, 2012). Rosário et al. (2012) stated that previous data indicated that the motivational conditions necessary to attain comprehensive and meaningful learning decrease as students progress from primary education until the end of high school. The authors stated that the purpose of their study was to test certain predictor variables, most importantly, grade level, in determining effects on mathematical achievement. The authors acknowledged that gender was not included in the model because although boys' achievements were higher than girls in mathematics, in 37 out of 65 PISA (The Program

for International Student Assessment) countries, most differences were relatively small (Rosário et al., 2012)

According to Rosário et al. (2012), student participants completed questionnaires during regular class schedules and took about 25 minutes to fulfill them while diary-logs were completed by the tenth week of the second term. The authors' study attempted to deepen the examination of the relationship between motivational variables such as self-efficacy for the use of Self-Regulated Learning strategies and math's academic achievement of middle school students. They included other variables; among them was grade level.

Results demonstrated evidence of a significant relationship between grade level and the motivational variables taken in the model (i.e., self-efficacy). Rosário et al. (2012) produced findings suggesting that students' confidence in their capacity to carry out self-regulated strategies decreases as they progress from one grade level to the next (from seventh to ninth), despite the fact that the weight of the relation is low. In general, these results coincide with those reported in the literature, suggesting that students in middle school lower their motivational levels and commitment to the school tasks, reporting a less frequent use of learning strategies as they progress in the grade levels (Rosário et al., 2012). The authors argued that these results suggest the need to rethink the educational practices in class, for example, by modifying assessment in order to foster students' engagement in the learning process. Proposing intrinsically interesting school activities and offering students the possibility of choosing and controlling their mastery on the school tasks are important features of student engagement and academic success as the students progress in grade level (Rosário et al., 2012). Educators should target their

efforts towards the development of meaningful learning tasks (i.e., intrinsically interesting and perceived as useful) because autonomy and control of learning are important dimensions of students' task engagement. This is relevant to the current study as the researcher investigated the relationship of grade level and academic achievement.

Literature has suggested that students' goal orientations link to various motivational, affective, cognitive/behavioral, and academic outcomes (Fouladchang, Marzooghi, & Shemshiri, 2009). Therefore, investigating variables related to goal orientations may be important. Fouladchang et al. (2009) investigated the effect of gender and grade level differences on goal orientations of undergraduate students in an Iranian university. The sample consisted of 302 Iranian students at Shiraz University (64% were females; Mean age = 20.78 years, SD = 1.58) selected by random cluster sampling. They completed an achievement goal questionnaire. The results showed the effect of gender and grade level differences on undergraduates' goal orientations. The results gave support to some western findings that males have a greater performance-approach goal orientation than females. Also, upper (post-secondary) graders reported higher scores on mastery goal orientation than lower (primary/secondary) graders. There was no significant interaction effect of gender and grade level (Fouladchang et al., 2009).

Fouladchang et al. (2009) stated that grade level is a factor that may account for differences in goal orientations of students. They argued that most studies to date have focused on the effects of school context, on the academic practices of schools, on providing meaningful and interesting tasks for students, on the provision of opportunities for student choice, and decision-making and reducing emphases on social comparison and competition on students' goal orientation. However, the authors believed that

previous research has paid little attention to the effect of grade level on the students' goal orientations.

The purpose of Fouladchang et al. (2009) study was to investigate the effect of gender and grade level on goal orientations in a sample of university undergraduates in Iran. The authors postulated that their study would provide the opportunity to determine whether gender differences and grade level were related to differences in students' goal orientations across a different culture (Iran). It was hypothesized that gender and grade level would affect goal orientations of Iranian undergraduate students (Fouladchang et al., 2009). To measure goal orientation, an achievement goal questionnaire developed by Elliot & Church (1997) was used, as cited in Fouladchang et al., (2009). This scale had 18 items divided into three subscales, each containing six items: mastery (e.g., I want to learn as much as possible from this class), performance approach (e.g., It is important to me to do better than the other students), and performance avoidance (e.g., I worry about the possibility of getting a bad grade in this class) goal orientation subscales. Items scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale, with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree for each item (p. 970).

To compare male and female students on goal orientation, the researchers conducted a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). The results found for the effect of gender differences on goal orientation indicated that significant differences exist between males and females. Specifically, male students had a greater performance approach orientation than female students. Males' tendency to seek positive competency judgments when compared to females supports the Dagnew (2017) findings report that boys are more competitive than girls, so they might be more performance oriented than

girls. The results pertaining to the main and interactive effects of grade level showed that the interaction of grade level and gender was not significant. However, upper grade students had more mastery goal orientations than lower grade students. This finding indicated the effect of grade level on goal orientation. The authors suggested that a possible explanation is that post-secondary students experience a greater feeling of freedom in universities and this may lead them to adopt more mastery goal orientation. At the universities, they have some choices in selecting learning tasks, and there is no need to compete with each other. For this reason, it is possible that goal orientations of university students change as they move from primary/secondary grades to the post-secondary grade level. These findings seem to contradict the findings of Rosário, Valle, Gonzalez-Pienda, and Lourenco (2012) that stated that students' confidence in their capacity to carry out self-regulated strategies decreases as they progress from one grade level to the next. This is relevant to the current study as the researcher investigated the relationship of grade level and academic achievement.

Lau, Kitsantis, Miller, and Drogin Rodgers (2018) assessed the interrelationship of elementary students' perceived responsibility for learning, self-efficacy, and sources of self-efficacy in mathematics, and differentiation as a function of gender and grade level. Participants in this study included 442 third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students from U.S. International Baccalaureate schools. The authors utilized a Personal Data Questionnaire to examine how student's perceived responsibility, self-efficacy, and the sources of self-efficacy in school. The results showed a significant main effect for self-efficacy, with grade 5 students displaying greater levels of math self-efficacy than grade 3 students. The authors found that students who have a strong belief in his or her mathematics ability are

more likely to take personal responsibility for learning and doing homework, thus putting forth the effort to persist with challenging tasks. Further, the authors argued that these students may ultimately aspire to the study of mathematics for a career. Student perceptions of responsibility for their own learning and knowledge of mathematics increased with elementary grade level. This finding is consistent with previous research suggesting that self-regulatory functioning increases as students' progress through school and develop greater depths of knowledge (Lau et al., 2018).

Rimm-Kaufman, Baroody, Larsen, Curby, and Abry (2015) examined concurrent teacher-student interaction quality via grade level and gender. Specifically, they looked at fifth graders' (n = 387) engagement in mathematics classrooms (n = 63) and considered how teacher–student interaction quality relates to engagement differently for boys and girls in the fifth grade. Three approaches were used to measure student engagement in mathematics: Research assistants observed engaged behavior, teachers reported on students' engagement, and students completed questionnaires. Engagement data were conducted three times per year concurrent with measures of teacher-student interaction quality. Results showed small but statistically significant associations among the three methods. Results of multilevel models showed only one significant finding linking quality of teacher-student interactions to observed or teacher-reported behavioral engagement; higher classroom organization related to higher levels of observed behavioral engagement. However, the multilevel models produced a rich set of findings for student-reported engagement. Students in classrooms with higher emotional support reported higher cognitive, emotional, and social engagement. Students in classrooms higher in classroom organization reported more cognitive, emotional, and social

engagement. Interaction effects (Gender × Teacher-student interaction quality) were present for student-reported engagement outcomes but not in observed or teacher-reported engagement. Boys (but not girls) in classrooms with higher observed classroom organization reported more cognitive and emotional engagement. In classrooms with higher instructional support, boys reported higher, but girls reported lower social engagement.

According to Rimm-Kaufman et al. (2015), three main findings emerged. First, the fifth graders, on average, showed high levels of math engagement regardless of informant. The authors also stated that correlations between informants were lower than anticipated given the simultaneity of the data collection, a finding that suggests the unique vantage point of each informant. Second, the most systematic finding from the multilevel models was the link from teacher-student interaction quality to student-reported engagement. That is, students in classrooms with teachers who show warmth, caring, and individual responsiveness to their students reported working hard, enjoying learning about math, and sharing ideas and materials with other students in their classroom. Similarly, students in classrooms with teachers who used proactive approaches to behavior management, facilitated smooth transitions between activities, and made learning objectives clear prior to learning also reported feeling greater cognitive, emotional, and social engagement in their math learning. This supports Peters (2009), who noted that a mutual relationship of respect, warmth, and trust correlated with students taking more responsibility for their learning. This also reinforces the importance of perceptions, not only of the teacher to her students but also of the students to their teacher.

Third, results showed higher engagement for 5th grade girls than boys on three of the five engagement measures. Boys' report of their cognitive and emotional engagement was more closely coupled to the classroom conditions (emotional and organizational support) than girls. An unexpected finding was that boys reported higher social engagement, but girls reported lower social engagement in the presence of higher instructional support. This supports Gogoi (2014), who concluded that the basis of gender differences in academic achievement motivation may be rooted in perception of self-competence, ability, and environmental motivational factors. This may have implications for the current study where the researcher examined whether gender is an influential factor on student academic achievement and on teacher perceptions of students.

Relationship to student gender. Recent decades have been marked by an extensive movement to analyze bias in people's thinking, especially in gender-related issues. Studies have addressed the question of gender bias in classrooms on different levels—the use of gender in books, learning opportunities determined by students' gender, or teachers' gender preferences. When it comes to the subject of gender, many researchers have aimed to understand gender roles and responsibilities and the expectations of males and females in societies, cultures, and households. Specifically, researchers have considered aptitudes, characteristics, and behavior associated with gender.

Buğdayci (2019) examined the personal and social responsibility levels of secondary school students. Specifically, they looked at 602 (285 females, 317 males) students who were studying at the state schools under the Directorate of National

Education in Konya Province. Utilizing the Personal and Social Responsibility Questionnaire (PSRQ), it was determined that female students had higher personal and social responsibility levels in an academic setting. The questionnaire results determined that that female students were more empathetic, sensitive, passive, malleable, helpful to others, and able to establish intimate relations in an academic setting, compared to the male students; while it is reported that the male students were more dominant, less responsible, less expressive about their feelings, more aggressive, and more brash compared to the female students (Buğdayci, 2019).

Lau et al. (2018) assessed the interrelationship of elementary students' perceived responsibility for learning, self-efficacy, and sources of self-efficacy in mathematics, and differentiation as a function of gender and grade level. Participants in this study included 442 third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students from U.S. International Baccalaureate schools. The authors utilized a Personal Data Questionnaire to examine how student's perceived responsibility, self-efficacy, and the sources of self-efficacy in school. The results showed that female students displayed greater self-regulation than do males: females tended to employ goal-setting, environmental structuring, self-monitoring, record keeping, and help seeking more often than male students. Also, female students exhibited greater motivation and ability to regulate their behaviors than male students (Lau et al., 2018).

According to Gogoi (2014), gender roles and expectations are all learned and not biologically predetermined. Gogoi's study focused on the relationships that exist among academic achievement motivation with three relevant factors: gender, socio-economic status, and family relationship pattern. The study was carried out on 100 randomly

sampled high school students (boys = 50; girls = 50; p. 127). Gogoi's study employed the Academic Achievement Motivation Test. This test was developed by Dr. T. R. Sharma and utilized to assess the samples' motivation in the field of academic achievement. The test employed the indirect technique of self-rating to assess students' level of achievement motivation. It was comprised of 38 items where the test taker had to make a choice between two alternatives given in the form of statements for each item. The scores ranged from 0 to 38. Accordingly, students were classified as "High Academic Motivated, Average Academic Motivated and Low Academic Motivated" (Gogoi, 2014, p. 128).

Specifically, with regard to gender and education, Gogoi (2014) referred to findings in the literature that indicated that boys and men are more confident about mathematics, science, and technology than girls and women (Gogoi, 2014). Boys are found to be more self-congratulatory, whereas girls are more modest as success has traditionally been seen as a masculine imperative in many societies. The author argued that gender roles and expectations are all learned and not biologically predetermined. They vary among societies and among cultures. The attempt at gender equality focuses on gender development where both man and woman can actively participate, make decisions, and gain from the outcomes (Gogoi, 2014). Gogoi (2014) concluded that when the similarities and differences among boys and girls are equally valued by societies and are considered equal partners at home and work, the foundations for gender equality will be laid. This can potentially lend more time to focus on self-management and increased self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy is not markedly different among girls and boys until about middle school, where Gogoi (2014) argued that girls exhibit a lower self-efficacy than boys. It is important to explore ways in which we can work towards boosting confidence in both male and female students throughout all subject areas and maintain said confidence throughout the entirety of their academic careers, as these lessons might translate into other areas of life besides academics.

Gogoi (2014) concluded that the basis of gender differences in academic achievement motivation may be rooted in perception of self-competence, ability, and environmental motivational factors that keep changing from the elementary school to the higher classes especially for girls as success is still perceived as a male essential. Thus, the findings of the study allowed the author to reject her first null hypothesis and state that academic achievement motivation varies in girls and boys. This is relevant to the current study because Gogoi's findings indicated that through acceptance and self-regulation and by providing opportunities of learning, this motivation can be imbibed in students irrespective of their gender. This may have implications for the current study where the researcher examined whether gender is an influential factor on student academic achievement and on teacher perceptions of students.

Gender role stereotypes remain strong influences in society, schools, and daily life in classrooms. A major challenge for educators is to establish classroom environments that do not favor one group of students to the detriment of another group and recognize that gender role stereotypes remain a major influence on schools' organization, teachers' practices, and students' attitudes and behaviors. Hand, Rice, and Greenlee (2017) examined potential gender biases in high school teachers and students in

two ways: by asking teachers and students to attribute masculine and feminine traits to the typical scientist or humanities professional, and by inquiring about the academic performance assumed of boys and girls. In addition, students were surveyed about their own self-efficacy in math and science courses and gender-balanced teaching initiatives present in the classroom. Results showed that teachers and students exhibited subtle bias by attributing more masculine characteristics to a scientist and feminine characteristics to the humanities. Teachers and students also reported their belief that boys tend to perform better than girls in STEM disciplines. Hand, et al. (2017) results supported previous literature examining self-efficacy discrepancies for girls in math and science classes and indicated a lack of gender-balanced teaching initiatives in math and science classes. These results have broad implications for the lack of women in STEM disciplines.

Dagnew (2017) defined gender role stereotyping as the expectation of a person to enact a series of norms or behaviors based upon his or her sex (Dagnew, 2107). He further argued that certain types of behaviors are categorized as masculine or feminine. However, gender as a continuum is social and relational rather than categorical. In other words, gender only exists as a comparative quality (i.e., if people are "less masculine" than others, they are also "more feminine" than those same others, even if their biological sex is the same). Thus, gender role stereotyping occurs when individuals are expected to enact certain practices or behaviors because of their gender (Dagnew, 2017 p. 159).

According to Dagnew (2017), gender role stereotypes influence classroom interactions between teachers and students. First, students who dominate the classroom, answering and asking most of the questions and using the available resources, are called target students. Regardless of the schooling level, the author stated that target students

are typically males. Teachers predominantly ask male students more and harder questions than any other group of students because these students are viewed as inherently smart. If a target student fails to answer a question, teachers will often reconstruct the question, breaking a difficult question into a series of simpler questions to attain the answer. If other students are unable to answer a question, teachers typically move on, usually to a target student (Dagnew, 2017). Overall, boys are more likely than girls to answer teachers' questions. Often, they call out answers, a risk-taking behavior expected of males, and seek the teacher's attention. In contrast, girls are more likely to receive criticism rather than praise for such risk-taking behavior. Teachers reward girls for being compliant, quiet, and helpful, which are stereotypical feminized behaviors, according to the author (Dagnew, 2017).

Dagnew (2017) aimed at finding a relationship between student sex role stereotypical beliefs, self-efficacy, academic engagement, and academic achievement. Moreover, he attempted to examine the predictive effects of sex role stereotypical belief, self-efficacy, and academic engagement on academic achievement of Tana Hiq Secondary high school students. The study was correlational in design, focusing on 9th- and 10th-grade students of Tana Hiq secondary school in the 2016 academic school year. A questionnaire was used to collect data from the participants of the study regarding their stereotypical beliefs, self-efficacy, and academic engagement. The author used t-tests, Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient, and a multiple regression analysis to interpret his data (Dagnew, 2017).

Dagnew (2017) indicated that with the reduction of sex role stereotypes, students' self-efficacy increased overall. With that, student self-efficacy, academic engagement,

and academic achievement showed to have positive relationships. Hence, the author recommended that the school community, in recognizing this, should support the students to further develop appropriate levels of academic efficacy and academic engagement to promote students' academic performance (Dagnew, 2017). A key factor in making this happen is the reduction, and even elimination of sex role stereotypes. This is relevant to the current study because the findings indicated that gender may influence teacher perceptions, classroom performance, and academic achievement.

Relationship to teacher gender. Duffy, Kelly, and Walsh (2001) conducted an observational study investigating the effects of gender of teacher, gender of student, and classroom subject (mathematics vs. English literature/language) on teacher–student interactions. According to the authors, little research has been done on the effects of gender of teacher on interaction patterns, yet differences have been found in the classroom interactions of male teachers compared with female teachers (Duffy et al., 2001). The authors state that in Greece, female elementary school teachers were found to be more sensitive and to give more warning to students about behavioral problems than male elementary school teachers; where American male and female elementary school teachers tend to show classroom interaction patterns with students that differ in quality, rather than quantity (Duffy et al., 2001).

Duffy et al. (2001) found a tendency of teachers to interact more with male students than with female students. Teacher were also more likely to comment on male student classroom responses than female student classroom responses. Teachers were also more likely to criticize the conduct of male students. However, the authors found

these interactions to depend on the sex of the teacher and the academic subject being taught.

Krkovic, Greiff, Kupiainen, Vainikainen, and Hautamaki (2014) examined whether and under which circumstances the interaction between teacher gender and student gender positively or negatively influences teachers' evaluations of students' performance, while controlling for objective measures of students' performance. For instance, it could be possible that a teacher with the same gender as a student evaluates the student as better than opposite-gender students, independent of their objective performance. The sample consisted of n > 1,500 Finnish 6th grade students (*M*age= 12.67) and their respective class teachers. Students completed several academic skills tests, including a mathematical thinking test, reading comprehension test, and scientific reasoning test. Furthermore, teachers provided their evaluation of each student, evaluating students' performance in different school subjects and answering questions regarding their probability of academic success. To test whether the teacher-student gender interaction had an effect on the criterion variable, (i.e. teachers' evaluation of the students' performance), multilevel analyses accounting for between- and within-class effects were applied. Thereby, the effect of students' objective performance on teachers' evaluation of the students and main effects of gender were controlled for as covariates.

Krkovic et al. (2014) found the main results indicated that the interaction between student and teacher gender did not influence teachers' evaluation of the students. However, regardless of their gender, teachers tended to evaluate girls as better than boys in first language performance (i.e. Finnish language) and potential for success in school. Teacher gender did not influence the evaluation. The results of the study suggest that the

interaction between teacher and student gender is unlikely to be a source of possible bias in the evaluations of students in the Finnish educational system.

Mullola et al. (2011) examined the effect of teacher's and student's gender and teacher's age on teacher-perceived temperament, education competence, and teachability, and whether there is significant same gender or different gender association between teachers and students in this relationship. The participants were a population-based sample of 3,212 Finnish adolescents (M= 15.1 years) and 221 subject teachers. Temperament was assessed with Temperament Assessment Battery for Children - Revised and Revised Dimensions of Temperament Survey batteries and EC with three subscales covering Cognitive ability, Motivation, and Maturity. Data were analyzed with multi-level modelling (Mullola et al., 2011).

Mullola et al. (2011) found that teachers perceived boys' temperament and educational competence more negatively than girls' temperament. However, the differences between boys and girls were not as large when perceived by male teachers, as they were when perceived by female teachers. Male teachers perceived boys more positively and more capable in educational competency and teachability than female teachers did. Male teachers were also stricter regarding their perceptions of girls' traits. With increasing age, male teachers perceived boys' inhibition as higher and mood lower. According to the authors, generally, the older the teacher, the more mature he/she perceived the student (Mullola et al., 2011). Teachers' ratings varied systematically by their gender and age, and by students' gender. These factors may have an effect on teacher expectations and perceptions and could potentially affect student academic achievement.

Wood (2012) examined teacher perceptions of gender-based differences among elementary school teachers. The author utilized an online survey, issued to 215 teacher-respondents to collect data. The quantitative analysis revealed no statistically significant differences; however, the qualitative analysis showed that there were more negative responses to survey statements pertaining to male teachers. More than half of the participants perceived differences between female and male elementary teachers, including beliefs that female teachers are more nurturing to students, despite the fact that some of these traits might be perceived negatively (such as being too nurturing or too sensitive). Other data indicated that male teachers are more laid back, but that male teachers are more dominant and commanding with students (Wood, 2012).

Wood argued that perceived differences between female and male teachers were especially apparent when it came to their ability to serve as role models and the jobs they are expected to fill in the elementary setting. Nearly every respondent indicated that more males were needed in elementary education (Wood, 2012). This finding supports existing literature that suggests that a significant reason for needing more male elementary teachers is so that they can serve as role models for students, especially for those students who lack male figures at home or outside of school. Survey responses were contradictory to the literature, considering that teacher-respondents perceived male teachers more negatively than their female colleagues, both generally, and more specifically, with regard to their functioning as role models for their students.

Hopf and Hatzichristou (1999) examined gender-related differences in Greek classrooms focusing on teacher gender. It was assumed that teacher-student interaction patterns would be influenced by teacher gender not so much as a main effect but as

interaction effects involving variables such as student gender, student achievement, grade, and teacher specialization (Hopf & Hatzichristou, 1999). According to the authors, the samples consisted of 1041 elementary school (mean age = 11.4 years) and 862 secondary school (mean age = 14.3 years) students in public schools in Greece. A multi-informant and multi-perspective approach to academic and psychosocial competence was used, involving teacher, peer, and self-ratings. Achievement data were also obtained (Hopf & Hatzichristou, 1999). Several significant teacher gender differences were found in teachers' assessment of students' competence at both age groups. Furthermore, various domains of children's self-concept were found to be different in classes of female and male teachers.

Hopf and Hatzichristou (1999) found several significant differences in the teachers' perspectives based on teacher gender. Female teachers evaluated children's adjustment as less problematic regarding various aspects of their academic and psychosocial functioning (with the exception of children with achievement and peer relationship problems). There was no differentiation between male and female teachers' evaluation of girls' interpersonal behavior, while female teachers evaluated more positively boys' interpersonal behavior as compared to their male teacher colleagues. The authors argued that female educators tend to be more gender-stereotypic in their attitudes and expectations of children's behavior and tend to adopt more the stereotypic role of females, thus being caring, supportive and maternal figures and more accepting of children's misbehavior (Hopf & Hatzichristou, 1999). The authors added that due to the greater gender-role differentiation of the Greek society as compared to other countries, strong gender-related differences were found in every aspect of children's functioning in

schools. This is relevant to the current study as the researcher examined, in part, if teacher gender influences teachers' expectations and subsequently, teacher perceptions of their students.

Klassen and Chiu (2010) examined the relationships among teachers' years of experience, teacher characteristics (gender and teaching level), three domains of self-efficacy (instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement), two types of job stress (workload and classroom stress), and job satisfaction with a sample of 1,430 practicing teachers using factor analysis, item response modeling, systems of equations, and a structural equation model. Regarding teacher-gender, the authors found that female teachers had greater workload stress, greater classroom stress from student behaviors, and lower classroom management self-efficacy, resulting in negatively perceived student engagement. Whereas, male teachers, though perceived as stricter in their classroom management approach, had less stress from student behaviors, as these behaviors were identified by the male teachers as less serious or problematic.

Relationship to number of years of teaching experience. Podolsky, Kini, and Darling-Hammond (2019) examined relevant research to determine whether teachers, on average improve their effectiveness as they gain experience in the teaching profession. Specifically, they examined 30 studies that analyzed the effect of teaching experience on student outcomes in K–12 public schools in the United States, as measured by student standardized test scores and non-test metrics. The data showed that teaching experience is positively associated with student achievement gains throughout a teacher's career. The gains from experience are highest in teachers' initial years but continue for teachers in the second and often third decades of their careers. The authors noted that as teachers gain

experience, their students are also more likely to do better on other measures of success beyond test scores, such as school attendance **(**Podolsky et al.**,** 2019).

Though no specific mention of teacher perceptions appears in Podolsky et al. (2019) study, the authors stated that they controlled for a variety of characteristics, including student race, student gender, student grade level, student eligibility for free and reduced-price lunch, and prior year achievement. Some of these variables were examined in the current study. Therefore, isolating and examining the role of each variable, specifically in this case -within the context of teaching experience, where the authors found that increased teaching experience had a positive relationship with student academic success, is relevant to the current study.

Ekici (2013) examined the responsibility perceptions of new teacher candidates for learner achievement. A total of 337 teacher candidates participated in the study. The research data were gathered with the scale of teachers' responsibility perception of student achievement, the scale of teacher sense of efficacy, the scale of attitudes toward the teaching profession, and the scale of academic self-efficacy. To analyze the data, descriptive statistics, a one-way variance of analysis (ANOVA), a t-test for independent groups, a Pearson Correlation Coefficient, and Tukey HSD test to define the source of variation were used with the SPSS-15 package program.

At the end of the study, responsibility perception scores of the new teacher candidates in student success were found to be higher than responsibility perceptions of student failure. Therefore, newer teachers saw themselves as more responsible for the successes of their students and less so for the students' failures. Moreover, teacher efficacy perception had a significant relationship to newer teachers' in-class strategies,

planning, instruction, and motivation. Statistically significant relationships were found among new teacher candidates' responsibility perceptions of student success and academic self-efficacy perceptions, of attitudes towards the teaching profession, classrooms, and of overall academic success levels. Ekici (2013) argued that the teacher plays a major role in the success and failure of a student, especially in terms of the teacher's qualifications and ability to motivate his students.

It was determined that there is a significant relationship between new teacher candidates' responsibility perception for student success as $p < 0.05$ and $r = .125$. Ekici (2013), therefore, believed that teachers should continually self-evaluate or assess in order to provide significant data when encountered with new and emerging issues with student success rates. In this respect, the author argued that teachers can remain on-going contributors in the measurement of students' academic successes or failures throughout their careers (if they choose to) (Ekici, 2013).

Ekici (2013) found that newer teachers perceived themselves as more responsible for student success. This may indicate that any change in their perceptions of their own responsibility could potentially affect their perceptions of student acceptance of responsibility at school. If teachers perceive themselves as less responsible (with more years of experience) for student academic success, it is possible that they may see students as more responsible for their own academic success. This potential relationship is relevant to the current study as the researcher examined if number of years of teaching experience is an influence on teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school. The researcher also considered that a teacher's perceived

responsibility for student academic success may not decrease with years of teaching experience.

Unal and Unal (2012) examined whether years of experience affect teachers' classroom and instructional management approaches. Data were collected from 268 primary school teachers. The findings of their investigation demonstrated that experienced teachers are more likely to prefer to be in control in their classrooms than beginning teachers while interacting with students when making decisions (Unal & Unal, 2012). The authors stated that while investigating previous studies, researchers were able to discover that there is a certain path that teachers follow through their career. While newer teachers prefer non-interventionism (minimum teacher control), they support interactionism (shared control) during internship and early career years, and finally they prefer to choose complete teacher control when they become experienced teachers (Unal & Unal, 2012).

The participants of this study were 268 elementary school teachers (74.4% female and 26.4% male). The age distribution of the participants was 22 - 49 (with the average 35.5). Driven by the interval data, participants were grouped into five based on their years of teaching experience (Group 1: 0-5 years of experience, Group 2: 6-10, Group 3: 11-15, Group 4: 16-20, Group 5: 21 or more) (Unal & Unal, 2012). Using the Behavior and Instructional Management Scale (BIMS), the authors investigated the differences in attitudes toward classroom and instructional management between beginning and experienced teachers, and male and female teachers.

The results indicated that teachers with a higher number of years of teaching experience are found to be in favor of maximum teacher control (interventionism) more

than that of teachers with less years of teaching experience. As teachers became more experienced, they became more controlling on both behavior and instructional management (Unal & Unal, 2012). The results of this study show that even though most beginning teachers seem to favor one classroom management approach (noninterventionism-student oriented), they tend to choose the opposite way as they gain experience (interventionism - teacher controlled).

According to Unal and Unal (2012), their results also indicated that overall, there were no significant differences between male and female teachers on their classroom management beliefs on the behavior and management scale. When considering the results of Unal and Unal's (2012) study, the researcher also considered if level of teacher control has a relationship with teachers' perceptions of their students. The total results of the study are relevant to the current study as the researcher examined teacher gender as a possible influence on teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school, as well as number of years of teaching experience as a possible influence on teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school.

Relationship to having access to adequate resources to support students. For teachers, the work environment is determined in part by the educational challenges associated with the economic and demographic mix of students in the school– characteristics of schools that are typically easy for a researcher to measure. In addition, their work environment includes a number of harder-to-measure factors such as the quality of the school's leadership and the extent to which teachers are given the leeway to

make decisions, are supported in their efforts to improve student learning, or have opportunities to develop professionally through resources and supports (Ladd, 2009).

Timperley and Phillips (2003) examined the ways in which teachers' perceptions and expectations of student achievement in two low-income communities changed over the course of 6 months' professional development in literacy, and how well those changed expectations were sustained over the following year. Pre- and post-course questionnaires and follow-up interviews ascertained changes in teachers' perceptions and expectations.

The participants were 31 literacy leaders and teachers from eight schools who took part in the professional development in literacy and completed both pre- and post-course questionnaires. All of the participants taught Year 1 students or, in the case of the literacy leaders, were responsible for overseeing these children's reading programs. Twenty-six of the teachers agreed to participate in follow-up interviews (Timperley & Phillips, 2003). The authors found that the professional development opportunity and its supplemental resources provided a set of conditions that led most of the teachers to change their expectations of how well children from low-income communities could achieve. They also found that these expectations were sustained over the following year. The conditions required to achieve these changes in most of the participants' expectations involved a complex interplay of new knowledge in the form of redefining the reading task and how to teach it, unanticipated changes in the children's achievement and teachers' feelings of self-efficacy in believing that they could make a difference if afforded the necessary resources and support (Timperley & Phillips, 2003).

Barbarin and Aikens (2015) argued that better academic outcomes, particularly literacy and language skills, occur in classrooms that have teachers with high expectations of students and adequate preparation to teach with rich learning materials (Barbarin & Aikens, 2015). According to the authors, classrooms serving low-SES communities, lacking resources and support, often fail to nurture higher order thinking skills; focus on basic instead of advanced competencies; are less varied and extensive in topical range; are more repetitive and fragmented from wider bodies of meaning; overly emphasize discipline and control of interactions and learning tasks; and focus on seat work and worksheet activities (Barbarin & Aikens, 2105).

Teachers are often viewed as the most important contributors to students' achievement because they have direct interaction with students themselves and a direct role in their learning process. Despite the perception that teachers exert a large influence on student learning, data from studies on the effects of teacher perceptions on their students' decision-making is lacking. According to Barbarin and Aikens (2015), very little of this work has focused on the reading achievement of children within the first 2 years of formal schooling. Nevertheless, several studies have shown that low-income students are often cut off from access to highly experienced and mature teachers who may be better prepared to help them overcome academic difficulties. The authors argued that compared to affluent children, teachers of low-income children are likely to be novice, have little or no preparation to teach, be without an advanced degree or a full authorization to teach in their subject area, and have lower expectations of their students' abilities (Barbarin & Aikens, 2015).

Also important is teacher conviction that their students can learn. Indeed, such conviction serves as a leading indicator of motivation and of a teacher's willingness to persist to devote himself/herself to students who seem unresponsive, make limited progress toward academic goals, and show limited promise of meeting rigorous academic standards. Teacher perceptions and expectations of their students may be affected by the resources available to them and the potential outcomes from using said resources (Barbarin & Aiken, 2015). Often, children for whom teachers hold higher expectations are held to stricter standards, called upon more, and more often pressed for answers. The authors contend that more research is needed on the links between teacher expectations and children's learning outcomes within the first 2 years of schooling (Barbarin & Aiken, 2015).

The researcher has seen repeatedly throughout the literature that a student's relationship with his or her teacher and school is one of the more powerful connections that youth may experience during their education. Peters (2009) discussed a seventh-grade science teacher whose beliefs, access to resources and supports, planning decisions, implementation, and student reactions to her student-centered methods were examined over a 4-week unit on genetics (Peters, 2009). The teacher designed a learning environment where students from Grades 6 to 8 in a metropolitan area located in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States were expected to take responsibility for research via a student-centered approach. The teacher's role in student-centered classrooms lies more in the setup of the learning environment than in the direct delivery of information. The role of the student in a student-centered classroom is an active knowledge seeker. The author noted that the teacher realized that she needed to show the students from the

beginning how to take on more responsibility. She deliberately withdrew her authority over the content to show students that they were capable of taking on the role of active learners (Peters, 2009).

When the students from Peters' (2009) study reported about their prior classes that were based on lecture and note taking, they expressed that they valued the knowledge only for a short period of time, usually until the test was administered. A student described the lack of meaning in teacher-centered science classes, ''I don't like that you memorize your notes and you take the test and then it is over, you don't need to know it anymore''(p. 338). When students saw the source of information entirely from an authority figure, such as the teacher, they failed to see how it related to them and why they should engage with the material other than to be successful on a test. As students discussed an activity that took place in the seventh-grade science teacher's class, the students described that the learning that took place was meaningful to them. One student mentioned, ''I think the trial will stay in my head for a really long time. It was really interesting to me'' (p. 338). When it was essential for students to make their own meaning in order to complete the activity, students developed more detailed cognitive structures about the content and were more likely to commit the content to long-term memory (Peters, 2009).

Peters (2009) noted that the perceptions held by the teacher that her students were capable of taking on the responsibility for their own learning not only strengthened their teacher-student relationship but also added value to the knowledge the students retained. Likewise, the students' perceptions of their teacher shifted toward respect and cooperation. The author found that students discovered that the quality of their

knowledge was strengthened by presenting information to their peers for review. Peer review of work seemed to encourage the students to accept student-centered means as a suitable method for learning. This is supported by students' comments regarding the high value that they placed on knowledge in the student-centered setting and the low value of knowledge that they placed on the teacher-centered setting where knowledge was only retained for the test and forgotten after that. Taking responsibility for their own learning seemed to be correlated to student respect for evidence (Peters, 2009).

The opportunity and support afforded to the seventh-grade teacher in Peters (2009) to initiate student-centered methods of instruction, positively impacted not only the teacher's perceptions of her students, but the students' perceptions of their teacher. Both teacher and students were observed to be enthusiastic and encouraged from the new process. This is relevant to the current study, as the researcher examined teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and how these perceptions may be influenced by access to adequate resources to support students.

A unified lens for exploring context. Together, the theory of planned behavior and attribution theory provide a practical lens for exploring teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and factors that may influence those perceptions. Given the extensive documentation on the importance of teacher perceptions, it is surprising how little attention has been given to the ways in which these perceptions are influenced and the if these perceptions, in turn, influence student decision-making at school. This is not to say there is an absence of literature on the need to examine teacher perceptions. However, there appears to be a lack of research on a potential cyclic causality wherein student decision-making in an academic setting may

form teacher expectations and subsequent perceptions that impact the future decision-making of the student.

The theory of reasoned action is the foundation from which the theory of planned behavior was built. It is based on the proposition that an individual's behavior is determined by the individual's behavioral intention to perform that behavior, which provides the most accurate prediction of behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Behavioral intention is a function of two factors: one's attitude toward the behavior (personal) and subjective norms (social). Ajzen (1985) extended the theory of reasoned action by including another construct, perceived behavior control (PBC), to predict behavioral intentions and behavior. The extended model is the theory of planned behavior.

Perceived behavioral control refers to people's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behavior of interest (Ajzen, 1991). If behavior is not under complete volitional control, the performers need to have the requisite resources and opportunities in order to perform the behavior. The perception of whether they have the resources will affect their intention to perform the behavior as well as the successful performance of the behavior. Educators have long been concerned with conclusive elements that influence student achievement. In academic settings, children's attributions for success and failure affect expectations for their own success as well as performance on academic tasks (Dweck & Repucci, 1973).

Weiner (1980) states: "Causal attributions determine affective reactions to success and failure. For example, one is not likely to experience pride in success, or feelings of competence, when receiving an 'A' from a teacher who gives only that grade, or when defeating a tennis player who always loses…On the other hand, an 'A' from a teacher

who gives few high grades or a victory over a highly rated tennis player following a great deal of practice generates great positive affect." (p.362). Students with higher ratings of self-esteem and with higher school achievement tend to attribute success to internal, stable, uncontrollable factors such as ability, while they contribute failure to either internal, unstable, controllable factors such as effort, or external, uncontrollable factors such as task difficulty (Weiner, 1980). Edwards (2000) argued that a decrease in academic competence may intrinsically shape the student's attitude toward specific responsible behaviors in school, as well as his/her perceived ability or even need to perform said behavior, ultimately affecting his/her decision to behave responsibly (i.e. study, complete assignments, etc.)

For example, students who experience repeated failures in reading are likely to see themselves as being less competent in reading. This self-perception of reading ability reflects itself in students' expectations of success on reading tasks and reasoning of success or failure of reading. This may affect future decisions by the student regarding reading.

Attribution theory does not only apply to students. For the purposes of the current study, attribution theory was applied to the teacher. The observance of student behavior by the teacher (i.e. repeated failure) may lead the teacher to consider antecedents of the behavior (why did the behavior occur?). The teacher may then determine causes of the behavior. This represents attribution. Attributions may then affect the teacher's subsequent behavior toward the student in terms of expectations and perceptions formed within the academic setting. These perceptions could potentially affect the future

decision-making of the student, as teacher perceptions may have a psychological impact on a student's perceived behavioral control.

Factors such as the teacher's perceptions of a student and student confidence are key to addressing various aspects of student learning (Miller, Jr. et al., 2013). It is this relationship between teacher and student that affords the teacher a unique vantage point in observing his/her students' acceptance of individual responsibility at school. In many cases, a teacher spends more time observing the student than the student's own family members, as a majority of the student's day is spent in the classroom. The teacher is typically the first to observe the student's attitude toward a behavior, the influence of a student's peers on his/her decision-making, and other contributing factors, such as a student's perception of his/her own ability to perform said behavior. Then ultimately, the teacher is the first to witness the student's decision. However, the current study also considered that other contributing factors may include the perceptions of the teacher and the psychological affects these perceptions may have on future decision-making by the student at school.

Summary

Research on student acceptance of individual responsibility is relatively limited. A summary of social-cognitive perspectives indicates that student responsibility has been conceptualized as students' internal sense of control over reinforcement in achievement settings and as students' systematic use of volitional processes to follow through on commitments to academic tasks. A summary of behavioral perspectives indicates that student responsibility has been viewed as a loose cluster of work-related and other desirable behaviors in school settings. Direct evidence from studies of student

responsibility and indirect evidence from research on related constructs have indicated that a behavioral definition of student responsibility, emphasizing students' patterns of meeting work-related expectations in school settings, is theoretically coherent and may be measured reliably. Research on how student responsibility develops has been hindered by a lack of research on how teacher perceptions of students and their subsequent expectations and treatment of students may or may not impact student responsible decision-making in an academic setting.

It is generally accepted that teacher perceptions of their students are made up of expectations based on the actions and behaviors of those students (Good & Brophy, 1997). Teachers' beliefs about students' potential academic achievement become their goals for the students and shape their daily classroom decisions and actions, including what they believe to be appropriate curricula and instructional practices. For example, planning is guided by beliefs about what students need and how they will respond if treated in particular ways, with decisions determined by how best to accomplish the expected goals for the students (Good & Brophy, 1997). When expectations are low, these decisions are likely to include non-challenging and non-academic curricula and instructional methods with teachers teaching less to the students instead of more (Delpit, 1995). Conversely, when expectations are high, teachers are more likely to assume that they can and will provide whatever programs and resources are required to meet the needs of the students to succeed (Reyes, Scribner, & Scribner, 1999). In investigating teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school, the current study examined factors that may influence teacher perceptions. These factors included: (a) student gender, (b) student grade level, (c) student socio-economic status,

(d) teacher gender, (e) number of years of teaching experience, and (f) teacher access to adequate resources to support students.

CHAPTER 3

Methods and Procedures

Introduction

The current IRB-approved study (Appendix A) was a non-experimental, correlational analysis of a phenomenon. The research methodology for the current study was a mixed method analysis using a sequential explanatory design (Creswell, 2003). The purpose of the current mixed method study was to determine whether there were statistically significant relationships between teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and (a) student gender, (b) student grade level, (c) student socio-economic status, (d) teacher gender, (e) number of years of teaching experience, and (f) teacher access to adequate resources to support students. The current study focused on a single setting selected to illustrate a potentially larger application (Creswell, 2013). Specifically, the unique vantage point of the teacher regarding student acceptance of individual responsibility at school can provide potentially significant data. The current study also examined the connection between factors which may form teachers' perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and the psychological consequences of these perceptions on students.

Quantitative Research Questions

The current study was designed to answer the following question as applied to student acceptance of individual responsibility at school:

RQ1. To what extent do differences exist in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon (a) student gender, (b) student grade level, (c) student socio-economic status, (d) teacher gender,

(e) number of years of teaching experience, and (f) teacher access to adequate resources to support students.

Qualitative Research Question

The current study was designed to answer the following question as applied to the perspectives of teacher-participants on students' role in their own academic success. Accordingly, the following research question guided the investigation:

RQ2. How do teachers perceive the students' role in their own academic success in terms of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and what factors influence these perceptions?

Mixed Method Research Question

The current study was designed to answer the following question as applied to finding a deeper understanding of how teacher-participants understood the experiences behind the statistics:

RQ3. To what extent do the qualitative results validate the quantitative findings?

Hypotheses

1. $H_{0:}$ There will be no significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon student gender.

   $H_{1:}$ There will be significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon student gender.
2. $H_{0:}$ There will be no significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon student grade level.

   $H_{1:}$ There will be significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon student grade level.

3. $H_{0:}$ There will be no significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon student socio-economic status.

   $H_{1:}$ There will be significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon student socio-economic status.

4. $H_{0:}$ There will be no significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon teacher gender.

   $H_{1:}$ There will be significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon teacher gender.

5. $H_{0:}$ There will be no significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon number of years of teaching experience.

   $H_{1:}$ There will be significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon number of years of teaching experience.

6. $H_{0:}$ There will be no significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon access to adequate resources to support students.

   $H_{1:}$ There will be significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon access to adequate resource to support

   students.

Research Design and Data Analysis

The current study was a non-experimental, correlational analysis of a phenomenon. The research methodology for the current study was a mixed method analysis using a sequential explanatory design (Creswell, 2003). The purpose of the current mixed method study was to determine whether there were statistically significant relationships between teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and (a) student gender, (b) student grade level, (c) student socio-economic status, (d) teacher gender, (e) number of years of teaching experience, and (f) teacher access to adequate resources to support students. The predominant phase that guided the current study was quantitative. However, findings from the qualitative phase were used to possibly explain and contextualize the results from the quantitative phase (Creswell, 2003).

The data were collected (in the quantitative phase) via a 15-item, 5-point Likert scale or teacher's rating scale (Appendix B). The current study was also designed to examine whether the teacher-participants' responses to a semi-structured, open-ended interview protocol (Appendix C) in the qualitative phase validate, explain or contextualize the quantitative findings from the teacher's rating scale in the quantitative phase (Creswell, 2003). The questions in the interview protocol were designed to address responsibility, student gender, student grade level, student socio-economic status, teacher gender, number of years of teaching experience, and teacher access to adequate resources to support students. Teacher-participants' responses to the interview protocol were collected and coded by categories, themes, and patterns identified for analysis and interpretation in accordance to the framework. Qualitative inquiry can inform

development or refinement of quantitative instruments or generate hypotheses in the qualitative phase for testing in the quantitative phase for future research (O'Cathain, Murphy, & Nicholl, 2010).

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the analysis of quantitative data collected for the current study. The unique vantage-point and experiences of teachers can provide useful data regarding student acceptance of individual responsibility at school. Factors that may influence teacher perceptions and teachers' definitions of responsibility and irresponsibility were examined for the current study.

It was hypothesized that teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school would have statistically significant relationships to each of the following: (a)student gender, (b) student grade level, (c) student socio-economic status, (d) teacher gender, (e) number of years of teaching experience, and (f) teacher access to adequate resources to support students. A multiple regression analysis was conducted in order to predict the value of a variable based on the value of two or more other variables. The dependent variable that was examined by the researcher in the current study was the teacher's rating scale score determined by the teacher-participants for each of their randomly selected students.

The Setting and Participants

The setting. The school was selected for the current study because its grade levels differed from those with which the researcher had experienced in his career as an educator. The researcher's career experience with secondary level education could potentially create preconceived expectations that could present limitations to the study. Also, the school was within geographical proximity to the researcher. The data collected

for the current study came from teachers regarding students in the third and fifth grades. These grades were selected because they represent key transition points in the educational process in which substantial increases in student responsibility are expected as students transition from primary to middle school (Gill, 2019). Lau et al. (2018) found the sophistication of students' self-regulatory functioning increases over broad developmental periods (i.e. – between 3rd and 5th grade) as they accumulate experience and knowledge. The school was also selected because it was generally representative of suburban educational settings in this region. Upon a detailed, written request by the researcher (Appendix D), the superintendent and principal expressed a willingness to participate (Appendix E).

The participants. The school's population represented both the primary and upper elementary/middle school levels (relevant to variable: student grade level). There were no participation criteria for the teacher-participants aside from being a third- or fifth-grade teacher in the selected school setting. Teacher-participants for the current study were volunteers recruited via an email sent by the researcher (Appendix F). Those who expressed interest in participation were given further initial details regarding the study from the researcher and then final detailed information via the teacher-participant consent form (Appendix G).

The student-data were selected via random cluster sampling, which included culturally diverse students in three third-grade classes and three fifth-grade classes (90 students in total) from a suburban elementary school located nearby a large metropolitan city in the northeast part of the United States. At no time were students participants in this study. Rather, the current study utilized data relating to students. The student data

was collected from teachers regarding a population of students representing both the primary and upper elementary/middle school grade levels. Those students were enrolled in the third- and fifth-grade classes of the selected school. The school had 457 students made up of 54% male students and 46% female students. The school had 43% of its students receiving free or reduced lunch. Enrollment by ethnicity included the following: 2.5% African American, 29.6% Hispanic or Latino American, 2% Asian or Other Pacific Islander, and 57.4% Caucasian. English Language Learners made up 10% of the population, and Students with Disabilities made up 16%. At a total of 69 students, third graders made up 15.1% of the school population. At a total of 67 students, fifth graders made up 14.66% of the school population. As previously stated, the total student population was 457 students. The total combined population for third- and fifth-grade students was 136 (See Table 1).

The population represented both the primary and upper elementary/middle school levels. According to the district website, the population was co-ed and culturally diverse. Instead of selecting the entire population of data, random cluster sampling allowed the researcher to collect data by dividing the data into small, more effective groups. This method was relevant for the purpose of the current study because it contained groups that were similar yet internally diverse. By dividing and classifying the population into groups (random cluster sampling), the researcher was afforded the ability to account for individuals relative to the larger population.

Table 1

Description of Sample and Population

Category	Number	%
Grade Level (Total School)		
3	69	15.1
5	67	14.66
Gender (Total School)		
Male	247	54
Female	210	46
Ethnicity (Total School)		
African American	11	2.5
Hispanic or Latino American	135	29.6
Asian or Other Pacific Islander	9	2
Caucasian	262	57.4
Other (Total School)		
English Language Learners	46	10
Students with Disabilities	73	16
Free or Reduced Lunch	197	43

Note: Data were taken from official school website and verified by building principal.

The current study was a correlation, n^* for Power for Pearson Correlation at an alpha level of .05. For tests of association using Pearson correlations, a moderate correlation between variables was considered meaningful. To detect a moderate correlation (r = .30), a sample of 90 analyzable student data records provided 90% power to discover that the correlation was statistically different from there being no correlation, that is that the correlation would be 0 at the 0.05 significance (Braunstein, 2007).

Another determining factor for selection was that the school had eligible data participants who were third- and fifth-grade students enrolled during the 2019–2020 school year that fit the following criteria:

1. Student data eligible for the current study were those <u>not</u> receiving special education services.

2. Student data eligible for the current study were those not in the process of evaluation for possible placement in a special education program.

Instruments

A standardized instrument such as a Likert scale, or the teacher's rating scale in the current study means that data were statistically analyzed, and results were presented in a numerical format. The advantage of this type of quantitative methodology is that it measured the reactions of a sample to a limited set of questions, thus facilitating comparison and aggregation of data. Regarding the qualitative interview protocol, in-depth, open-ended interviews elicited detailed accounts of experiences that potentially reduced the possibility of misunderstanding and increased the teacher-participants' willingness to reveal sensitive, albeit truthful information.

Quantitative Phase

Teacher's rating scale. The teacher's rating scale was developed for the purpose of ascertaining the teachers' perceptions of their randomly selected students' acceptance of individual responsibility. The researcher retained the right of final editing and approval of the instrument "teacher's rating scale" from its developer (Walsh, 1980) (Appendices H & I). The researcher chose this particular instrument because it reflected the conceptualization of the phenomenon in a manner consistent with the researcher's perspective. The teacher's rating scale is a 15-question, 5-point Likert scale based on the characteristic behaviors of responsible and irresponsible students identified by Price (1968). It was used to ascertain the teachers' perceptions of individual student's acceptance of responsibility.

The researcher also identified the definition of a responsible student (in relation to the teacher rating scale) as one who displayed good work habits, worked willingly and made good efforts toward working diligently, used time wisely, was willing to share and contribute to group work, was personally adherent to classroom rules, was helpful in classroom activities, and met established standards (Walsh, 1980). The researcher further identified the responsible student as exercising courtesy and demonstrating autonomy in decision-making. Some sample selection items included: (2) Completes assignments without help from others and (4) Has the necessary supplies for schoolwork (paper, pencil, text, etc.).

Within the same context, the researcher identified the irresponsible student as one who did not adhere to established classroom standards, made excuses or blamed others, failed to listen to or follow the directions of the teacher, and displayed disrespect to the teacher, classmates, and the classroom (Walsh, 1980). The researcher established that the irresponsible student was a distractive influence in class, hindered the learning of other students, did little to no work, and made little to no attempt to work independently. Some sample selection items included: (1) Makes excuses for not completing schoolwork and (5) Blames others for classroom disturbances or group failures.

Previously noted, students were not subjects in the current study. Since teacher-participants were asked to rate the behaviors of students (while concealing student identities) the researcher thought it best to include a parent/guardian informational letter (Appendix J) and a parent/guardian consent form (Appendix K). The six teacher-participants were asked to randomly select 15 student names from their class according to the eligibility criteria. The eligible data participants were third- and fifth-grade students

enrolled during the 2019–2020 school year that fit the stated criteria. Participating teachers were instructed to write the names of their eligible data participants on pieces of paper, put those pieces of paper in a hat, and then randomly select 15 each. Teachers were then instructed to substitute the name of their student data participant with a number (see Procedures for Collecting Data).

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, for the safety of all involved with the current study, and in accordance with emergency state mandates to social distance, all instructional, directive, consent, instrumental, and any other physical materials were exchanged remotely via email. Regarding the quantitative phase of the current study, teacher's rating scales and directives were administered to the participating teachers for completion remotely via email. Further clarification of instructions was made via telecommunication (i.e., phone, video teleconference applications). Each teacher placed the individual student's gender at the designated space at the top of each teacher's rating scale. Only the participating teachers had knowledge of each student's assigned number for name replacement. Addressing contemporary challenges associated with human research subjects, including, but not limited to personal data and privacy concerns, the researcher contends that this was the best way to enhance protections for the individual research participants (both teacher-participants and student-data records) (National Academy of Sciences, 2016).

Reliability. The developer of the teacher's rating scale submitted the teacher's rating scale in 1980 to 23 elementary school teachers enrolled in a graduate education class for review and critique (Walsh, 1980). Copies of the scales accompanied by a letter of explanation were mailed to professional personnel in Louisiana and Texas in the fields of elementary education and family life for further review and critique. Suggestions for improving the scales were made concerning use of behavioral terms and rewording of statements. The developer made revisions and submitted the scales to members of her graduate committee for further review and approval (Walsh, 1980). The researcher of the current study conducted a reliability test on the teacher's rating scale. Cronbach's alpha showed the teacher's rating scale to reach acceptable reliability, $\alpha = 0.92$. Most items appeared to be worthy of retention, resulting in a decrease in the alpha if deleted. The one exception to this was item 3, which would increase the alpha to $\alpha = 0.94$. As such, removal of this item should be considered for future research.

Qualitative Phase

The interview protocol. Glaser and Strauss (1967) as cited in Glesne (1999), and Patton (2002), stated that theory can be generated from inquiry based on interviews and data gathering in the real world rather than in the laboratory. Specifically, phenomenology was the predominant qualitative method of research in the current study. The current study was designed to understand the subjective, lived experiences and perspectives of the teacher-participants (Creswell, 2013). In interviewing teachers, insights were gained into what they perceived and experienced as it related to their own sense of individual responsibility. Teacher perceptions and factors that may influence those perceptions were examined until patterns and themes became evident (Moustakas,

1994). All teacher-participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without penalty. Teacher-participants were also informed that they could choose to not answer questions for any reason without penalty. The teacher participants were provided with the Teacher Participant Consent Form remotely, via email, which contained a thorough description of the research study. Upon the request of the researcher, permission to collect data at the chosen sample population location was granted by the district's superintendent. All local school district policies were followed to ensure safety and confidentiality of all involved throughout the current study.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, qualitative data was collected via telecommunication. At no time was a face-to-face interview conducted with any subjects. All interviews were conducted and audio recorded with consent and via a telecommunication format chosen by the individual teacher-participants. The interview protocol was semi-structured with 16 open-ended question. The researcher followed the four-phase Interview Refinement Protocol process outlined by Castillo-Montoya (2016). This included: (1) ensuring interview questions align with research questions, (2) constructing an inquiry-based conversation, (3) receiving feedback on interview protocols, and (4) piloting the interview protocol. The data collected from the interview protocol process were recorded, transcribed, and coded by themes as per coding methods described by Creswell (2003).

From a qualitative standpoint, teacher participant interviews were organized by categories, themes, and patterns identified for analysis and interpretation in accordance to the framework. This process involved several steps. The first general step was to organize

the data to be analyzed. After the interviews were transcribed, the raw data was sorted according to general ideas or broad categories. After the data were sorted, it was read to obtain a general feeling of the ideas expressed by the teacher-participant interviewees (Creswell, 2003). Next, the coding process began. For each question, the researcher searched for the ideas expressed by the teacher-participants. Then a list of topics was developed which were clustered for similarities. The clusters formed narrower categories; and, when possible, lines were drawn to connect categories that showed interrelationships. A preliminary analysis was performed with the connections. The categories were then coded and themes were identified to form the basis of the interpretations for the analysis of the data (Creswell, 2003).

Trustworthiness. The interview protocol questions aligned with the themes of the research questions. For example, "In your opinion, does student acceptance of individual responsibility at school differ for students of lower socio-economic status and higher socio-economic status? Explain." (Research Question 1). "In your opinion, does teacher gender play a role in how the teacher perceives the student? Explain." (Research Question 1). "If a student does not achieve academic success in school, what might be some influencing factors? Explain." (Research Question 2). "In your opinion, are students responsible for their own learning? Explain" (Research Question 2). These are examples of the 16 open-ended questions from the protocol. The researcher employed the process of confirmability in order to maintain objectivity. By aligning the interview protocol themes to the research questions, the researcher ensured, as far as possible, that the study's findings were the result of the experiences and ideas of the teacher-participants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher. The role of this type of

triangulation in promoting such confirmability in this context was to reduce the effect of investigator bias (Shenton, 2004).

After developing the interview protocol, the researcher submitted it for peer review and critique to his cohort colleagues in his graduate doctoral program. Suggestions for improving the interview protocol were made concerning use of vocabulary terms and rephrasing. The researcher made revisions and submitted the interview protocol back to the same doctoral cohort colleagues for further review and approval. The researcher employed the process of credibility through this debriefing process. According to Shenton (2004), the vision of the researcher may be widened as others bring to bear their experiences and perceptions. These types of collaborative sessions allow for the discussion of alternative approaches. Peer scrutiny may enable the researcher to refine his or her methods and strengthen the design (Shenton, 2004).

Procedures for Collecting Data

After obtaining IRB approval, data collection began. Data collection should begin by determining what information the researcher wants to collect. This should be followed by setting a timeframe for data collection, determining data collection methods, collecting the data, analyzing the data, and implementing the findings (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). Pertaining to the teacher's rating scale, teacher- participants were granted one week to gather, record, and return their rating scale responses remotely, via email to the researcher. The teacher's rating scale scores worked as correlated measures to shed light on the research questions, whereas the interview protocol questions aligned more directly with the research questions. Both the teacher's rating scale and interview protocol

worked together to address the research questions of the current study as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2

Correlation of Research Questions, Teacher's Rating Scale and Interview Protocol

Research Quest.	Teacher's Rating Scale Items	Interview Protocol Items
RQ1. To what extent do differences exist in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon (a) student gender, (b) student grade level, (c) student socio-economic status, (d) teacher gender, (e) number of years of teaching experience, and (f) teacher access to adequate resources to support students	1–15	1,3,4,5,8,9,10,11,12,13,15,16
RQ2. How do teachers perceive the students' role in their own academic success in terms of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and what factors influence those perceptions?	1–15	2,6,7,14
RQ3. To what extent do the qualitative results validate the quantitative findings?	1-15	1-16

Quantitative Phase

All information on individual students was kept confidential. The researcher was never privy to any of the students' names or personal information. Student identities were only known to the participating teachers and principal. Teacher-participants did not place students' names on the teacher's rating scales. Teacher-participants randomly selected 15 students from their classes and assigned a number to each student. See Table 3.

Table 3

Description of Grade/Class Student Number for Name Substitution

Grade Level	Class	Number Substitution
3	1	(1-15)
3	2	(16-30)
3	3	(31-45)
5	1	(46-60)
5	2	(61-75)
5	3	(76-90)

Indication of grade level and class number were applied in advance by the researcher atop of the teacher's rating scales**.** Assignment of the participating classes aligned with teacher-participant volunteers**.** Teacher-participants adhered to the instructions regarding random selection of their student data participants, as well as the number for name substitution process, in order to protect the identities of their students.

Regarding the teacher's rating scale, there were five possible response options for each of the provided items. These options included: ALWAYS, MOST OF THE TIME, UNSURE, SELDOM, and NEVER. A response of ALWAYS to an item was assigned a value of 5 points, while responses of MOST OF THE TIME, UNSURE, SELDOM, NEVER were assigned values of 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively. However, for items that are negatively worded (items 1, 5, 10, and 12), points were assigned in reverse. Therefore, a response to ALWAYS for a negatively worded item was assigned a value of 1 point, while responses of MOST OF THE TIME, UNSURE, SELDOM, NEVER were assigned values of 2, 3, 4, and 5, as the goal of the teacher's rating scale was to determine the teacher-participants' perceptions of individual student's acceptance of responsibility at school. Therefore, the higher the teacher's rating scale score, the higher the teacher's

perception of the individual student's acceptance of responsibility at school. Teacher-participants were not aware of or informed of the points assigned to their responses.

The item selections on the teacher's rating scale were classified as either "responsible" or "irresponsible." An example of a "responsible" item selection on the teacher's rating scale was the following: This Student: 2. Completes assignments without help from others (Walsh, 1980). Other examples can be found in Appendix B. An example of an "irresponsible" item selection on the teacher's rating scale was: This Student: 1. Makes excuses for not completing schoolwork (Walsh, 1980). Other examples can be found in Appendix B.

After requesting principal participation via recruitment email (Appendix L) and obtaining principal consent to participate in the current study (Appendix M), the teacher's rating scales were sent to the principal by the researcher remotely, via email. Teacher-participants were instructed by the researcher to provide a list of their randomly selected students' names with their corresponding number substitutions to their principal remotely, via email. The school principal had access to specific student information that teachers are not privy to. The specific information that the principal was asked to verify was student status regarding free or reduced-price lunch. The teacher's rating scale had a blank square box on the right side. The school principal was instructed by the researcher to place a check mark in the box on the teacher's rating scales of the randomly selected students who were receiving free or reduced-price lunch, after receiving the name to number substitution scale provided remotely by teacher-participants. The free or reduced-price lunch designation was used as a measure of student socio-economic status for the current study. The researcher was never privy to the names of students receiving free or

reduced-price lunch. The principal's participant consent form informed the principal that participation was voluntary and there were no consequences or penalties for withdrawal, and withdrawal from participation could occur at any time.

The teacher's rating scale consisted of 15 Likert-style statements for teacher - participants to rate their randomly selected student data participants. Their rating scores indicated how they perceived each student's acceptance of individual responsibility in school. The interview protocol consisted of 16 semi-structured, open-ended questions. The responses of the teacher-participants provided insight into what they perceive and experience as it related to the teachers' own sense of individual responsibility.

Qualitative Phase

Interviews were conducted individually and remotely via the telecommunication application of the individual teacher-participant's choosing to ensure the safety of all involved with the current study during the COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher ensured that all communication was clear prior to beginning each interview. After consent was obtained to audio record each interview, the questions were spoken in such a way as to promote thoughtful, reflective responses. Up to one hour was allotted for each interview. Each interview was conducted, recorded, and then transcribed by the researcher. Interviews were recorded using the researcher's Samsung 10s model cell phone, which required a numerical code for access. During the interviews, the researcher used the REV app on the Samsung 10s. Rev Voice Recorder is an audio recording, dictation, and transcription application. After each interview, the researcher analyzed the transcriptions, recorded insights and made connections to any emerging themes that were presented (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Teacher-participant interviewees were offered the

opportunity to read the transcriptions and check for accuracy of their responses to questions, remotely, via email. The researcher employed the process of credibility by employing member checking to ensure the teacher-participants consider that their words match what they actually intended (Shenton, 2004).

The researcher followed the four-phase Interview Refinement Protocol process outlined by Castillo-Montoya (2016). This included: (1) ensuring interview questions align with research questions, (2) constructing an inquiry-based conversation, (3) receiving feedback on interview protocols, and (4) piloting the interview protocol. The data collected from the interview protocol process was recorded transcribed, and coded by themes as per coding methods described by Saldaña (2016). From a qualitative standpoint, teacher participant interviews were organized by categories, themes, and patterns identified for analysis and interpretation in accordance to the framework.

Data Analysis Approach

Quantitative phase. To examine the research questions, a multiple linear regression was conducted to assess if the independent variables predicted the dependent variable. A multiple linear regression assesses the relationship among a set of dichotomous, or ordinal, or interval/ratio predictor variables on an interval/ratio criterion variable (Lani, 2019). In this instance, the independent variables included: (a) student gender, (b) student grade level, (c) student socio-economic status, (d) teacher gender, (e) number of years of teaching experience, and (f) teacher access to adequate resources to support students, and the dependent variable is the teacher's rating scale score.

Using SPSS (IBM Corp. Released 2013. IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 24.0. Armonk, NY: IBM Corp.), independent variables were added

simultaneously into the model and evaluated by what they add to the prediction of the dependent variable. The *F*-test was used to assess whether the set of independent variables collectively predicted the dependent variable. *R*-squared—the multiple correlation coefficient of determination—was reported and used to determine how much variance in the dependent variable can be accounted for by the set of independent variables. The *t* test was used to determine the significance of each predictor and beta coefficients were used to determine the magnitude of prediction for each independent variable. For significant predictors, every one-unit increase in the predictor, the dependent variable increased or decreased by the number of unstandardized beta coefficients (Lani, 2019).

The assumptions of multiple regression—linearity, homoscedasticity, independence, normality, outliers and multi-collinearity—were assessed. Linearity assumes a straight line relationship between the predictor variables and the criterion variable, and homoscedasticity assumes that scores are normally distributed about the regression line. Linearity and homoscedasticity were assessed by examination of a scatter plot. The absence of multi-collinearity assumes that predictor variables are not too related and were assessed using Variance Inflation Factors (VIF). VIF values over 10 will suggest the presence of multi-collinearity (Lani, 2019). Regarding linearity, homoscedasticity, independence, and outlier, the assumptions were met. Normality and multicollinearity were violated.

Qualitative phase. According to Creswell (2003), in order to make sense of the collected data, analyzing the interview responses involves a particular sequence of interpretation. First, the researcher must organize the data for analysis. This involves

transcribing the recordings and arrangement of any pertinent documentation. Second, the researcher must read all of the data to maintain an overall or general sense of what was collected. Next, the researcher must begin a detailed open coding process where the data are grouped and categorized. The researcher should use the coding process to begin to develop categories and themes. The researcher must decide how the themes will be interpreted in the qualitative narrative. Lastly, the data must be interpreted so to gain a more comprehensive understanding from the inquiries.

For the first cycle coding process, the transcriptions were coded and analyzed for themes and patterns. This process involved several steps (Creswell, 2003; Saldaña, 2016). The researcher utilized elemental (i.e. -in vivo coding), affective (i.e. -emotion coding), and exploratory (i.e. -holistic coding) methods of coding for first cycle coding. Elemental coding methods are primary approaches to qualitative data analysis with basic, but focused filters for reviewing the corpus and they build a foundation for future coding cycles (Saldaña, 2016). In vivo coding, a type of elemental coding method, is applying the words verbatim that participants use to examine the possible dimensions or ranges of descriptive categories (Saldaña, 2016). The researcher conducted this process by using single words or short descriptions to identify or summarize what was going on throughout the content of the interview. The researcher underlined and circled key words and phrases that were descriptive in nature, using different colored highlighter pens to form common categorical patterns. After a general sorting of data, the researcher reread both the transcripts and the sorted data in order to obtain a general idea or direction of the notions expressed by the teacher-participant interviewees.

Affective coding methods investigate subjective qualities of human experiences by directly acknowledging and naming those experiences. These human experiences include but are not limited to emotions, values, conflicts, and judgements (Saldaña, 2012). Emotion coding, a type of affective coding method, was used to label the feelings that participants may have experienced. Emotion codes label the emotions experienced by the participants or the emotions recalled by the participants. Saldaña (2016) stated, "Since emotions are a universal human experience, our acknowledgement of them in our research provides deep insight into the participants' perspectives, worldviews, and life conditions" (p. 86).

Exploratory coding methods are a system used to preliminarily assign codes to data prior to more refined coding systems being established. Tentative labels were used as the data was initially reviewed. These labels included social, emotional, behaviors/actions and pedagogy and were aligned with the research questions. A specific code was used for each large unit of data uncovered to capture categories that emerged from interview transcripts in a holistic approach to determining underlying themes (Saldaña, 2016). According to Saldaña (2016), holistic coding, a type of exploratory coding, is appropriate when the researcher already has a general idea of what to investigate in the data. It is preparatory groundwork for more detailed coding of the data. Holistic codes can be utilized to grasp basic themes or issues, as a whole (Saldaña, 2016).

Next, the researcher began the second cycle coding process, using pattern and focused coding. Pattern codes, according to Saldaña (2016), are "ones that identify an emergent theme, configuration, or explanation. Pattern coding will group summaries into smaller sets, themes, or constructs" (p. 152). For each question response, the researcher

identified the ideas expressed by each teacher-participant interviewee. A list of topics was developed by the researcher, clustered for similarities or patterns. The clusters formed categories whereby the researcher could connect the categories that demonstrated interrelationships. A preliminary analysis was conducted for these connections. The categories were then be focused coded. The goal in focused coding is to compare codes across participants' data to assess comparability and transferability (Saldaña, 2016). Focused coding involves searching for the most frequent codes appearing in a body of work to develop the most prominent category or categories, from which the researcher can develop overarching themes (Saldaña, 2016).

Limitations

Validity is defined as the extent to which a concept is accurately measured in a quantitative study (Heale & Twycross, 2015). For example, an instrument designed to measure one thing, but actually measures another, would not be considered valid. Likewise, reliability, or the accuracy of an instrument, should consistently have the same results if it is used in the same situation on repeated occasions (Heale & Twycross, 2015). To enhance validity and reliability in the current study, the researcher conducted a Cronbach's alpha as a measure of internal consistency and teacher's rating scale reliability (Institute for Digital Research & Education, 2019).

Likewise, in qualitative research, trustworthiness determines whether the research measures what it intended to measure, as well as the accuracy of the results (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The trustworthiness and validity of qualitative research depends on what the researcher sees and hears. Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted that credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are important in establishing

trustworthiness. One of the ways to ensure credibility is to ensure that those interviewed have the opportunity to discuss the phenomenon the researcher seeks to explore (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Teacher-participant interviewees were offered the opportunity to read the transcriptions and check for accuracy of their responses to questions, remotely, via email. Vignettes from the semi-structured interviews were used to further discuss and illustrate key themes for the current study, which also served as potential support for the results of the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). One way to establish confirmability is to ensure there is no researcher bias. It is important to interpret what the data tell the researcher in an unbiased way. Transcribing entire interviews and manually coding them assisted in ensuring a deep understanding of the interview content and participant intent. The current study utilized specific methods to enhance, as outlined by Creswell and Poth (2018). This included corroboration of evidence via clarifying researcher bias and engagement in reflexivity, (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Researcher bias and reflexivity. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), research bias occurs when the researcher has an influence on the results. This is a potential limitation of the current study. The researcher has been an educator for twenty years, thirteen of which were as an administrator of safety, security, and discipline. From this experience, the researcher may have predetermined beliefs of student responsibilities in school. In order to minimize the influence of potential selection bias, the researcher selected a sample and population that differed from what the researcher had personal experience with. In order to minimize the occurrence of outcome bias, the researcher also selected and gained approval to use an instrument for quantitative data collection, which was tested and used in previous research from a developer he has no association with.

Throughout the process of the current investigation, the researcher reflected on his own perceptions of student responsibility and considered that there are factors which may influence these perceptions.

Peer review. Peer review entails feedback or evaluation of work, instruments, methods, etc. to the researcher from people with similar competencies or experience in the field of research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). After developing the interview protocol, the researcher submitted it for peer review and critique to his cohort colleagues in his graduate doctoral program. Suggestions for improving the interview protocol were made concerning use of vocabulary terms and rephrasing. The researcher made revisions and submitted the interview protocol back to the same doctoral cohort colleagues for further review and approval. The interview questions were designed as neutral questions. According to Patton (2002), neutral questions do not lead the respondent in a direction that will bias the free expression of individual perceptions.

Sample. The chief disadvantage of using cluster sampling is the notable risk that the clusters may not be truly homogeneous among each other. This can be due to any number of possible factors. This is a notable limitation and should be considered for future research. The current study's sample size may have also contributed to possible limitations and should also be considered for future research.

Research Ethics

All teacher- participants were informed that their participation is voluntary with no consequences for withdrawal at any time. The teacher- participants were provided with the Teacher Participant Consent Form, which contains a thorough description of the research study. Upon the request of the researcher, permission to collect data at the

chosen sample population location was granted by the district's assistant superintendent. All local school district policies were followed to ensure safety and confidentiality of all involved throughout the current study.

There was no indication of pressure to participate in the email volunteer request. There was no indication of reward or punitive measure in choosing to participate or not to participate. The researcher spoke with the principal via telephone regarding the use of her school's data and teacher-participants. After the principal spoke with the school's assistant superintendent, the assistant superintendent asked for a formal and descriptive request via email. The researcher emailed a formal and descriptive letter regarding the nature and details of the study and the assistant superintendent responded by granting the researcher permission to conduct the study as requested.

Researcher Role

In quantitative research, the role of the researcher is to analyze the data with the help of statistics. Ideally, the numbers will yield an unbiased result that can be generalized to some larger population (Allen, 2017). The quantitative phase may or may not provide answers to questions about the frequency of a phenomenon, or the magnitude to which the phenomenon affects the sample population (Allen, 2017).

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary research instrument. What the researcher brings to the investigation from his/her own background and identity should be treated as his or her bias (Maxwell & Wooffitt, 2005). Since qualitative research is interpretative research, researcher biases, beliefs, and assumptions can intrude into the analysis of data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The researcher of the current study acknowledged that his work-background could influence his interpretation of data. In order to minimize any personal bias on the results of this study, member checking was utilized during the interview process to increase the credibility, validity, and transferability of the study results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). During each interview, the researcher restated and summarized information, questioning participants on the accuracy of the information. In addition, the researcher consulted his doctoral cohort colleagues throughout the evolution of the current study. Advisement from the researcher's doctoral cohort colleagues helped the researcher to focus on relevant details that participants offered, which lead the researcher to develop themes from the data. Lastly, the researcher included relevant quotes from participants to substantiate the findings of the study (Maxwell & Wooffitt, 2005).

Conclusion

The researcher described the research site in detail, including contextual data and demographics in order to convey its pertinence to the current study. The researcher detailed the rationale for participant selection and the recruiting process, as well as sample size and pertinent demographic characteristics. The researcher provided a step-by-step plan for data collection, including data collection methods and sources. For each data collection method, the researcher described the technique in detail, citing sources and the relevance of each method as it pertained to the current study. The researcher detailed the trustworthiness and reliability of instruments used to collect the data for the current study. The researcher identified the data analyses utilized for the current study, including the framework/s that informed how the researcher derived themes that emerged from the data. This included how computer-assisted quantitative data analysis (SPSS)

facilitated data analysis, as well as a detailed description of the qualitative data analysis phase: transcribing, coding, categorizing, thematizing, and applying data. Lastly, the researcher described how his role as a researcher, professional, and individual impacted the data collection and data interpretation of the current study. The researcher identified steps used to recognize and address biases related to his role. In the next chapter, data findings will be presented that address the research questions.

CHAPTER 4

Introduction

The purpose of the current mixed method study was to determine whether there were statistically significant relationships between teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and (a) student gender, (b) student grade level, (c) student socio-economic status, (d) teacher gender, (e) number of years of teaching experience, and (f) teacher access to adequate resources to support students. The focus was to understand the subjective, lived experiences and perspectives of the teacher-participants through the examination of these factors. Results were indicated for each research question. The research questions that guided the current study were:

RQ1. To what extent do differences exist in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon (a) student gender, (b) student grade level, (c) student socio-economic status, (d) teacher gender, (e) number of years of teaching experience, and (f) teacher access to adequate resources to support students?

RQ2. How do teachers perceive the students' role in their own academic success in terms of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and what factors influence these perceptions?

RQ3. To what extent do the qualitative results validate the quantitative findings?

The current mixed-method study used both quantitative and qualitative methods. The predominant phase was quantitative, and the approach was phenomenological. Patton (2002) described phenomenology in the following way:

> What these various phenomenological and phenomenographic approaches share in common is a focus on exploring how human beings make sense of the experience and transform experience into consciousness, both individually and as shared meaning. This requires methodologically, carefully, and thoroughly capturing and describing how people experience some phenomenon—how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others. To gather such data, one must undertake in-depth interviews with people who have directly experienced the phenomenon of interest; that is, they have "lived experience" as opposed to secondhand experience, (p. 104).

Upon email recruitment, six teacher-participants volunteered and were selected based on their status as being a third- or fifth-grade teacher in the selected school setting. The student-data of the current study were selected via random cluster sampling, which included culturally diverse students in three third-grade classes and three fifth-grade classes (90 student data participants in total). The teacher's rating scale was used to ascertain the teachers' perceptions of individual student's acceptance of responsibility in school. The interview protocol was used to ascertain insights into what the teacher-participants perceived and experienced as it related to their own sense of individual responsibility, as well as factors that may influence those perceptions. The specific factors examined for the current study were: (a) student gender, (b) student grade level, (c) student socio-economic status, (d) teacher gender, (e) number of years of teaching experience, and (f) teacher access to adequate resources to support students.

Quantitative Findings

Research Question 1

To what extent do differences exist in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon (a) student gender, (b) student grade level, (c) student socio-economic status, (d) teacher gender, (e) number of years of teaching experience, and (f) teacher access to adequate resources to support students?

The purpose of the teacher's rating scale was to ascertain the teacher-participants' perceptions of their randomly selected students' acceptance of individual responsibility at school. The collected data was examined to determine whether there were statistically significant relationships between teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and (a) student gender, (b) student grade level, (c) student socio-economic status, (d) teacher gender, (e) number of years of teaching experience, and (f) teacher access to adequate resources to support students.

Demographic Information of Teacher-Participants

Four of the teacher-participants were female and two were male. Male teacher 1 had 20 years of teaching experience and taught 3rd grade. Male teacher 2 had two years of teaching experience and taught 5th grade. Female teacher 1 had eight years of teaching experience and taught 3rd grade. Female teacher 2 had 13 years of teaching experience and taught 3rd grade. Female teacher 3 had 15 years of teaching experience and taught 5th grade. Female teacher 4 had four years of teaching experience and taught 5th grade. See Table 4.

Table 4

Demographics of Teacher-Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Grade	Years of Teaching Experience
Male teacher 1	M	3	20
Female teacher 1	F	3	8
Female teacher 2	F	3	13
Female teacher 3	F	5	15
Male teacher 2	M	5	2
Female teacher 4	F	5	4

Reliability

A reliability analysis was carried out on the teacher's rating scale comprising 15 items. Cronbach's alpha showed the teacher's rating scale to reach acceptable reliability, $\alpha = 0.92$. Most items appeared to be worthy of retention, resulting in a decrease in the alpha if deleted. The one exception to this was item 3, which would increase the alpha to $\alpha = 0.94$. As such, removal of this item should be considered for future research.

Assumptions

The assumptions to multiple regression were tested first. According to Keith (2014), the assumptions to this type of analysis are as follows: linearity, homoscedasticity, independence, normality, outliers, and multicollinearity.

Linearity. In order to test for linearity, the researcher generated scatterplots in SPSS. A visual inspection of the scatterplot for each independent or predictor variable (see Figures 4 – 9) would indicate if the assumption of linearity was met for each independent or predictor variable on the dependent variable. However, the current study contains 6 independent or predictor variables - five of which are categorical. When conducting a multiple regression analysis, the coding of categorical data requires the

development of dummy variables. A dummy variable is a numeric variable that represents categorical data, such as gender, race, political affiliation, etc. (Hardy, 1993). Dummy variables meet the assumption of linearity by definition, because they create two data points, and two points define a straight line. There is no such thing as a non-linear relationship for a single variable with only two values (Hardy, 1993). Dummy variables need no linearity assumptions, as they are already linear. The five categorical independent or predictor variables for which dummy coding was required for the current study were: Student Gender, coded as 0 = Female, 1 = Male, Student Grade Level, coded as 0 = 3rd grade, 1 = 5th grade, Free or Reduced Price Lunch, coded as 0 =No, 1 = Yes, Teacher Gender, coded as 0 = Female, 1 = Male, and Teacher access to adequate resources, coded as 0 = No, 1 = Yes.

Number of years of teaching experience is ordinal and measured in consecutive numbers. Linearity was violated for data from number of years of teaching experience, meaning that the data are nonlinear as determined by both visual inspection of the scatterplot and the R^2 (see Figure 9). When data is nonlinear/curvilinear it means that the ratio of change between the independent and dependent variables is not constant and that the data falls along a curve rather than a straight line (Hardy, 1993). The R^2 result for number of years of teaching experience was as follows: R^2 Linear = 0.012.

Homoscedasticity. A visual inspection of the scatterplot of standardized residual vs. standardized predicted value showed no signs of funneling, suggesting that the data met the assumptions of homoscedasticity and linearity (see Figure 10).

Independence. The Durbin-Watson statistic showed that the assumption of independent errors has been met (Durbin-Watson value = 2.156).

Normality. Normality was tested by visual inspection of a histogram and analysis of the Shapiro-Wilk Test on the dependent variable (Teacher's Rating Scale Scores). The results from the Shapiro-Wilk Test indicated a violation (Shapiro-Wilk = .000). See Figure 11 to view the histogram. The visual inspection of the histogram appeared to meet the normality assumption, as the data contained approximately normally distributed errors, as did the normal P-P plot of standardized residuals (see Figure 12), which showed points that were not completely on the line, but close. Only extreme deviations from normality are likely to have a significant impact on the findings. The researcher continued to interpret the statistics.

Outliers. The assumption has been met that there are no influential cases biasing the model. Cook's Distance values were all under 1, suggesting individual cases were not unduly influencing the model.

Multicollinearity. Analysis of collinearity statistics show this assumption has been violated. Even though VIF scores were well below 10, tolerance scores were not all above 0.2 (Student Grade level = .168, Number of years teaching experience = .174) (see Table 4). Likewise, these same variables correlated with each other at .901.

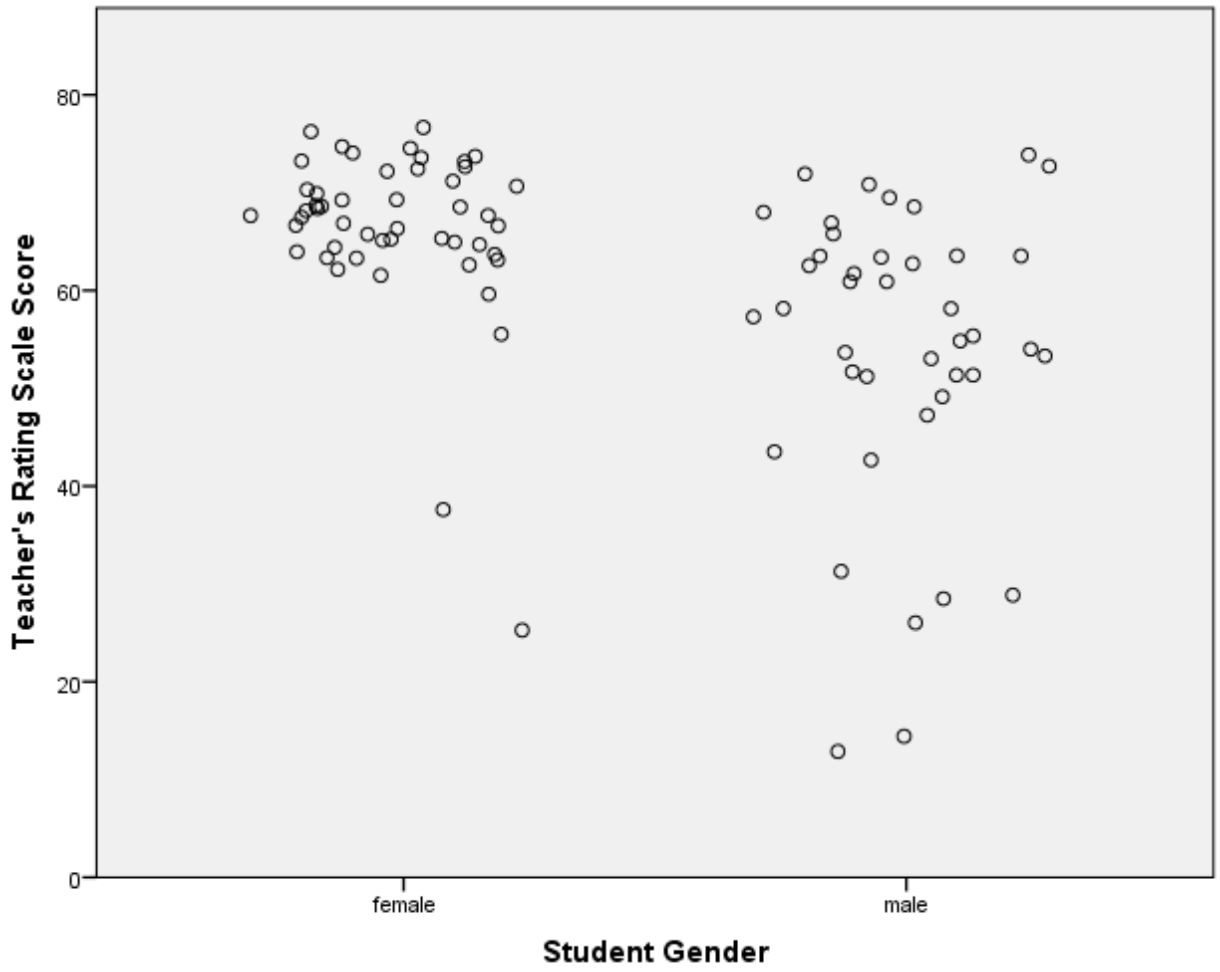

Figure 4. Scatterplot of Teacher's Rating Scale versus Student Gender.

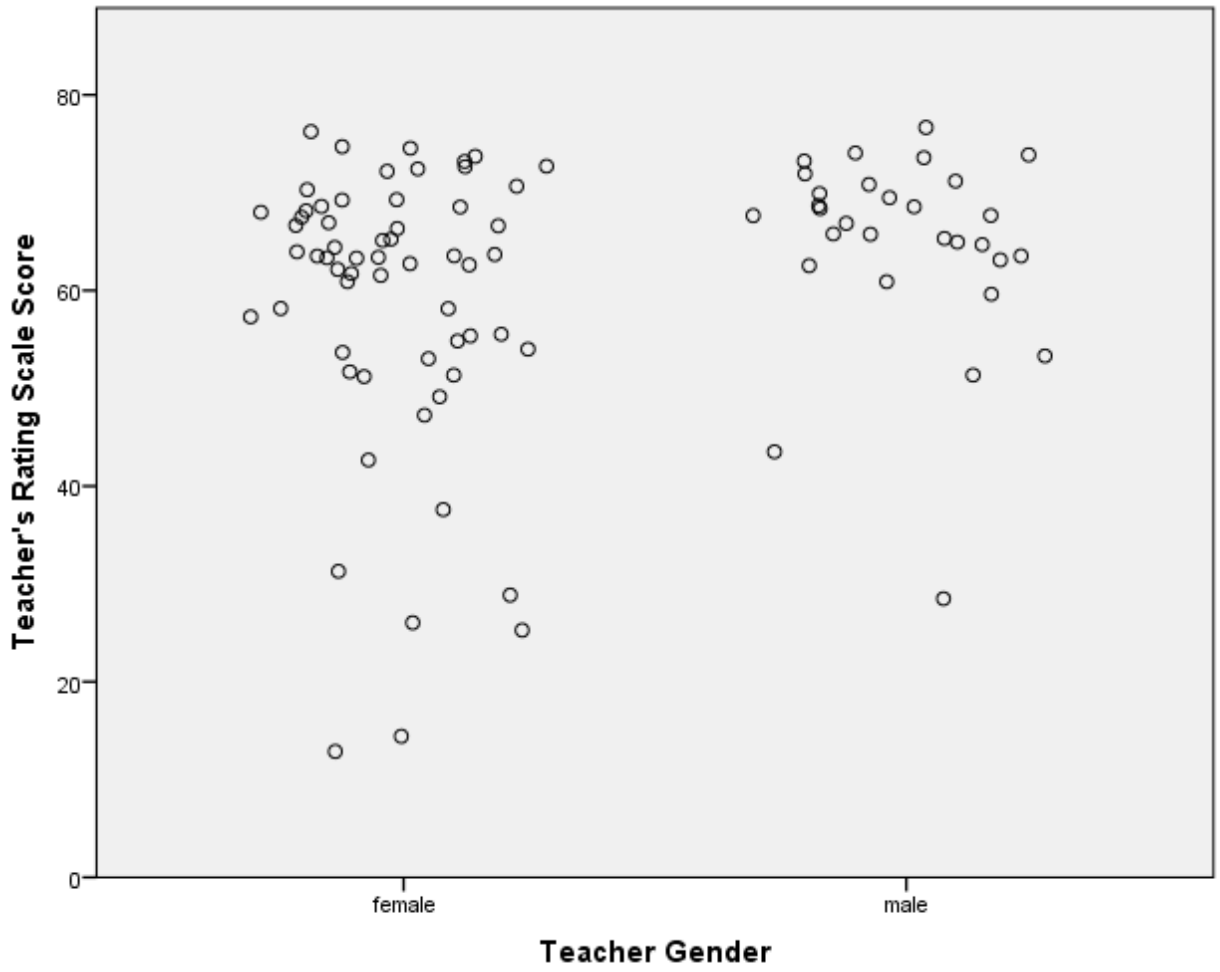

Figure 5. Scatterplot of Teacher's Rating Scale Score versus Teacher Gender.

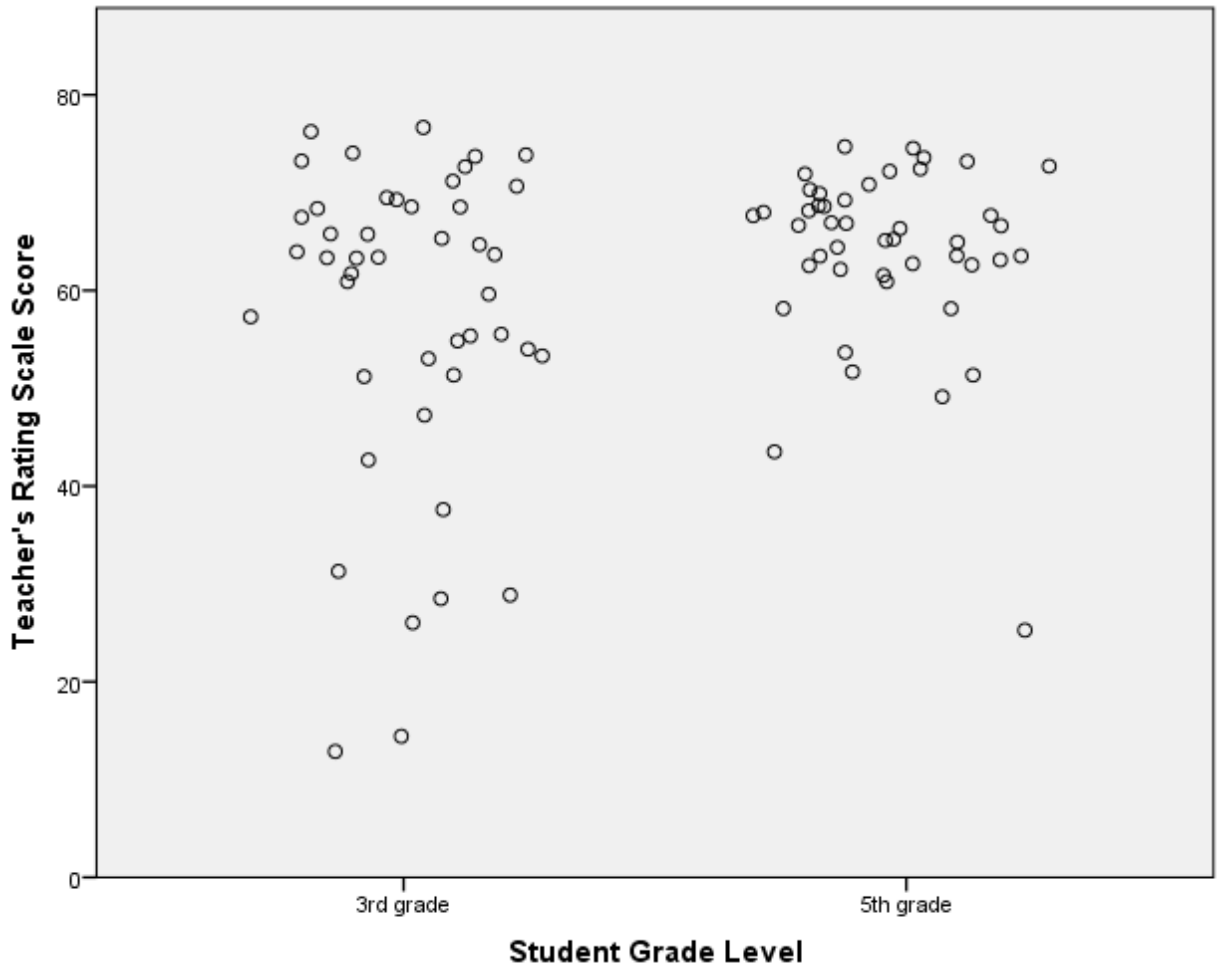

Figure 6. Scatterplot of Teacher's Rating Scale Score versus Student Grade Level.

Figure 7. Scatterplot of Teacher's Rating Scale Score versus Free or Reduced-Price Lunch.

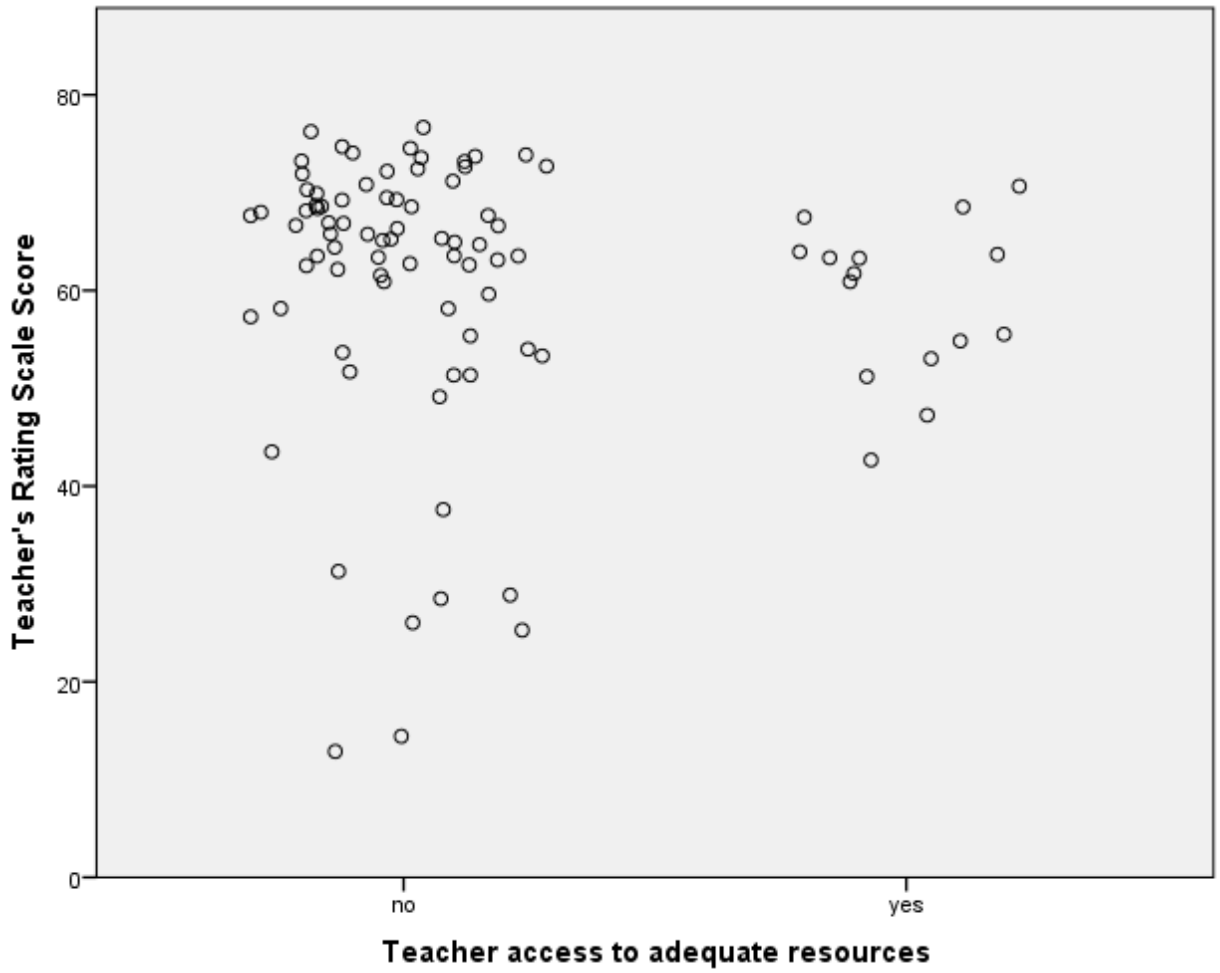

Figure 8. Scatterplot of Teacher's Rating Scale Score versus Teacher access to adequate resources.

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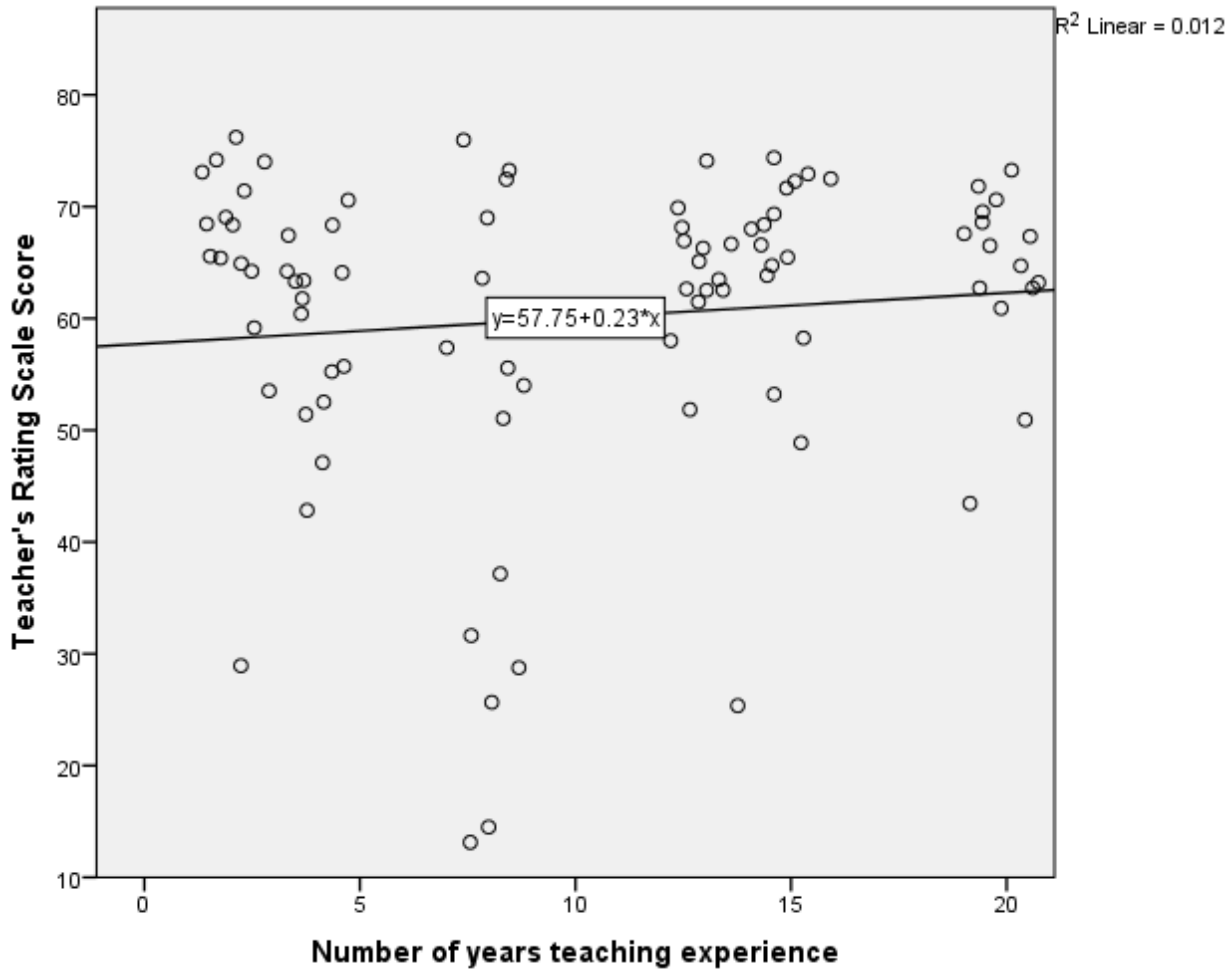

Figure 9. Scatterplot of Teacher's Rating Scale Score versus Number of years teaching experience.

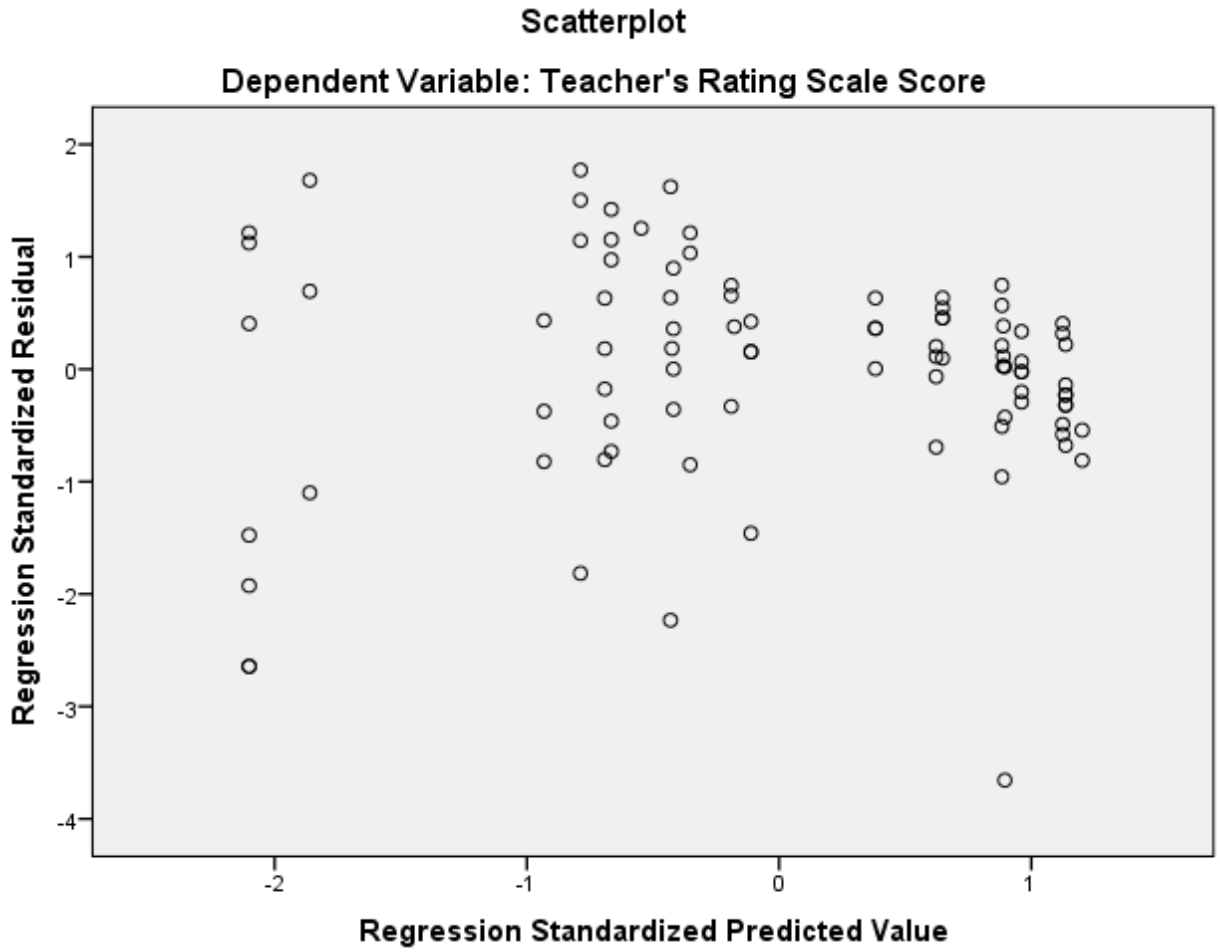

Figure 10. Scatterplot of Regression Standardized Residuals versus Regression Standardized Predicted Values.

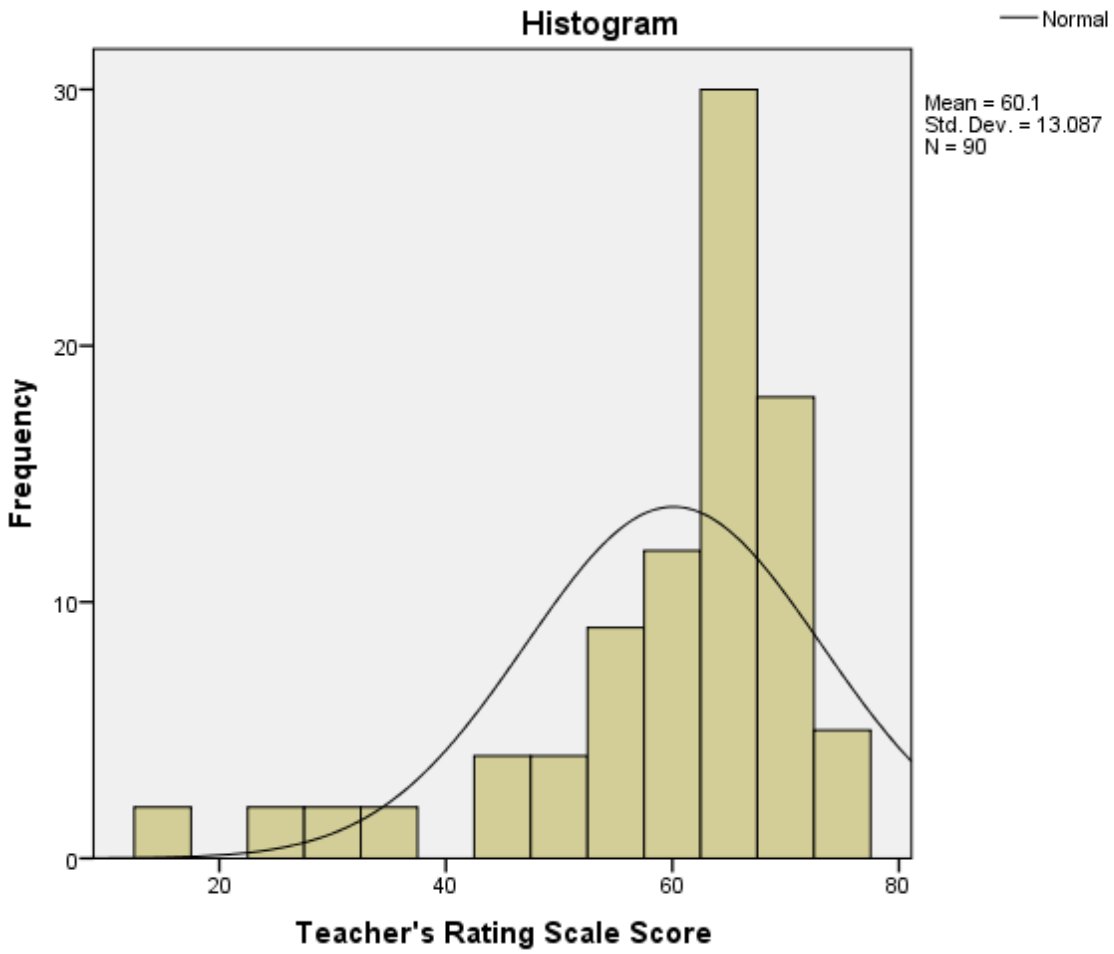

Figure 11. Histogram Frequency Distribution of Teacher's Rating Scale Scores.

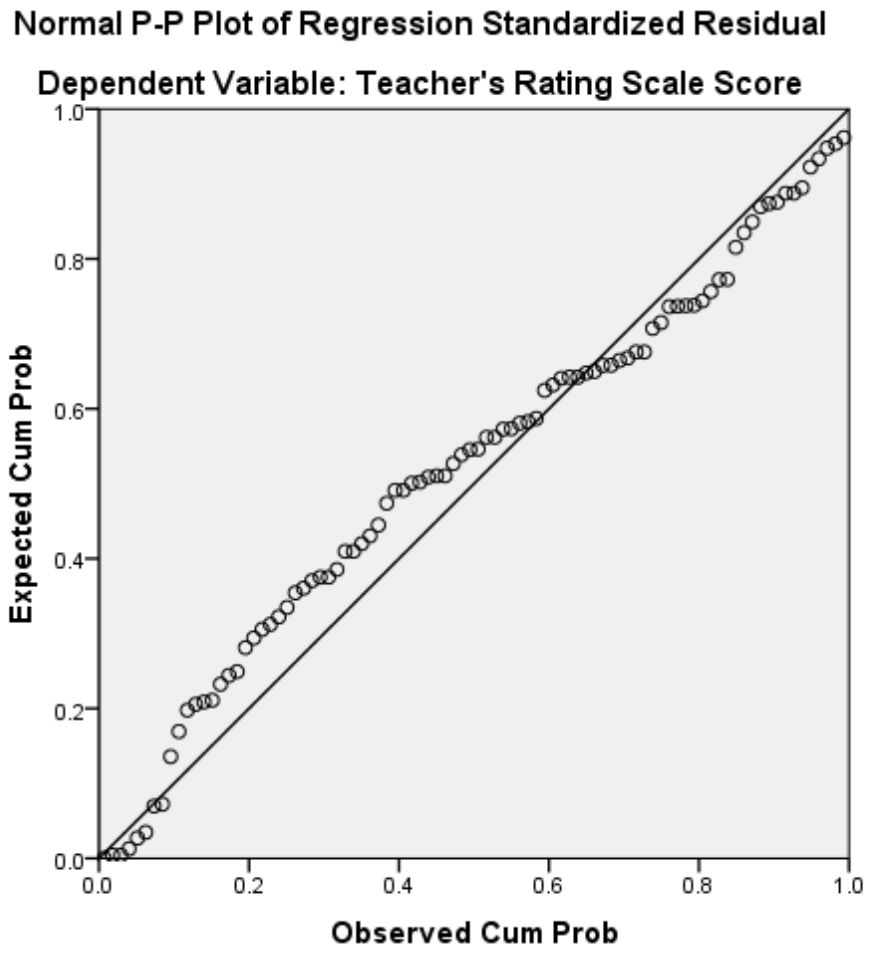

Figure 12. Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual for Teacher's Rating Scale Scores.

Table 5

Summary of Multiple Regression for Variables Predicting Teacher's Rating Scale Scores (n = 90))

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	*Std. Error*	*Beta*	*t*	Sig.	*Zero-order*	*Partial*	*Part*	*Tolerance*	*VIF*
1	(Constant)	61.588	3.488		17.655	.000					
	Student Gender	-9.774	2.415	-.374	-4.047	.000*	-.444	-.406	-.365	.955	1.047
	Teacher Gender	6.919	2.707	.251	2.556	.012*	.185	.270	.231	.848	1.179
	Student Grade Level	17.106	5.735	.657	2.983	.004*	.235	.311	.269	.168	5.952
	Free or Reduced Price Lunch	1.791	2.420	.068	.740	.461	.133	.081	.067	.967	1.034
	Teacher access to adequate resources	5.024	3.808	.144	1.319	.191	-.026	.143	.119	.686	1.458
	Number of years teaching experience	-.918	.448	-.444	-2.051	.043*	.110	-.220	-.185	.174	5.741

*Note: *p<.05*

Analysis Results

In order to respond to research question 1, a multiple linear regression was calculated to predict teacher's rating scale scores based on student gender, student grade level, free or reduced price lunch, teacher gender, number of years of teaching experience, and teacher access to adequate resources to support students. The overall prediction model was significant, $F(6,83) = 6.604$, $p < .05$, with an R^2 of .323, accounting for 32.3% of the teacher's rating scale score variance, and an $R^2_{adjusted}$ of .274, accounting for 27.4% of the teacher's rating scale score variance at an $\alpha = .05$. The results indicated that student gender, teacher gender, student grade level, and number of years of teaching experience were significant predictors of teacher's rating scale scores. Free or reduced-price lunch and teacher access to adequate resources to support students were not

significant predictors of teacher's rating scale scores. Regression coefficients and standard errors can be found in Table 5.

Participants' predicted teacher's rating scale scores are equal to 61.588 – 9.774 (Student Gender) + 6.919 (Teacher Gender) + 17.106 (Student Grade Level) + 1.791 (Free or Reduced Price Lunch) + 5.024 (Teacher access to adequate resources) - .918 (Number of years teaching experience), where Student Gender was coded as 0 = Female, 1 = Male, Student Grade Level was coded as 0 = 3rd grade, 1 = 5th grade, Free or Reduced Price Lunch was coded as 0 =No, 1 = Yes, Teacher Gender was coded as 0 = Female, 1 = Male, Number of years teaching experience was measured in consecutive numbers, and Teacher access to adequate resources was coded as 0 = No, 1 = Yes.

Student gender was a significant predictor of teacher rating scale scores, (t = -4.047, p = .000). The value of the slope coefficient was – 9.774 or β = -9.774, where student gender was coded as 0 = Female, 1 = Male. A dichotomous independent variable such as student gender has a different interpretation than that of continuous independent variables. In the dichotomous independent variable situation, the value of the slope coefficient represents the difference in the dependent variable between the two categories of the dichotomous independent variable (Hardy, 1993). The researcher coded the two categories of the student gender variable as: 0 = Female and 1 = Male. The comparison between the two categories was with respect to the category with a value of 0. In this case, the researcher was comparing male students to female students as female students were coded as 0. That is, the coefficient represents the difference in predicted teacher rating scale scores of male students compared to female students. Therefore, going from 0 to 1, is going from female students to male students. As such, the coefficient represents

the difference in teacher's rating scale scores for being male students. The predicted teacher's rating scale scores for male students were 9.774 points (on average) lower than female students. In the current study overall, teacher-participants perceived female students as more responsible than male students at school. Regarding the stated hypothesis: $H_{0:}$ There will be no significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon student gender, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis.

Student grade level was a significant predictor of teacher rating scale scores (t = 2.983, p = .004). The value of the slope coefficient was 17.106 or β = 17.106, where student grade level was coded as 0 = 3rd grade, 1 = 5th grade. The predicted teacher's rating scale scores for 5th graders were 17.106 points (on average) higher than 3rd graders. In the current study overall, teacher-participants perceived 5th graders as more responsible than 3rd graders at school. Regarding the stated hypothesis: $H_{0:}$ There will be no significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon student grade level, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis.

Teacher gender was a significant predictor of teacher rating scale scores (t = 2.556, p = .012). The value of the slope coefficient was 6.919 or β = 6.919, where teacher gender was coded as 0 = Female, 1 = Male. The predicted teacher's rating scale scores generated by male teachers were 6.919 points (on average) higher than that predicted to be generated by female teachers. In the current study overall, male teacher-participants perceived students (overall) as more responsible at school than female teachers perceived students (overall). Regarding the stated hypothesis: $H_{0:}$ There will be no significant

differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon teacher gender, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis.

Number of years teaching experience was a significant predictor of teacher rating scale scores (t = -2.051, p = .043). The value of the slope coefficient was -.918 or β = -.*918,* where Number of years teaching experience was an ordinal variable, measured in consecutive numbers. In this case, the slope coefficient represents the change in the independent variable. As such, an increase in number of years teaching experience is associated with a decrease in generated teacher's rating scale scores, as the slope coefficient was negative. Therefore, with every 1-year increase of teaching experience, there is a .918 decrease in generated teacher's rating scale scores. In the current study, teacher-participants with more years of teaching experience perceived students (overall) as less responsible at school than teacher-participants with less years of teaching experience did. Regarding the stated hypothesis: $H_{0:}$ There will be no significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon number of years of teaching experience, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis.

Free or reduced-price lunch, the current study's designated measure of student socioeconomic status, was not a significant predictor of teacher rating scale scores (t = .740, p = .461). Regarding the stated hypothesis: $H_{0:}$ There will be no significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon student socio-economic status, the researcher retained the null hypothesis.

Teacher access to adequate resources (to support students) was not a significant predictor of teacher rating scale scores (t = 1.319, p = .191). Regarding the stated hypothesis: $H_{0:}$ There will be no significant differences in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon access to adequate resources to support students, the researcher retained the null hypothesis.

Qualitative Findings

Research Question 2

How do teachers perceive the students' role in their own academic success in terms of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and what factors influence these perceptions?

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, for the safety of all involved with the current study, and in accordance with emergency state mandates to social distance, all qualitative data was collected via telecommunication. The purpose of the interview protocol was to gain language-rich responses into the perspectives and lived experiences of the teacher-participants interviewed (remotely, via telecommunication). Each teacher-participant was interviewed individually with the request that the teacher-participants, when possible, and if comfortable, could elaborate with as much detail as possible with their responses.

Demographic Information of Teacher-Participant Interviewees

The teacher-participants for the qualitative phase were the same teacher-participants from the quantitative phase, therefore the demographic information is the same (see Table 3). Four of the teacher-participants were female and two were male. Male teacher 1 had 20 years of teaching experience and taught 3rd grade. Male teacher 2

had two years of teaching experience and taught 5th grade. Female teacher 1 had eight years of teaching experience and taught 3rd grade. Female teacher 2 had 13 years of teaching experience and taught 3rd grade. Female teacher 3 had 15 years of teaching experience and taught 5th grade. Female teacher 4 had four years of teaching experience and taught 5th grade. Each interview was audio recorded with consent, and then later transcribed for analysis. The first cycle of the analysis involved charting descriptive words and phrases for each participant for each question (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002). These charts were then examined for identifying common patterns within each set of responses to a question. This process resulted in 23 identified commonalities.

First cycle. The researcher identified key words/phrases that were as follows: Good grades/bad grades, lack of parenting/family, sad, punctuality, good parenting/family, motivation, sports/clubs/extracurricular activities, procrastination, teachers connected with students, does not do home/classwork, classroom environment, lateness, parent communication, girls mature faster than boys, self-control, frustrating, home-life/situation, access to technology, opportunities, financial struggles, experience, naïve, inexperience.

The process was as follows: After viewing the transcriptions for each question referenced to each research question for each teacher-participant interviewee, the researcher created common tentative labels. Research question 1 regarded the extent to which differences exist in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school via specific variables. These specific variables included student gender, student grade level, student socio-economic status, teacher gender, number of years of teaching experience, and teacher access to adequate resources to support

students. To the questions regarding these specific variables (interview questions 1-16) the teacher-participant interviewee responses included statements about parent or lack of parent input, maturity, gender differences regarding maturity levels, financial status – haves vs. have-nots, teachers connecting with students through dialogue and rapport, informed experience, naive inexperience, and support from administration.

Interview questions 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, and 16 directly asked the teacher-participant interviewees about how specific variables or factors affect their perceptions of students. Common responses indicated that teacher gender played little to no role in how teachers perceive their students. Male teacher 1 indicated that female teachers who have children of their own may have maternal instincts that make them more protective of their students in general. Otherwise, the teacher-participants' responses did not further support that teacher gender was an influential factor in how teachers perceive their students.

Student gender as a potential factor influencing teacher perceptions generated responses indicating that boys trail girls in terms of self-regulation. Responses indicated that girls were more serious about their work, as they tend to start their work earlier than boys and spend almost double the amount of time completing it. Teacher-participant responses also indicated that girls' grade point averages across subjects were higher than those of boys.

Number of years of teaching experience as a potential factor influencing teacher perceptions generated differing responses. Specifically, male teacher 1, with 20 years of teaching experience indicated that newer teachers or "rookie teachers" are easily manipulated by students. Whereas, female teacher 4, with four years of teaching

experience indicated that “older,” more experienced teachers tend to be “jaded” when it comes to their students.

Teacher access to adequate resources as a potential factor influencing teacher perceptions generated responses indicating that it is difficult to do more with less, keeping up with technology is key, we are living in the digital age, and teachers need to be afforded more support. Likewise, student socio-economic status as a potential factor influencing teacher perceptions, followed a similar path of response, in that teacher-participants indicated that some students have greater access to technology at home than others, and that schools need to provide equitable opportunities and access to all students. However, none of the teacher-participants directly stated that they view students differently due to the students’ socio-economic status.

For research question 2 regarding the students’ role in their own academic success in terms of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school, from interview questions 2, 6, 7, and 14, the teacher-participant interviewees made references and statements regarding quality parenting, procrastination, grades and work completion. Elaborating on these questions, teacher-participant interviewees described characteristics, qualities, behaviors that fit their definitions of personal responsibility. The teacher-participant interviewees gave responses regarding participation in clubs and activities, getting good grades, making good choices, and demonstrating self-control.

Responses of every teacher-participant interviewee to each interview question were first read. Key words and phrases were listed on paper for each question by each teacher-participant according to the respective research question. These were read and reread and were noted for being recurrent. These recurrent phrases resulted in tentative

labels that were analyzed for the purpose of identifying emergent and overarching themes.

Second cycle: Overarching themes. During the second cycle, pattern and focused coding resulted in the analysis of tentative labels as the data was reviewed. These labels included social, emotional, behaviors/actions and pedagogy and were aligned with the research questions. A specific code was designated for each large unit of data uncovered to capture categories that emerged from interview transcripts in a holistic approach to determining underlying themes (Saldaña, 2016). See Table 6 for the specific code designations.

Table 6

Second Cycle Code Designations

Teacher-participant phrases	Codes
"completes homework", "studies"	*Good grades*
"punctual", "class on time"	*Punctual*
"dedicated", "gets work done"	*Motivated*
"waits until", "half credit"	*Procrastinates*
"doesn't care", "missing assignments"	*Does not do home/classwork*
"late to class", "late to school"	*Lateness*
"tutoring", "credit recovery"	*Extra help*
"unreturned calls", "rough home life"	*Lack of parental involvement/family*
"girls mature faster than boys", "fooling around", "disruptive"	*Maturity*
"always present", "responsive"	*Good parenting/family*
"more clubs", "more activities"	*Sports/clubs/extracurricular activities*
"investment", "digital age"	*Technology*
"teachers build rapport", "talk to students"	*Teachers connected with students*
"room organized", "conducive to learning"	*Classroom environment*
"always get parent", "never get parent", "involvement"	*Parent communication*
"need more", "not enough," "do more with less"	*Supports*

After review of the common categories/codes of the interviewees' responses, four overarching themes emerged. These themes were: (a) Parents and families influence student acceptance of individual responsibility at school, (b) teacher rapport and connectedness with students influence student acceptance of individual responsibility at school, (c) school programs, activities, and supports influence student acceptance of individual responsibility at school, and (d) student acceptance of individual responsibility at school plays a role in their own academic success.

Teacher-Participant Responses

For the current study, quotes or vignettes of teacher-participant responses were included for the purpose of identifying how teacher perceptions related to each research question. Direct teacher-participant quotations were used for clarity of their individual perspectives and to provide for a language-rich description of their perceptions relative to student acceptance of individual responsibility at school. They were also used to illustrate the four key emergent themes for the current study.

Pertaining to Research Question 1

Defining a responsible student. Teacher-participants shared a variety of views regarding individual responsibility. Some teacher-participants expressed their views on the lack of individual responsibility. Male teacher 1 stated, "A student is being irresponsible when he or she isn't paying attention in class," as well as when "the student leaves his or her work behind, neglecting to take it home." Female teacher 1 stated, "Specific behaviors are inappropriate and therefore irresponsible, such as coming late to school, disrupting the lesson, and simply not caring about the work." Male teacher 2

stated, “Students are irresponsible when they do not do their work, talk to their friends during class, or just doing what they shouldn’t be doing.”

Specific to responsibility, female teacher 3 spoke of participation in school programs and activities, stating, “I would label students as responsible who are involved in school, not just come to class and leave after school, but they stay after school and they participate in other activities besides just academic stuff, like sports or clubs.” Female teacher 2 stated, “Responsible students, I've noticed that they're in class on time, they do turn in their work, they're not lazy. They actually try. They study for tests.” Female teacher 4 stated, “A responsible student comes to class on time, prepared, and ready to work.”

The researcher’s understanding of the teacher-participant responses is that student responsibility occurs when students take an active role in their learning by recognizing they are accountable for their academic success. Student responsibility is demonstrated when students make choices and take actions which lead them toward their educational goals. Also, each student’s ability to learn and gain the best possible rewards from their school experience may be influenced by an environment which is conducive to learning and to activities which are consistent with the objectives of their academic institution, as well as inclusive in terms of team-building and enjoyable recreation.

Perceptions regarding student gender. Teacher-participants shared a variety of views regarding student gender. Male teacher 1 stated, “Girls tend to pay attention more whereas, boys tend to daydream in class.” Female teacher1 stated, “Girls tend to choose homework before TV and boys just the opposite; so I’m told by their parents.” Male teacher 2 stated, “My boys are more eager to answer a question in class and my girls are

less aggressive about it." Female teacher 2 stated, "It depends on what they're getting from home. Parents play a big role in priorities." Female teacher 3 stated, "If it's a long-term project, girls tend to stick it out, despite their boredom or frustration. Boys will voice their displeasure sooner." Female teacher 4 stated, "I know I have a good relationship with my kids, if the work is interesting and relatable, they will make sure to do their best."

The researcher's understanding of the teacher-participant responses is that although there are various exceptions, boys and girls do differ in ways that parallel conventional gender stereotypes and that affect how the sexes behave at school and in class. The differences seem to do with physical behaviors, styles of social interaction, academic motivations, behaviors, and choices. They have a variety of influences, including parents and peers.

Perceptions regarding student grade level/gender. Teacher-participants shared their views on student grade level, and while doing so, some teacher-participants referenced gender. Male teacher 1 stated, "The assumption is that with age, comes wisdom. This is often the case with my girls. They tend to mature faster than the boys and it shows in their work ethic." Female teacher 1 stated, "I've taught different grade levels, and I've noticed a pretty big difference in maturity when students go from elementary to middle school; not always a good thing." When asked to elaborate, female teacher 1 stated, "Well, the kids aren't as babyish, but sometimes their behavior is disruptive – especially with the boys." Male teacher 2 stated, "I really haven't had the experience to notice a difference." Female teacher 2 stated, "The girls mature faster, but sometimes their schoolwork suffers because they get too involved socializing." Female

teacher 3 stated, “If the parents stay on them and we do too, ultimately their level of focus should increase as they get older.” Female teacher 4 stated, “My students want to be treated like they’re the older kids and that’s fine, but they don’t always understand that the work gets harder and they can’t afford to have missing assignments or be late for class.”

The researcher’s understanding of the teacher-participant responses is that grade level plays a role in a student's ability to accept responsibility for his or her own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. It affects their ability to keep track of his or her thinking and to control the various emotions they may experience in a learning situation. Presumably, with age comes maturity. This governs personal responsibility, shared communication, openness to new ideas, and ability to find solutions to problems. This is directly relatable to emotional control and reasoning, as well. However, the social aspect of this maturity, as it pertains to boys and girls seems to impact academic performance in unexpected, and sometimes undesirable ways.

Perceptions regarding student socio-economic status. Teacher-participants shared their views regarding student socio-economic status. Male teacher 1 stated, “Look, it’s not fair for some kids. They don’t have the computers or iPads at home. Some of my assignments require access to the internet, so it’s important they can get access at school. It’s the digital age” When further asked about how this affects the grades of these students, male teacher 1 stated, “I do my best to help my kids and supplement resources. I understand first-hand about haves and have-nots, so I do whatever I can to help my kids out.” Female teacher 1 stated, “I don’t really know the socio-economic status of my students; I mean I see every kid has a cell phone and nice shoes, but I never really noticed

how it affects their responsibility." Male teacher 2 stated, "Regardless of socio-economic class, the biggest difference is what the parents tell their kids because that is what they believe." Female teacher 2 stated, "You have to be ready with combs, tissues, pencils. Sometimes we dress them, we comb their hair. I buy them supplies if they don't have; it's sad." Female teacher 3 stated, "Good parenting means teaching these kids that name brands don't matter and that despite what they don't have, they have to still work hard in school." Female teacher 4 stated, "The biggest disadvantage these students have because of their SES is that they look at their parents and think that's as good as it gets. They don't realize they could do more. They just have to work hard."

The researcher's understanding of the teacher-participant responses is that despite not knowing the socio-economic status of their students, the teachers were not necessarily "SES-blind". The teacher-participants mentioned supplying students with materials and tools that they were lacking. Some responses also implied that students should aim beyond their parents' status. The teacher-participants did not state that students could not attribute success or failure to their own actions, but the implications detected by the researcher were that students' socio-economic status may be a factor in their academic performance.

Perceptions regarding teacher gender. Teacher-participants shared their views on teacher gender. Male teacher 1 stated, "Sometimes, female teachers who have children of their own may have maternal instincts that make them more protective of their students in general." Female teacher 1 stated, "I don't think it makes a big difference. Some kids who don't have a father-figure at home, attach to a male teacher and this may cause the teacher to connect more to the student." Male teacher 2 stated, "I think that it is important

for the teacher to talk to the students and build that trust. I don't think gender plays a part in that. Just as long as the teacher tries." Female teacher 2 stated, "Students overall respond well to me because I talk to them and get to know them. I'm not sure if it matters if it's a male or female thing, I see all my kids as someone who needs me." Female teacher 3 stated, "Teachers' gender does not necessarily have a big effect during elementary school but seems to make more of a difference when children are older. Then, girls do better with a female teacher and boys with a male one." Female teacher 4 stated, "The gender of the teacher shouldn't matter. I make sure I get to know all of my kids and talk to them. I want them to feel comfortable and safe in my classroom."

Though previous research indicates male and female teachers differ in terms of their classroom management practices and their belief in students' learning ability (Mullolah et al., 2011), teacher gender's effect on student academic achievement may be arbitrary. The researcher's understanding of the teacher-participant responses is that the relationship between student learning outcomes and the presence of male or female teachers in classrooms may depend on the needs of the individual student.

Perceptions regarding number of years of teaching experience. Teacher-participants shared their views on number of years of teaching experience. Male teacher 1 stated, "Inexperienced teachers are a little naive. They mean well, but they think it's all rainbows and unicorns." When asked to elaborate, male teacher 1 stated, "They don't know what it's like to deal with parents or principals that expect the impossible sometimes. We just don't always have the support we need to deal with these kids." Female teacher 1stated, "It's not always easy for a new teacher to handle the students, but

if you can connect with them early on, it makes life much simpler." Male teacher 2 stated, "I respect teachers who have been doing it for a while. They've helped me when I have questions. I think with that experience, you are better equipped to understand and help the students." Female teacher 2 stated, "It definitely helps when you need to really know your kids. I know what to look for and how to address issues better now than when I was a new teacher." Female teacher 3 stated, "Experience has taught me to have eyes in the back of my head. I know which kid is fooling around, who is lying about studying and who is telling the truth. It becomes second nature." Female teacher 4 stated, "I feel like I learn something new every day. It's helpful when you are faced with a situation you have seen before but experience also helps to face new situations with the students with more confidence."

The researcher's understanding of the teacher-participant responses is that teachers improve in their effectiveness as they gain experience in the teaching profession. Their responses appear to align with issues of management and not necessarily with academic performance. However, the teacher-participant overall responses imply that the two may be connected. The researcher's takeaway is that the quality of the teacher is not something that is fixed or necessarily set in stone. With time, teacher quality is afforded the opportunity to develop.

Perceptions regarding teacher access to adequate resources to support students. Teacher-participants shared their views on teacher access to adequate resources to support students. Male teacher 1 stated, "We definitely need more. I mean, we are expected to do more with less and it makes it very frustrating because the kids are digital learners and sometimes we just don't have the means to keep their interest." The

researcher followed up by asking what happens in these instances. Male teacher 1 stated, “You get a lot of off-task behavior. A lot of extraneous talk. And it becomes disruptive.” Female teacher 1stated, “We do our best. We can always use more, but we make it work. The kids have tablets and computers at home that help with homework assignments.” Male teacher 2 stated, “I spend my own money a lot of times. There are some students who can’t bring in supplies for projects, so I try to help. I feel bad for them.” Female teacher 2 stated, “I don’t think it makes me perceive students differently. We definitely don’t have enough resources. That doesn’t mean the principal doesn’t support us, it just means we don’t have the budget. The kids do a pretty good job adjusting.” Female teacher 3 stated, “Our staff does its best with what we have. Resources could help to make a better classroom environment.” When asked to elaborate, female teacher 3 stated, “My kids are visual learners for the most part. An organized room, rich with images would make the class more conducive to learning. I try to update my room, but mostly out of pocket.” Female teacher 4 stated, “The principal sends me emails about PDs. I appreciate that she finds them for me. It has helped a lot. These opportunities make me a better teacher and in turn helps me to connect with my students.”

Responses regarding teacher access to adequate resources to support students indicated that accessibility of adequate resources is regarded as an essential and integral part of education. The success of the students relies on an effective school administration with good leadership, and regular training and professional development for teachers to improve upon their practice.

Pertaining to Research Question 2

Perceptions regarding the students' role in their own academic success.

Teachers shared their views on the students' role in their own academic success in terms of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school. Male teacher 1 stated, "Bottom line, kids have to do the work. Yes, some kids struggle, but if they don't put in the effort, pay attention, ask for help, then the result will not be a good one." Female teacher 1 stated, "You have to come to class on time, complete the assignments and seek extra help. Students, with our support, of course have to meet us more than halfway." Male teacher 2 stated," Some of our students have a rough home life. It helps to have responsive parents to reinforce what we are teaching. They all have potential." Female teacher 2 stated, "I always tell my kids they have to study and not procrastinate. There is no time for fooling around. We have to teach them early on to take their schoolwork seriously." Female teacher 3 stated, "It helps to get involved in activities like sports or clubs. It teaches a sense of responsibility that they can apply to their schooling. But these are decisions they have to make on their own, even at their age." Female teacher 4 stated, "They're still babies. They need a lot of guidance from us. We have to learn how they learn and then teach them how to be responsible."

The researcher's understanding of the overall attitude of the teacher-participant responses regarding the students' role in their own academic success is that teachers cannot control learning. Only learners can do that. Learning cannot be imposed upon or given to students. It is something they must do for themselves. As such, it makes sense that they take responsibility for their own learning. But what does that mean, exactly? It means learners must invest the time, energy, and focus to develop

understanding. They must define the purpose of their learning and determine how they will apply this to areas outside of the classroom. They must struggle with and overcome the obstacles to learning that exist within themselves. The researcher contends that teachers must therefore provide the intellectual, social, and emotional support needed to guide their students through this endeavor.

Overarching Themes

Four broad, overarching themes emerged after numerous reviews of the most frequent categories/codes. These themes were that the teacher-participants believed: (a) parents and families influence student acceptance of individual responsibility, (b) teacher rapport and connectedness with students -influence student acceptance of individual responsibility, (c) school programs, activities, and supports influence student acceptance of individual responsibility, and (d) student acceptance of individual responsibility at school plays a role in their own academic success. Table 7 summarizes which teacher-participants made comments on the themes. Some teacher-participants commented on the themes a different number of times in different interview questions but will only be listed once on the table.

Table 7

Theme Comments by Teacher-Participant Interviewees

Parents and families influence student acceptance of individual responsibility	Teacher rapport/ connectedness - influence student acceptance of individual responsibility	School programs/ activities/ & support influence student acceptance of individual responsibility	Student acceptance of individual responsibility at school plays role in own academic success
	male teacher 1	male teacher 1	male teacher 1
	female teacher 1	female teacher 1	female teacher 1
male teacher 2	male teacher 2		
female teacher 2	female teacher 2		female teacher 2
female teacher 3		female teacher 3	female teacher 3
female teacher 4	female teacher 4	female teacher 4	female teacher 4

The themes (a) parents and families influence student acceptance of individual responsibility, (b) teacher rapport and connectedness with students influence student acceptance of individual responsibility, (c) school programs, activities, and supports influence student acceptance of individual responsibility, and (d) student acceptance of individual responsibility at school plays a role in their own academic success, each addressed research questions 1 and 2 in differing degrees and ways.

Theme A: Parents and families influence student acceptance of individual responsibility at school

Four of the six teacher-participants discussed the influence that parents and families have on student acceptance of individual responsibility at school. While discussing the *students' role in their own academic success*, male teacher 2 stated, "Some of our students have a rough home life. It helps to have responsive parents to reinforce what we are teaching." While discussing *student socio-economic status*, male teacher 2

stated, “Regardless of socio-economic class, the biggest difference is what the parents tell their kids because that is what they believe. Also, while discussing *socio-economic status*, female teacher 3 stated, “Good parenting means teaching these kids that name brands don’t matter and that despite what they don’t have, they have to still work hard in school.” Female teacher 4 stated, “The biggest disadvantage these students have because of their SES is that they look at their parents and think that’s as good as it gets.” While discussing *student grade level and student gender,* female teacher 3 stated, “If the parents stay on top of them and we do too, ultimately their level of focus should increase as they get older.” While discussing *student gender*, female teacher 2 stated, “Parents play a big role in priorities.”

The researcher’s takeaway from the teacher-participant responses that created this theme is that parent-influence is generally thought of as an avenue for promoting behavior at home. However, parent involvement may also enhance children's behavior and academic performance in school as parents and teachers work together to enhance social functioning and address problem behaviors.

Theme B: Teacher rapport and connectedness with students influence student acceptance of individual responsibility at school

Five of the six teacher-participants discussed the influence that teacher rapport and connectedness has on student acceptance of individual responsibility at school. While discussing *student socio-economic status*, male teacher 1 stated, “I do my best to help my kids and supplement resources. I understand first-hand about haves and have-nots, so I do whatever I can to help my kids out.” After the researcher expressed admiration for this notion, male teacher 1 stated, “It has really made a difference in how the kids and I relate

to each other in class." While discussing *teacher gender*, female teacher 1 stated, "…some kids who don't have a father figure at home, attach to a male teacher and this may cause the teacher to connect more to the student." While discussing *number of years of teaching experience*, female teacher 1 stated, "…if you can connect with them early on, it makes life much simpler." While discussing *teacher gender*, male teacher 2 stated, "I think that it is important for the teacher to talk to the students and build trust." While discussing *student socio-economic status*, female teacher 2 stated, "…I buy them supplies if they don't have it." When further asked by the research how the students respond, female teacher 2 stated, "They love me. It's like I'm a second mom to some of them." While discussing *teacher gender*, female teacher 2 stated, "Students overall respond well to me because I talk to them and get to know them." While discussing *number of years of teaching experience*, female teacher 2 stated, "It definitely helps when you need to know your kids." Female teacher 2 noted that it better helps to address the numerous student issues that arise on any given day. While discussing *student gender*, female teacher 4 sated, "I know I have a good relationship with my kids…" Female teacher 4 noted that with this and interesting content, the students put in an extra effort. While discussing *teacher gender*, female teacher 4 noted that getting to know all of her students helps them to feel safe and comfortable in her classroom.

The researcher's takeaway from the teacher-participant responses that created this theme is that teachers are an integral factor contributing to student achievement. Although curricula, reduced class size, district funding, family and community involvement all contribute to school improvement and student achievement, one of the

most influential factors in student success is relationship the student has with his or her teacher.

Theme C: School programs, activities, and supports influence student acceptance of individual responsibility at school

Four of the six teacher-participant discussed how school programs, activities, and supports influence the students' acceptance of individual responsibility at school. While discussing *number of years of teaching experience*, male teacher 1 stated, "We just don't always have the support we need to deal with these kids." When further probed by the researcher, male teacher 1 noted that there wasn't enough money in the budget for after school activities that appeal to all of the students. While discussing *teacher access to adequate resources to support students*, male teacher 1 stated, "We definitely need more. I mean, we are expected to do more with less…" Male teacher 1 noted that the computers in his classroom are obsolete and some of the keys are missing. Female teacher 1 noted that students need the support of teachers, but it "…becomes difficult to spare time after school when there is no money to pay for as many clubs as the students would like." Also, while discussing *teacher access to adequate resources to support students*, female teacher 3 stated, "Resource could help to make a better classroom environment." She further noted that this could make school more interesting and more conducive to learning. While discussing the *students' role in their own academic success,* female teacher 3 stated, "It helps to get involved in activities like sports or clubs. It teaches a sense of responsibility that they can apply to their own schooling." While discussing *teacher access to adequate resources to support students,* female teacher 4 stated that

being afforded professional development opportunities "helps me to connect with my students."

The researcher's takeaway from the teacher-participant responses that created this theme is that activities and programs would increase the likelihood of expanded student participation. These activities should promote team building, dedication, mutually agreed upon goals, commitment and responsibility.

Theme D: Student acceptance of individual responsibility plays a role in their own academic success

Five of the six teacher-participants discussed how student acceptance of individual responsibility plays a role in their own academic success. While discussing the *students' role in their own academic success*, male teacher 1 stated, "Bottom line, kids have to do the work. Yes, some kids struggle, but if they don't put in the effort, pay attention, ask for help, then the result will not be a good one." Also while discussing the *students' role in their own academic success*, female teacher 1 stated, "You have to come to class on time, complete the assignments and seek extra help. Students, with our support, of course have to meet us more than halfway." While discussing *student grade level and student gender*, female teacher 2 stated, "…sometimes their school work suffers because they get too involved socializing," When further probed by the researcher, female teacher 2 noted that choosing to engage in drama, especially through social media has hurt the grades of many of her female students. While discussing the *students' role in their own academic success*, female teacher 2 stated, "I always tell my kids they have to study and not procrastinate. There is no time for fooling around. We have to teach them early on to take their schoolwork seriously." While discussing *number of years of*

teaching experience, female teacher 3 stated, "I know which kid is fooling around, who is lying about studying and who is telling the truth." When further probed by the researcher about how this affects her perception of her students, female teacher 3 noted that she has a good sense of who she can reach, who she can convince to work harder, and who she won't even bother trying to reach because it becomes "useless." While discussing *student grade level and student gender*, female teacher 4 stated, "…they can't afford to have missing assignments or be late for class." While discussing *student socio-economic status*, female teacher 4 stated, "They don't realize that they could do more. They just have to work hard."

The researcher's takeaway from the teacher-participant responses that created this theme is that student responsibility occurs when students take an active role in their learning by recognizing they are accountable for their academic success. Student responsibility is demonstrated when students make choices and take actions which lead them toward their educational goals.

Quantitative and Qualitative Connections

In this section, the researcher coupled the quantitative data results with the qualitative data from the interview protocol that supported the quantitative results.

Research Question 3

To what extent do the qualitative results validate the quantitative findings?

As determined in the quantitative phase of the current study, four of the six independent or predictor variables were significant predictors of the dependent variable (Teacher's Rating Scale Scores). The four significant independent variables were Student Gender (p = .000), Student Grade Level (p = .004), Teacher Gender (p = .012), and

Number of years teaching experience (p = .043). There are noted teacher-participant responses in the qualitative phase of the current study that support these findings.

Specifically regarding *student gender*, the predicted teacher's rating scale scores for male students were 9.774 points (on average) lower than female students. In the current study overall, teacher-participants perceived female students as more responsible than male students at school. During the interview protocol process, Male teacher 1 stated, "Girls tend to pay attention more, whereas boys tend to daydream in class." Female teacher1 stated, "Girls tend to choose homework before TV and boys just the opposite; so I'm told by their parents." Female teacher 3 stated, "If it's a long-term project, girls tend to stick it out, despite their boredom or frustration. Boys will voice their displeasure sooner." Male teacher 1 also stated, "The assumption is that with age, comes wisdom. This is often the case with my girls. They tend to mature faster than the boys and it shows in their work ethic." The differences between male and female students seem to do with physical behaviors, styles of social interaction, academic motivations, behaviors, and choices. Three teacher-participants' responses were unspecific without leaning in one gender direction over another. The experiences of the other three teacher-participants supported the quantitative findings that overall, teacher-participants perceived female students as more responsible than male students at school.

Specifically regarding *student grade level*, the predicted teacher's rating scale scores for 5th graders were 17.106 points (on average) higher than 3rd graders. In the current study overall, teacher-participants perceived 5th graders as more responsible than 3rd graders at school. During the interview protocol process, Female teacher 1 stated, "I've taught different grade levels, and I've noticed a pretty big difference in maturity

when students go from elementary to middle school…" Female teacher 3 stated, "If the parents stay on them and we do too, ultimately their level of focus should increase as they get older." This response most strongly validates the quantitative findings. The other responses were not contradictory. They were less specific than that of Female Teacher 3. Even with further probing by the researcher, the other teacher-participant responses alluded to agreement with Female Teacher 3, but aligned more with what they believed would be the future behavior of the students.

Specifically regarding *teacher gender*, the predicted teacher's rating scale scores generated by male teachers were 6.919 points (on average) higher than that predicted to be generated by female teachers. In the current study overall, male teacher-participants perceived students (overall) as more responsible at school than female teachers perceived students (overall). During the interview protocol process, some of the teacher-participants' responses supported the hypothesis that teacher gender significantly predicts teachers' ratings of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and therefore teachers' perceptions. However, some teacher-participant statements conflicted with the quantitative results. Male teacher 1 stated, "Sometimes, female teachers who have children of their own may have maternal instincts that make them more protective of their students in general." Female teacher 2 stated, "The students overall respond well to me because I talk to them and get to know them. I'm not sure if it matters if it's a male or female thing, I see all my kids as someone who needs me." Female teacher 3 stated, "Teachers' gender does not necessarily have a big effect during elementary school but seems to make more of a difference when children are older. Then, girls do better with a female teacher and boys with a male one." Though the responses do not reflect that male

teachers perceive students as more responsible at school, as indicated by the quantitative results, they do indicate that teacher gender does, in varying degrees, affect teachers' perceptions of their students. However, there was one response that came close to supporting the quantitative findings. Female teacher 1 stated, "I don't think it makes a big difference. Some kids who don't have a father-figure at home, attach to a male teacher and this may cause the teacher to connect more to the student."

Specifically regarding *number of years teaching experience*, quantitative results indicated that with every 1-year increase of teaching experience, there was a .918 decrease in generated teacher's rating scale scores. Therefore, teacher-participants with more years of teaching experience perceived students (overall) as less responsible at school than teacher-participants with less years of teaching experience did. During the interview protocol process, male teacher 1(20 yrs teaching) stated, "Inexperienced teachers are a little naive. They mean well, but they think it's all rainbows and unicorns." When asked to elaborate, male teacher 1 stated, "They don't know what it's like to deal with parents or principals that expect the impossible sometimes. We just don't always have the support we need to deal with these kids." Female teacher 1 (8 yrs teaching) stated, "It's not always easy for a new teacher to handle the students, but if you can connect with them early on, it makes life much simpler." Male teacher 2 (2 yrs teaching) stated, "I respect teachers who have been doing it for a while. They've helped me when I have questions. I think with that experience, you are better equipped to understand and help the students." Female teacher 2 (13 yrs teaching) stated, "It definitely helps when you need to really know your kids. I know what to look for and how to address issues better now than when I was a new teacher." Female teacher 3 (15 yrs teaching) stated,

"Experience has taught me to have eyes in the back of my head. I know which kid is fooling around, who is lying about studying and who is telling the truth. It becomes second nature." Female teacher 4 (4 yrs teaching) stated, "I feel like I learn something new every day. It is helpful when you are faced with a situation you have seen before, but experience also helps to face new situations with the students with more confidence."

The teacher-participant responses indicated that there is something gained through increased experience. For all of the teacher-participants, what is gained appears to be a better understanding of students, however, it seems that the definition of this understanding differs between teacher-participants with more experience and teacher-participants with less experience. Responses from teacher-participants with less experience seemed to coincide with being better able to help students, whereas responses from teacher-participants with more experience seemed to be more jaded and defensive. Teacher-participant responses supported the hypothesis that number of years teaching experience significantly predicts teachers' ratings of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and therefore teachers' perceptions. Teacher-participant responses also seemed to indicate that teachers with more experience tend to perceive students as less responsible at school.

Specifically regarding *student socio-economic status* (found not to be a statistically significant predictor of the dependent variable), three teacher-participant responses indicated that disadvantaged students need more support, but these responses did not specify if student socio-economic status affects student acceptance of individual responsibility at school. Teacher-participant responses supported the quantitative results, indicating that student socio-economic status was *not* a statistically significant predictor

of teacher's rating scale scores. However, it is important to note that the teacher-participants were not aware of the socio-economic status of their students.

Specifically regarding *teacher access to adequate resources to support students*, (found not to be a statistically significant predictor of the dependent variable), all six teacher-participants stated the importance of resources. However, only one teacher stated that without resources and supports, students can become "off-task". This is the closest response to indicating that lack of resources and supports may affect a student's acceptance of individual responsibility at school. This response contradicts the quantitative findings that teacher access to adequate resources to support students was *not* a statistically significant predictor of teacher's rating scale scores. However, it may be prudent to consider that though there were no indications of statistical significance, this particular variable may be practically significant.

As determined in the qualitative phase of the current study, the researcher identified four emergent, overarching themes from numerous reviews of common categories/codes identified through very specific coding processes. Statements made by the teacher-participants which connected to the four themes were identified in this section. Some of the teacher-participant statements pertained to variables that did not prove to be significant in the quantitative phase. For purposes of this particular section of the current study, the researcher referenced only those statements pertaining to significant predictors of the dependent variable. The four themes were: (a) parents and families influence student acceptance of individual responsibility, (b) teacher rapport and connectedness with students -influence student acceptance of individual responsibility, (c) school programs, activities, and supports influence student acceptance of individual

responsibility, and (d) student acceptance of individual responsibility at school plays a role in their own academic success.

Conclusion

The results were organized into sections: Quantitative Phase and Qualitative Phase. In the quantitative phase, results from the analysis of the reliability and validity of the teacher's rating scale were presented first, followed by answers to the following research question: RQ1. To what extent do differences exist in teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school based upon (a) student gender, (b) student grade level, (c) student socio-economic status, (d) teacher gender, (e) number of years of teaching experience, and (f) teacher access to adequate resources to support students?

The qualitative phase included coding results from the interview protocol, as well as any validation the results provided for the findings of the quantitative phase. Answers were provided for the following research questions: RQ2. How do teachers perceive the students' role in their own academic success in terms of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and what factors influence these perceptions? RQ3. To what extent do the qualitative results validate the quantitative findings? The researcher also addressed the entirety of results for the current study as they applied to the hypotheses outlined in Chapter 1.

The findings of the quantitative phase identified student gender, teacher gender, student grade level, and number of years of teaching experience as significant predictors of teacher's rating scale scores. Free or reduced-price lunch and teacher access to adequate resources to support students were not significant predictors of teacher's rating

scale scores. These findings directly answered research question 1. The findings of the qualitative phase identified four emergent themes from numerous reviews of common categories/codes identified through very specific coding processes. The four themes were: (a) parents and families influence student acceptance of individual responsibility, (b) teacher rapport and connectedness with students -influence student acceptance of individual responsibility, (c) school programs, activities, and supports influence student acceptance of individual responsibility, and (d) student acceptance of individual responsibility at school plays a role in their own academic success. These finding directly answered research question 2. Connections were made between the findings of the quantitative phase and the qualitative phase, where qualitative findings validated quantitative results. This directly answered research question 3.

In the next chapter, the researcher discusses the implications of each of the major findings as they relate to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks. The researcher also linked findings of the current study with previous literature. The researcher also provided a discussion of the limitations of the current study, as well as recommendations or suggestions for future practice and future research.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Introduction

This chapter discusses the implications of each of the major findings as they relate to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks presented in Chapter 2. The researcher also has linked findings of the current study with previous literature, as reviewed in Chapter 2. The researcher also provides a discussion of the limitations of the current study, as well as recommendations or suggestions for future practice and research.

The goal of the current study was to examine students' acceptance of individual responsibility at school as perceived by their teachers, as well as factors that may influence those teacher perceptions, and the potential impact those perceptions may have on student decision-making. Through the combined lenses of theory of planned behavior and attribution theory, the current study examined how teachers perceive the outcomes of student decision-making; attribute said outcomes; develop expectations from said outcomes; and form perceptions from said expectations. More specifically, the current study focused on the notion of a cyclic causality wherein student decision-making in an academic setting may form teacher expectations and subsequent perceptions that impact the future decision-making of the student by affecting the student's perceived behavioral control for future behavioral decisions at school.

Implications of Findings

The broad themes identified in the current study emerged from an investigation into how teachers perceive their students' role in their own academic success in terms of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and a further examination into

what factors may influence these teacher-perceptions. The findings were based on a mixed method analysis where specific factors of potential influence upon teachers' perceptions of their students were tested quantitatively and further examined for qualitative validation. The hypotheses aligned with the research questions collectively postulated the notion that teacher perceptions of their students are affected by certain factors, and therefore lead to the subsequent treatment of, expectations for, and interactions with students that produce future decisions (responsible or irresponsible) made by said students in an academic setting. The findings supported the cyclic relationship proposed in the conceptual framework of the current study. Therefore, it is plausible that teachers can have a significant impact on co-developing the individual responsibility of the student.

The connectedness of teachers with students can influence and reinforce such development. Some student-participants in previous literature expressed that teachers who most influenced their acceptance of individual responsibility at school were the ones who took the time to develop positive and professional working relationships (Peters, 2009). However, it is important for the student to understand that the teacher can only guide, while it is the individual student's internal locus of control that is of utmost importance. Internal locus of control is defined as the belief that events in one's life, whether good or bad, are caused by controllable factors such as one's attitude, preparation, and effort (Grinnel, 2018). Similarly, Ajzen's (1985) concept of perceived behavioral control speaks to this notion which separates the theory of planned behavior from its theoretical predecessor, making it an important component in the cyclical relationship with attribution theory.

The theory of planned behavior's concept of perceived behavioral control refers to people's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behavior of interest, which in turn will likely determine the level of intention to perform said behavior (Ajzen, 1991). If behavior is not under complete volitional control, the performers may find that performing the behavior is difficult. The perception of whether or not they can perform the behavior with relative ease will affect their intention to perform the behavior. In this specific case, student-decisions and the behaviors that follow may directly impact the teacher's perception of the student, as well as subsequent exchanges with the student.

Much of the existing understanding of the process explained by attribution theory comes from research conducted in the context of school achievement. Educators' attempts to understand the causes of achievement or lack of achievement in school often determines their reactions and attributions to these causes (Frey, 2018). Through the combined lenses of theory of planned behavior and attribution theory, the current study examined how teachers perceive the outcomes of student decision-making; attribute said outcomes; develop expectations from said outcomes; and form perceptions from said expectations. In turn, students' perceived behavioral control or their confidence in their ability to perform a specific behavior may be directly affected by the perceptions of a significant influence in their lives, such as a teacher.

The data from the current study reinforces the need to dissect teacher perceptions. It allowed for the identification of objective evidence for a better understanding of student decision-making and subsequent academic performance when important decisions about students were to be made. The researcher contends that there is a need for

more concerted efforts toward making teachers aware of the potential influences on student behavior and decision-making that lead to their academic appraisals.

School administrators, teachers, and even researchers can impact student acceptance of individual responsibility at school by researching, developing, and implementing school-wide programs or extracurricular activities that focus on self-regulated strategies, building self-efficacy, reinforcing the competencies of social-emotional learning, and understanding the value of individual responsibility and how it transcends to all other areas of life beyond the classroom.

Relationship to Prior Research

Quantitative phase. The results of the current study indicated that student gender was a significant predictor of teacher's rating scale scores. Specifically, teacher-participants overall, perceived female students as more responsible than male students at school. These results support the findings of Buğdayci (2019) that determined male students, as compared to female students, were more dominant, less responsible, less expressive about their feelings, more aggressive, and more brash in an academic setting. Likewise, the results of the current study support the findings of Lau et al. (2018), who determined that female students displayed greater self-regulation than do males: females tended to employ goal-setting, environmental structuring, self-monitoring, record keeping, and help-seeking more often than male students. Also, female students exhibited greater motivation and ability to regulate their behaviors than male students.

The results of the current study indicated that student grade level was a significant predictor of teacher's rating scale scores. Specifically, teacher-participants overall, perceived 5th graders as more responsible than 3rd graders at school. These results support

the findings of Lau et al. (2018) which determined that student perceptions of responsibility for their own learning and knowledge of mathematics increased with elementary grade level. The authors noted that their findings were consistent with previous research suggesting that self-regulatory functioning increases as students progress through school and develop greater depths of knowledge. Likewise, the results of the current study support the findings of Fouladchang et al. (2009) who, while investigating the effect of gender and grade level on goal orientations in a sample of university undergraduates in Iran, determined that upper grade students had more mastery goal orientations than lower grade students, indicating more individual responsibility taken toward academic achievement.

The results of the current study indicated that teacher gender was a significant predictor of teacher's rating scale scores. Specifically, overall, male teacher-participants perceived students (overall) as more responsible at school than female teachers perceived students (overall). These results support the findings of Hopf and Hatzichristou (1999), who determined that male teachers assessed children's interpersonal behaviors as less problematic than did female teachers. Likewise, the results of the current study support the findings of Klassen and Chiu (2010) who determined that female teachers had greater workload stress, greater classroom stress from student behaviors, and lower classroom management self-efficacy, resulting in negatively perceived student engagement. Whereas, male teachers, though perceived as stricter in their classroom management approach, had less stress from student behaviors, as these behaviors were identified by the male teachers as less serious or problematic.

The results of the current study indicated that number of years of teaching experience was a significant predictor of teacher's rating scale scores. Specifically, teacher-participants with more years of teaching experience perceived students (overall) as less responsible at school than teacher-participants with less years of teaching experience did. These results support the findings of Ekici (2013), who found that newer teachers perceived themselves as more responsible for student success. This may indicate that any change in their perceptions of their own responsibility could potentially affect their perceptions of student acceptance of responsibility at school. If teachers perceive themselves as less responsible (with more years of experience) for student academic success, it is likely that their perceptions of students' responsibility will also change (Ekici, 2013). Likewise, the results of the current study support the findings of Unal and Unal (2012). The authors found that even though there were no significant differences between male and female teachers on their classroom management beliefs on the behavior and management scale, teachers with a higher number of years of teaching experience were found to be in favor of maximum teacher control (interventionism) more than that of teachers with less years of teaching experience. The authors indicated that with increased teacher control, came less acceptance for disruptive and irresponsible behaviors in the classroom (Unal & Unal, 2012).

The results of the current study indicated that free or reduced-price lunch (the designated measure of student socio-economic status for the current study) was not a significant predictor of teacher's rating scale scores. These results are contradictory to the findings of Miller, Jr. et al. (2013), who determined that teachers' perceptions are significantly lower in schools that serve relatively more economically disadvantaged

students. The authors stated that when a greater proportion of students are eligible for free or reduced-cost lunches, teachers have significantly lower perceptions of the character and academic development of students, of communications and associations with parents, and of the overall school climate.

The results of the current study also contradict the findings of Miller, Jr. et al. (2013), who stated that the possibility of their findings could be the result of a selection effect by which teachers with a more negative outlook or those less adept at working with socially and culturally diverse populations are more likely to secure employment in economically disadvantaged schools. Further, teachers serving disadvantaged populations may not be meeting their own career expectations, which manifests as negative perceptions of their school, students, and parents (Miller, Jr. et al., 2013 p. 154).

The results of the current study indicated that teacher access to adequate resources to support students was not a significant predictor of teacher's rating scale scores. These results contradict the findings of Timperley and Phillips (2003), who determined that professional development opportunities and supplemental resources provided a set of conditions that led most of the teachers in their study to change their expectations (in a more positive and optimistic direction) of how well children from low-income communities could achieve. Likewise, the results of the current study contradict the findings of Peters (2009) who stated that the opportunity and support afforded to the seventh-grade teacher in her study (allowing for the implementation of student-centered methods of instruction) positively impacted not only the teacher's perceptions of her students, but the students' perceptions of their teacher. Both teacher and students were observed to be enthusiastic and encouraged from the new process.

The quantitative results of the current study regarding teacher access to adequate resources to support students also contradicted the qualitative results of the current study, where four overarching themes emerged from careful coding processes of categorical development. One of these themes was “School programs/activities & supports influence student acceptance of individual responsibility at school.” One of the teacher-participants stated, “Resources could help to make a better classroom environment,” noting that this could make school more interesting and more conducive to learning. Another participant stated, “It helps to get involved in activities like sports or clubs. It teaches a sense of responsibility that they can apply to their own schooling”, and “helps me to connect with my students.” It should be noted that some teacher-participants referenced doing their best with what they have.

Qualitative phase. The results of the current study identified the following theme: Parents and families influence student acceptance of individual responsibility. These results support the findings of Hartup and Van Lieshout (1995), who determined that cultural variations and aspects of parent-child relationships (attachment, parental demandingness and responsiveness, and parenting style) are related to the development of socially responsible behavior in young children. The results of the current study identified the following theme: Teacher rapport and connectedness with students - influence student acceptance of individual responsibility. These results support the findings of Peters (2009) who determined that the perceptions held by the teacher that her students were capable of taking on the responsibility for their own learning not only strengthened their teacher-student relationship but also added value to the knowledge the students retained. Likewise, the students’ perceptions of their teacher shifted toward

respect and cooperation. The relationship between teacher and student can play an important role in the trajectory of a student's academic success and social development. Establishing a positive relationship with teachers can help a student feel safe and comfortable in his or her classroom environment (Lerner, 2003). Lerner (2003) also found that students are more likely to actively participate in class and challenge themselves academically in environments that they feel comfortable and safe in. Likewise, teachers who feel engaged by passionate students who work proactively at their professional relationship in class, tend to grade higher.

The results of the current study identified the following theme: School programs, activities, and supports influence student acceptance of individual responsibility. These results support the findings of Timperley and Phillips (2003), who determined that the professional development opportunities and supplemental resources provided a set of conditions that led most of the teachers in their study to change their expectations of how well children could achieve. They also found that these expectations were sustained over the following year, due to the increased academic performance outcomes of these students. O'Brien (1995) found the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities/ supportive programs and success in school are strongly associated as evidenced by student- participants' better attendance, higher levels of achievement, and aspirations to higher levels of education. A variety of activities and programs coupled with the opportunity for student involvement in activity-formation, based on student interests may increase the likelihood of expanded student participation. Teachers as leaders for these programs would increase the opportunity for students and teachers to connect on a professional level outside of the classroom, which may directly affect their professional

relationship inside of the classroom. The strengthening of this relationship, as noted in Lerner (2003), increased student acceptance of responsibility in school as evidenced by increased academic performance.

The results of the current study identified the following theme: Student acceptance of individual responsibility at school plays a role in their own academic success. These results support the findings of Crandall et al. (1965) and Steinberg and Elmen (1986) who determined that correlational data provided fairly strong evidence for a link between social-cognitive measures of student responsibility (academic locus of control, use of volitional strategies, and self-regulated learning) and academic achievement, as well as a link between behavioral manifestations of student responsibility and academic achievement. Likewise, the results of the current study support the findings of Martel, McKelvie, and Standing (1987), who found that an important single predictor of academic achievement among students is the extent to which they are held formally and individually responsible for their actions.

Limitations of the Study

Violated assumptions. The assumption violations of multiple regression on some of the relationships are potentially limiting. The current study used a multiple linear regression analysis in order to answer research question 1. This type of statistical analysis was chosen for several reasons. First, a regression analysis was used as the current study was not an experiment and rather examined the predictive relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable. The dependent variable in the study was predicted from a set of multiple predictor variables. The dependent variable and one independent or predictor variable were continuous in nature, whereas five independent or

predictor variables were categorical. The assumptions tested were linearity, homoscedasticity, independence, normality, outliers, and multicollinearity. Data analyses revealed that the assumptions of normality and multicollinearity appeared to be violated in some of the examined relationships. However, regarding normality, though the results from the Shapiro-Wilk Test indicated a violation (Shapiro-Wilk = .000), a visual inspection of the histogram appeared to meet the normality assumption, as the data contained approximately normally distributed errors, as did the normal P-P plot of standardized residuals (see Figure 12), which showed points that were not completely on the line, but close. Only extreme deviations from normality are likely to have a significant impact on the findings. Regarding multicollinearity**,** VIF scores were well below 10, however, tolerance scores were not all above 0.2 (Student Grade level = .168, Number of years teaching experience = .174) (see Table 4). Likewise, these same variables correlated with each other at .901.

Despite the violations, the researcher contends that a multiple linear regression was still the appropriate statistical analysis for the nature of the data. Due to the assumption violations, it is plausible that another data analysis technique (i.e., Non-parametric analyses) might have yielded different results, however according to Gibbons and Fielden (1993), non-parametric tests are usually less powerful than corresponding parametric tests which is a particular concern if the sample size is small.

Internal validity. Specifically, the threat of ambiguity about the direction of causal influence is a factor in reference to the correlation in the current study. As noted, the current study focused on the notion of a cyclic causality wherein student decision-making in an academic setting may form teacher expectations and subsequent perceptions

that impact the future decision-making of the student by affecting the student's perceived behavioral control for future behavioral decisions at school. In this case, not unlike the classic chicken or egg causality dilemma, it is difficult to determine whether teacher perceptions are *first* responsible for student decision-making (responsible or irresponsible), or if student decisions (responsible or irresponsible) are *first* responsible for teacher perceptions. Though it is implied that students are the initial ignitors of this cycle, there isn't absolute certainty. Therefore, causal inferences need to be made very carefully, perhaps investigated on an individual case by case basis.

The researcher has bolstered inferences pertaining to the current study by proposing a theoretical model which combines two separate frameworks. Individually, both have some basis in the research literature. However, the researcher could not find evidence of previous literature that connects theory of planned behavior and attribution theory as was done for the current study. Even so, the results may be consistent and theoretically justified with future research models of a similar or identical nature.

External validity. The specific sample population of teacher-participants and their student-data, sample size, as well as the setting in which the current study was conducted is a limitation in that the demographic make-up of the sample limits the generalizability of the findings to similar samples with similar demographics.

Knowledge of SES. The teacher-participants were not aware of the SES status of their students. Only the school principal was privy to this knowledge. The researcher acknowledges that the implications of knowing as opposed to not knowing the SES status of students may have resulted in different findings for free or reduced-price's statistical significance on teacher's rating scale scores.

Qualitative drawbacks. Qualitative interpretations are limited. Personal experience and knowledge influence observations and conclusions. For example, previous research suggests that job satisfaction influences teacher perceptions of their students (Klassen & Chiue, 2010). Does this mean that teachers who expressed a need for increased resources are unsatisfied with their jobs? This may be a difficult connection to make qualitatively (alone). Because qualitative research is open-ended, participants have more control over the content of the data collected. In the current study, teacher-participants may not have wanted to state that their perceptions of their students could be the result of their own personal unhappiness. In this regard, the researcher may not be able to verify the results objectively against the statements of the teacher-participants. Therefore, because qualitative research is a perspective-based method of research, the responses given cannot be definitively measured. Comparisons can be made and this can lead toward duplication, but for the most part, quantitative data is required for circumstances which need statistical representation and that is not part of the qualitative research process. For the current study, the researcher recognized the importance of a mixed method analysis, as it allowed for a cross-reference of the qualitative data with the quantitative data.

Recommendations for Future Practice

Specific recommendations for future practice can be made from the findings of the current study. Training programs for school districts should be developed, addressing how teachers, rated highly effective, relate to and connect with their students. Some of the literature addressed in Chapter 2 details how the connectedness of teachers with students can influence and reinforce student development. Students expressed that

teachers who most influenced their acceptance of individual responsibility at school were the ones that took the time to develop positive and professional working relationships (Peters, 2009). These programs should be built upon strategies with which to connect to students successfully. Strategies should detail how teachers can influence the behavior and character traits of their students by examining the concept of relatedness. By connecting with or relating to their teachers, students are more likely to develop the desire to demonstrate individual responsibility (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Likewise, extracurricular programs should be designed or developed to best impact student responsibility. A variety of activities and programs would increase the likelihood of expanded student participation. These activities should promote team building, dedication, mutually agreed upon goals, commitment, and responsibility. Teachers as leaders for these programs would increase the opportunity for students and teachers to connect on a professional level outside of the classroom, which may directly affect their professional relationship inside of the classroom. For example, the Comprehensive After School System of NYC (COMPASS NYC) comprises more than 900 programs serving young people enrolled in grades K-12. Through its network of providers, COMPASS NYC offers high quality programs with a strong balance of academics, recreation, enrichment, and cultural activities to support and strengthen the overall development of young people (New York City Department of Education, 2020). Many of these programs are run and led by teachers. The key elements of all COMPASS NYC programs are: Robust opportunities for youth to explore their interests and creativity, intentional integration of literacy and science, technology, engineering & mathematics (STEM) into traditional programming for all elementary and middle school

participants to expose them to content and professions of the future, age-appropriate programming that is hands-on, project-based and aligned with educational standards, environments that support social and emotional learning, high quality arts and sports instruction, strategies that support youth and families during critical educational transitions, and emphasis on youth engagement and making learning fun (New York City Department of Education, 2020).

Schools should conduct workshops for parents on effective ways to impact the individual responsibility of the student. Most often, parents are a school's most important partner and stakeholder in effective collaboration for understanding students. Parents may have information that can help teachers more effectively reach their students and vice versa. Sharing information and strategy is very important. These workshops could be held in the school, or a common community meeting place for all stakeholders to collaborate, brainstorm, information-share, and problem-solve.

Educators should make more of an effort to discover ways to better connect with their students. In some cases, responsibilities at home are prioritized over those that students have in school. In other cases, some of these students may lack the extra encouragement of accepting individual responsibility at home. This shines a light on the importance of teachers in the lives of their students. Schools should exhaust every effort to develop and offer a wide array of school activities and to increase, not only student participation in said activities, but their active involvement in activity- formation as well. This should be based on the interests and needs of the students. Educators should not dismiss their unique and important role in the growth of their students. It is an

opportunity for teachers to guide their students toward the invaluable lesson of accepting individual responsibility.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research might consider certain questions. First, how do specific teacher-characteristics interact with specific student-characteristics, and therefore impact student-decision making? Subsequently, how might this affect the accuracy of academic skill appraisals made by teachers? Certain considerations might include parental status (particularly whether the teacher has school-age children), and educational philosophy, especially attitude toward a broader subject than responsibility, such as discipline.

Second, what other specific observable behaviors (aside from the behaviors in the teacher's rating scale) underlie teachers' perceptions and how do these behaviors differentially affect judgments of students' academic skills? Consequently, there may be some variance in teachers' judgments of students' individual acceptance of responsibility at school that represents aspects of academic competence that the teacher's rating scale does not assess.

Third, the researcher contends that since the current study explores the cyclic relationship of student-decisions and teacher perceptions, it is recommended that future research consider a student's rating scale in which students rank the degree to which their teachers help to develop individual responsibility. Future replications of the current study may want to include further interview protocol questions to teacher-participants regarding how their teacher-student relationships are specifically impacted. Likewise, an interview protocol that explores student perceptions and possible factors that influence those

perceptions, could be very informative. Future research may focus specifically on student interview responses to how teachers affect student participation and motivation in school.

Fourth, the researcher recommends that an additional correlation be run in order to identify if verbally expressed "need" for resources correlates with job satisfaction, as it has been previously suggested that job satisfaction influences teacher perceptions of their students. Finally, the sample was restricted to one school location, consisting of six teacher-participants of three 3rd grade classes and three 5th grade classes, assessing the acceptance of responsibility of 15 students each (n = 90). Replications in other locations, with other grades, and with larger samples will need to be conducted before these findings can be more widely generalized.

Conclusion

Traditional education over the past century in America and around the world has focused on a skills-based curriculum. This curriculum has included academic subjects, such as reading, writing, mathematics, and the sciences, along with logical abilities related to technology. These skills are measurable using quantitative methods, and this has led to a major focus on assessment of these types of skills in education to determine student and school success. There has been a recent refocusing of academic approach that has been geared toward student-centered learning, with strategies designed to make learning meaningful in order to help students develop life skills (Starcher & Allen, 2016). According to Starcher and Allen (2016) these skills could be called the "reason for being" of humanistic psychology (p.2). They are the most uniquely human, enabling us to experience and share emotions and feelings, thoughts and beliefs, motivations and inspirations, and one's sense of meaning and identity within physical and social realities.

It is argued that these skills are of utmost importance and improve the quality of relationships between students and teachers (Starcher & Allen, 2016). In fact, Masburn et al., (2008) found that students who report high-quality relationships with their teachers exhibit better social adjustment and higher academic competence.

The recent refocusing or shift in how educators may apply these life skills to education started more than 20 years ago with the emergence of social emotional learning (SEL). According to Greenberg et al. (2003), the goal of the SEL movement is to foster the development of four interrelated sets of cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies: self-awareness, social-awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Starcher and Allen (2016) argued that this refocusing has brought personality and personality traits back to the forefront, especially in terms of the interrelationships between teacher, student, and academic success.

The conceptual framework for the current study was built upon the combined lenses of the theory of planned behavior and attribution theory. From this specific framework, a cyclic causal relationship became apparent. The researcher contends that it is not certain whether teacher perceptions are *first* responsible for student decision-making or if student decisions are *first* responsible for teacher perceptions. Causal inferences need to be made very carefully, perhaps investigated on an individual case by case basis. The current study explored the phenomenon of teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school, as well as factors that may influence those perceptions. The researcher's takeaway was that improving the professional relationship between teacher and student is the key to strengthening both teacher practice and student academic performance.

Admittedly, the researcher's preconceived notions of student responsibility in school centered firmly around the student *only*. Unexpectedly, investigating the voice of the teacher led the researcher to dive further into teacher perceptions. It drew more questions as to how and why teacher perceptions formed. This led the researcher to examine the professional relationship and interactions between teacher and student, which resulted in a change of perception for the researcher. The researcher's educational philosophy shifted to a deeper understanding of how students learn and grow, and how essential each experience is to a child. As educational leaders, when we establish a solid foundation for trusting relationships between teachers and students, we potentially set the stage for growth and student achievement. The researcher's educational philosophy shifted from a disciplinary perspective to a student-centered approach. The creation of a happy, safe environment where students feel good about stepping out of their comfort zones, taking risks, making mistakes, and ultimately learning from each experience is important for student growth. Gardiner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences, as well as principles of social and emotional learning are imperative in understanding that each student has something to bring to the table, just not the same thing, or at the same time. It is our professional responsibility as educators to optimize the individual strengths of each student and assist in building on their challenges. Educators cannot expect a blanket mastery of skills, because no two students are alike. Teacher expectations and subsequent perceptions should be based on this notion.

It is not uncommon to question one's purpose, but a better understanding of relationships and perceptions, and how education relies on both, can guide teachers and students closer to realizing what their purpose is. Ongoing exploration of teacher

experiences and perceptions could perhaps be the most valuable strategy with which to explore issues facing students today.

Appendix A

St. John's University IRB Approval

IRB-FY2020-442 - Initial: Initial Submission - Expedited - St. John's

irbstjohns@stjohns.edu <irbstjohns@stjohns.edu>
Thu 3/26/2020 11:55 AM
To: gile@stjohns.edu <gile@stjohns.edu>; Steven Postiglione <steven.postiglione02@my.stjohns.edu>

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

Federal Wide Assurance: FWA00009066

Mar 26, 2020 11:55 AM EDT

PI: Steven Postiglione
CO-PI: Elizabeth Gil
Ed Admin & Instruc Leadership

Re: Expedited Review - Initial - **IRB-FY2020-442** *TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT ACCEPTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY AT SCHOOL AND FACTORS THAT MAY INFLUENCE THOSE PERCEPTIONS: A Mixed Method Analysis*

Dear Steven Postiglione:

The St John's University Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for *TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT ACCEPTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY AT SCHOOL AND FACTORS THAT MAY INFLUENCE THOSE PERCEPTIONS: A Mixed Method Analysis*. The approval is effective from March 26, 2020 through March 25, 2021

Decision: Approved

PLEASE NOTE: If you have collected any data prior to this approval date, the data must be discarded.

Selected Category: 7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Sincerely,

Raymond DiGiuseppe, PhD, ABPP
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Professor of Psychology

Appendix B

Teacher's Rating Scale

Teacher's Rating Scale

Thank you for volunteering to participate in the current study.

Student # _____

Male/Female /Other_____ **BOX NOT FOR TEACHER USE**

Directions: Shown below is a group of statements regarding how you see your student at school. Please read each statement carefully and rate the student according to observations thus far. If he/she always behaves like this, check ALWAYS. If he/she behaves like this most of the time, check MOST OF THE TIME. If you aren't certain, check UNSURE. If he/she seldom behaves this way, check SELDOM. If he/she never behaves this way, check NEVER.
Please read carefully and respond honestly. The results will be treated in a confidential manner.

This Student:	ALWAYS	MOST OF THE TIME	UNSURE	SELDOM	NEVER
1. Makes excuses for not completing schoolwork.					
2. Completes assignments without help from others.					
3. Completes schoolwork after several reminders.					
4. Has the necessary supplies for schoolwork.					

This Student:	ALWAYS	MOST OF THE TIME	UNSURE	SELDOM	NEVER
6. Follows class rules even when I'm not here.					
7. Gets along well with classmates during group work.					
8. Willingly does his/her share in group projects.					
9. Is ready to begin classwork with the group.					
10. Must be reminded to start his/her classwork.					
11. Can be counted on to help maintain the classroom's appearance.					
12. Must be told exactly what to do.					
13. Participates in his/her own independent reading.					
14. Will ask a question if directions or instructions are not understood.					
15. Is willing to help others in class.					

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Introduction

I've arranged to meet with you (via skype or any telecommunication application of your choice) to discuss, through a series of sixteen questions, topics related to the research I'm conducting on student acceptance of individual responsibility at school, teacher perceptions of students, and factors which may influence those perceptions. As a teacher, you have a unique vantage point of student choices and behaviors at school. As a participant in the research, you have the right to ask questions at any time, to decide if you would prefer not to answer some questions, and to withdraw from the research at any time. The researcher appreciates your time and input. Please note that your responses will be confidential to the researcher. I look forward to our discussion.

1. How many years of teaching experience do you currently have? (Research Question 1)

2. How would you describe a responsible student? Describe characteristics, qualities, behaviors that fit your definition. (Research Question 1)

3. Based on your experience, do male students and female students differ in their acceptance of individual responsibility at school? If so, how? (Research Question 1)

4. Based on your experience, does student acceptance of individual responsibility at school increase, decrease, or remain unchanged with advancement of grade level? Explain (Research Question 1)

5. Based on your experience, is there a disparity between female students' and male students' acceptance of individual responsibility at school, based on grade level? Explain (Research Question 1)

6. In your own opinion, does student acceptance of individual responsibility at school have an effect on students' grades? Explain (Research Question 2)

7. In your opinion, are students responsible for their own learning? Explain (Research Question 2)

8. In your opinion, does student acceptance of individual responsibility at school differ for students of lower socio-economic status and higher socio-economic status? Explain (Research Question 1)

9. In your opinion, does teacher gender play a role in how the teacher perceives the student? Explain. (Research Question 1)

10. In your opinion, does student gender play a role in how the teacher perceives the student? Explain. (Research Question 1)

11. In your opinion, does number of years of teaching experience play a role in how the teacher perceives the student? Explain. (Research Question 1)

12. Do you feel that as a teacher, you have access to adequate resources to support your students at school? (Research Question 1)

13. In your opinion, does teacher access to adequate resources to support students play a role in how the teacher perceives the student? Explain. (Research Question 1)

14. If a student does not achieve academic success in school, what might be some influencing factors? Explain. (Research Question 2)

15. In your opinion, does student socio-economic status play a role in how the teacher perceives the student? Explain (Research Question 1)

16. As a teacher, what factors do you believe influence your perceptions of your students? (Research Question 1)

Appendix D

Permission Request to Superintendent of District to Conduct Research

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

[redacted]

(DATE)

Dear Assistant Superintendent [redacted]

My name is Steve Postiglione. I am a doctoral candidate at St. John's University. I am requesting permission to conduct research for my dissertati[redacted] Elementary School.

I am currently looking for 3rd and 5th grade teachers to volunteer to participate in my doctoral research study. Specifically, I am investigating a possible correlation between teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and factors that may influence those perceptions. Teacher-participants will be asked to fill out a 15 question Likert-scale (Always, Most of the time, Unsure, Seldom, Never) for 15 of their students regarding responsible behavior. The students will be selected by the teacher randomly by picking 15 names out of a hat. Teacher-participants will also be interviewed by me. The interview will consist of 16 questions. The interview will be conducted face-to-face, at a location of their convenience. It will last no more than 1 hour. The interview will be audio recorded. At no time will teacher-participants' personal information or the personal information of the students be used in the study. I will not be privy to any of the student information (name, address, etc.). I have a process that ensures this and can be further explained.

There is no compensation for participating in the study. There will be absolutely no penalties for deciding not to participate. Teacher-participants will be recruited via

email recruitment sent by me. If teacher-participants decide to participate, they may stop at any time at no penalty. There are absolutely no risks of harm for any participants in this study. All information on individual students will be kept confidential. I will not be privy to any of the students' names or personal information, as my design does not require that information. Their teachers will receive instructions on how to randomly select the sample and swap the students' names for numbers. Only the students' teachers and principal will have access to that information.

If permission is granted for this research to be done, it is agreed that my study will be conducted with your guidance and complete knowledge. No publication of the findings will be made without permission from your office. The findings of this study will offer educational leaders, teachers, the Boards of Education, parents and community members the data they need regarding the values of teacher perceptions of their students. Yet more specifically, an understanding of how these perceptions are formed and their impact on student's social, emotional and cognitive growth.

Thank you for your cooperation.
Sincerely,

Steven R. Postiglione

Appendix E

Permission Granted by Superintendent

[redacted]

January 5, 2020

Attn: St. John's Institutional Review Board

I have reviewed Steven Postiglione's approved IRB research protocol, including any letters of consent in "Teacher Perceptions of Student Acceptance of Individual Responsibility at School and Factors That May Influence Those Perceptions". I understand what he is asking of the individuals and grant him permission to conduct his study at [redacted]. I have the authority to do so.

If I have any further questions about the research study I understand that Steve can be reached at (516) 456-8833 or via e-mail at steven.postiglione02@stjohns.edu. I also understand that if I have any questions regarding the IRB approval or the rights of research participants I can contact Raymond DiGiusseppe, Ph.D, Chair, St. John's Institutional Review Board, at (718) 990-1440 or via email at digiuser@stjohns.edu.

Please contact with me any questions at [redacted]

Thank you in advance,

[redacted]

Appendix F

Sample E-Mail Recruitment to Teacher-Participants

Good Morning,
My name is Steve Postiglione. I am a doctoral candidate at St. John's University. I am currently looking for 3rd and 5th grade teachers to volunteer to participate in my doctoral research study. Specifically, I am investigating a possible correlation between teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and factors that may influence those perceptions. Teacher-participants will be asked to fill out a 15 question Likert-scale (Always, Most of the time, Unsure, Seldom, Never) for 15 of their students regarding responsible behavior. The students will be selected by the teacher randomly by picking 15 names out of a hat. Teacher-participants will also be interviewed by me. The interview will consist of 16 questions. The interview will be conducted via skype or any other telecommunication application of your choosing. It will last no more than 1 hour. The interview will be audio recorded with your consent only. At no time will your personal information be used in the study. I will not be privy to any personal student information. I will at no time be in contact with any students. I have a process that ensures this and can be further explained. There is no compensation for participating in the study. There will be absolutely no penalties for deciding not to participate. If you decide to participate, you may stop at any time at no penalty. There are no more risks for participating that the participants would encounter in daily activity. If you are interested, please call me at 516 456-8833 for further details and instruction. Thank you.
Steve

Amendment: In light of the recent novel corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic, and the urgency for social distancing to slow the spread of the virus, I am moving all research activities online, including email and video telecommunication.

Appendix G

Teacher-Participant Consent Form

Revised Request for Participation in a Research Project

Consent Form

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT ACCEPTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY AT SCHOOL AND FACTORS THAT MAY INFLUENCE THOSE PERCEPTIONS: A Mixed Method Analysis

Revision
In light of the recent novel corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic, and the urgency for social distancing to slow the spread of the virus, I am moving all research activities online, including email and video telecommunication. This is a revised consent form for the purpose of informing the participants of this change.

Background and purpose
This is a request for you to participate in a research study that intends to determine if there is a relationship between teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and factors that may influence those perceptions.

What does the study entail?
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following:
The teacher-participants will be administered teacher's rating scales regarding 15 of their students via email. The teacher's rating scale is a 15 question, 5-point Likert scale developed for the purpose of ascertaining the teachers' perceptions of his/her randomly selected students' acceptance of individual responsibility at school.
Teacher participants will be given one week to complete the teacher's rating scale and return them via email as instructed by the researcher. A 16-question interview will follow via skype or a telecommunication application most convenient to the participating interviewee. The interview/discussion could take approximately up to an hour and will be audio recorded with the advanced consent of the teacher-participant.

Potential advantages and disadvantages

Although you will receive no direct benefits through your participation, this research may help the researcher better understand the impact, if any, of teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and factors that may influence those perceptions. The findings of this study will offer educational leaders, teachers, the Boards of Education, parents and community members the data they need regarding the values of teacher perceptions of their students. Yet more specifically, an understanding of how these perceptions are formed and their impact on student's social, emotional and cognitive growth.

Your voluntary participation in this study poses no more risk than what would be encountered in daily activity. You may choose to end your participation at any time, without risk of penalty. You may also choose to not answer questions posed in either the teacher's rating scale or the interview protocol.

What will happen to the samples and the information about you?

All information on individual students and teachers will be kept confidential. The researcher will not be privy to any of the students' or teachers' names or personal information. The sample information and data collected will only be used in accordance with the purpose of the current study as described above. All the data collected and sample information will be processed without name, ID number, or other directly recognizable type of information. A class code number (i.e. 3rd Grade Class 1) links you to your data.

Any and all raw data collected will be destroyed by the researcher when results are obtained at the completion of the current study. It will not be possible to identify you in the results of the study when these are published.

Voluntary participation

Participation in the study is voluntary. If you wish to participate, sign the declaration of consent on the final page. If you agree to participate at this time, you may later withdraw your consent without fear of consequence or mistreatment. You can withdraw your consent to participate in the study at any time and without stating any particular reason. If you wish to withdraw your consent or have questions concerning the study, you may contact Steve Postiglione at (516) 456-8833.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University's Institutional Review Board, St. John's University, Dr. Raymond DiGiuseppe, Chair digiuser@stjohns.edu 718-990-1955 or Marie Nitopi, IRB Coordinator, nitopim@stjohns.edu 718-990-1440 as well as the researcher's mentor, Dr. Elizabeth Gil, gile@stjohns.edu.

Consent for participation in the study

I am willing to participate in the study. Print_____

Sign_____ I confirm that I have given consent to be audio-recorded.

Print_____ Sign_____

Appendix H

Teacher's Rating Scale Permission For Use Request

Steven R. Postiglione
[redacted]

September 20,

2018

Dr. Elizabeth T. Walsh

[redacted]

[redacted]

Dear :

My name is Steven Postiglione. I am a doctoral candidate at St. John's University in New York. I recently read your dissertation, *Academic Achievement And Acceptance Of Home And School Responsibilities By Elementary Students*, submitted in December 1980. I found your work to be very inspirational. I am working on a dissertation regarding teacher perceptions on the role of student individual responsibility as it pertains to achievement.

I am writing to request permission to use the teacher's rating scale that you developed, in order to survey a selected population of teachers for my study. I believe that the burdens of performance and achievement have fallen heavily upon the shoulders of teachers (alone), more so than ever before, while it seems that expectations for student individual responsibility are no longer components examined for success. I am very interested in amplifying the voices of teachers, whose careers, in many cases are threatened because of this. I believe that your teacher's rating scale would be an excellent instrument for my study. I am also requesting permission to slightly update the instrument with minor changes, such as "his/her" rather than just "his". I would also like to remove "most of the time" from item 12, as that may present confusion within a Likert scale.

Your response to this letter is greatly appreciated, as is the time you have taken to read it. Again, your work has been an inspiration to me, and I can't thank you enough. If it is easier to reply via e-mail, you can reach me at the following e-mail address: steven.postiglione02@stjohns.edu. Otherwise, written correspondence such as this is also greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Steven R. Postiglione

Appendix I

Permission Granted by Teacher's Rating Scale Developer

Permission Granted

Inbox x

Elizabeth Walsh <ewalsh18@cox.net> Wed, Sep 26, 7:13 PM

to Stevepost76

Mr. Postiglione,

You have my permission to use the Teacher's Rating Scale I developed for my dissertation research and make the requested change. I just ask that you give credit where credit is due.

Also, I wish you luck with your dissertation research and ultimately the granting of your doctoral degree.

Elizabeth Walsh

Appendix J

Parent/Guardian Information Letter

Request for Participation in a Research Project

Information Letter

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT ACCEPTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY AT SCHOOL AND FACTORS THAT MAY INFLUENCE THOSE PERCEPTIONS: A Mixed Method Analysis

Parent/Guardian Information Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Steve Postiglione. I am a doctoral student at St. John's University. I am currently conducting a research study that intends to determine if there is a relationship between teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and factors that may influence those perceptions. Furthermore, I am investigating how those teacher perceptions may affect students.

The current study will involve the random selection of students by the students' teacher. The teacher will complete a rating scale of his/her perception of students' responsibility, individually within the classroom. There is no participatory effort or task on the part of your son/daughter for the current study. You are not in any way obligated to grant permission for your child to participate in this research, and your child will not be penalized in any way for not participating. If permission is granted, you have the right to withdraw him/her from the study at any time without prejudice to you or your child. Please be assured that your child's name will not be revealed in any publication, document, recording, computer storage or any other form of report or presentation developed from this research. The selected students' names will be substituted for numbers. The researcher will not, at any time, be privy to your child's name or personal information. The researcher, will not, at any time have contact with your child.

Attached are two copies of the consent form. By signing this consent form you grant permission for your child to be rated for this study, as described above. If permission is granted, you should return a signed copy of the consent form in the stamped, return envelope and keep the second copy for your records. If you have any questions regarding this research or your rights related to participation in this research, feel free to call me at (516) 456-8833 or call Dr. Elizabeth Gil at (718) 990-1557. If you have questions about your child's rights as a research participant, you may contact the University's Institutional Review Board, St. John's University, Dr. Raymond

DiGiuseppe, Chair digiuser@stjohns.edu 718-990-1955 or Marie Nitopi, IRB Coordinator, nitopim@stjohns.edu 718-990-1440. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely, Steve Postiglione

Appendix K

Parent/Guardian Consent Form for Student Data Use

Consent Form for Participation in Educational Research

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT ACCEPTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY AT SCHOOL AND FACTORS THAT MAY INFLUENCE THOSE PERCEPTIONS: A Mixed Method Analysis

(Sample consent form).

I agree to allow my child to participate in a research study rating my child's individual acceptance of responsibility at school, as rated by his/her teacher. Mr. Postiglione will conduct this study under the direction of Dr. Elizabeth Gil. The nature and purpose of this study have been explained to me, and I understand there is no participatory effort or task on the part of my child for the current study. I understand my child's and my own identity will not be revealed to the researcher. I understand that the researcher will not, at any time be privy to the personal information of my child and will not have contact, at any time with my child. I understand that my child's personal information will not appear in any publication, documentation, computer storage, or any other form of report developed from this research. Additionally I understand I may withdraw my consent for participation at any time without penalty or prejudice. If I have any questions with regard to this study, I can contact Mr. Postiglione at (516) 456-8833 or call Dr. Elizabeth Gil at (718) 990-1557. I understand that if I have questions about my child's rights as a research participant, I may contact the University's Institutional Review Board, St. John's University, Dr. Raymond DiGiuseppe, Chair digiuser@stjohns.edu 718-990-1955 or Marie Nitopi, IRB Coordinator, nitopim@stjohns.edu 718-990-1440.

_____

Child's Name

_____ _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian *Date*

_____ _____

Doctoral Researcher *Date*

Appendix L

Sample Principal Recruitment E-Mail

Good Morning,

My name is Steve Postiglione. I am a doctoral candidate at St. John's University. I have received approval from Assistant Superintendent Lukas to conduct my study at Tremont Elementary School and I will be emailing some of your teachers for recruitment. I am currently looking for 3rd and 5th grade teachers to volunteer to participate in my doctoral research study.

Specifically, I am investigating a possible correlation between teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and factors that may influence those perceptions. Teacher-participants will be asked to fill out a 15 question Likert-scale (Always, Most of the time, Unsure, Seldom, Never) for 15 of their students regarding responsible behavior. The subjects of my study will be teachers. At no time will students be in contact with me. The teacher-participants will randomly select student names and substitute those names for numbers, and then rate the randomly selected students on how they perceive the students' acceptance of responsibility at school. I will not be privy to any student names or personal information.

If you agree to participate, a list or key of student names and their designated numbers will be given to you by the teacher-participants. Your role as principal would be to identify which of these students receive free or reduced priced lunch, without divulging the students' names to me. There is a blank box at the top right of the teacher's rating scale for you to simply check if the student receives free or reduced price lunch. Free or reduced price lunch is being used as a measure of student socio-economic status, which is a variable that I will be examining to see if it plays a role in teachers' perceptions of their students. There is no compensation for participating in the study. There will be absolutely no penalties for deciding not to participate. If you decide to participate, you may stop at any time at no penalty. There are no more risks for participating that the participants would encounter in daily activity. If you are interested, please call me at 516 456-8833 for further details and instruction. Thank you.
Steve

Amendment: In light of the recent novel corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic, and the urgency for social distancing to slow the spread of the virus, I am moving all research activities online, including email and video telecommunication.

Appendix M

Principal Participation Consent Form

Revised Request for Participation in a Research Project

Consent Form

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT ACCEPTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY AT SCHOOL AND FACTORS THAT MAY INFLUENCE THOSE PERCEPTIONS: A Mixed Method Analysis

Revision

In light of the recent novel corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic, and the urgency for social distancing to slow the spread of the virus, I am moving all research activities online, including email and video telecommunication. This is a revised consent form for the purpose of informing the participants of this change.

Background and purpose

This is a request for you to participate in a research study that intends to determine if there is a relationship between teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and factors that may influence those perceptions.

What does the study entail?

The teacher-participants will be administered teacher's rating scales regarding 15 of their students via email. The teacher's rating scale is a 15 question, 5-point Likert scale developed for the purpose of ascertaining the teachers' perceptions of his/her randomly selected students' acceptance of individual responsibility at school. Teacher participants will be given one week to complete the teacher's rating scale. A 16 question interview of each teacher-participant will follow via skype or any other video conferencing application that the teacher-participant feels comfortable using. The teacher-participants' telecommunication interview will be audio recorded, with their advanced consent.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

Upon the completion of the teacher's rating scales, participating teachers will be instructed to return the teacher's rating scales to you (via email). As building principal, you have access to particular information that teachers do not. The information being referred to is student designation as a free or reduced-price lunch recipient. Teacher participants will be randomly selecting 15 students each. They will be substituting the

students' names for numbers as directed by the researcher. At no time will the researcher have access to student names, nor will the researcher ever be aware of what numbers were substituted for which student names. However, the teacher participants will provide you, the building principal with their lists. The researcher has placed an empty square box at the top right of each teacher's rating scale. Using the lists provided to you from the teacher participants, please place a check in the box of those students receiving free or reduced-price lunch.

Potential advantages and disadvantages

Although you will receive no direct benefits through your participation, this research may help the researcher better understand the impact, if any, of teacher perceptions of student acceptance of individual responsibility at school and factors that may influence those perceptions. The findings of this study will offer educational leaders, teachers, the Boards of Education, parents and community members the data they need regarding the values of teacher perceptions of their students. Yet more specifically, an understanding of how these perceptions are formed and their impact on student's social, emotional and cognitive growth.

Your voluntary participation in this study poses no more risk than what would be encountered in daily activity. You may choose to end your participation at any time, without risk of penalty. You may also choose to not answer questions posed in either the teacher's rating scale or the interview protocol.

What will happen to the samples and the information about you?

The researcher will not be privy to any of the students' or teachers' names or personal information. The sample information and data collected will only be used in accordance with the purpose of the current study as described above. All the data collected and sample information will be processed without name, ID number, or other directly recognizable type of information.

Any and all raw data collected will be destroyed by the researcher when results are obtained at the completion of the current study. It will not be possible to identify you in the results of the study when these are published.

Voluntary participation

Participation in the study is voluntary. If you wish to participate, sign the declaration of consent on the final page. If you agree to participate at this time, you may later withdraw your consent without fear of consequence or mistreatment. You can withdraw your consent to participate in the study at any time and without stating any particular reason. If you wish to withdraw your consent or have questions concerning the study, you may contact Steve Postiglione at (516) 456-8833.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University's Institutional Review Board, St. John's University, Dr. Raymond DiGiuseppe, Chair digiuser@stjohns.edu 718-990-1955 or Marie Nitopi, IRB Coordinator, nitopim@stjohns.edu 718-990-1440 as well as the researcher's mentor, Dr. Elizabeth Gil, gile@stjohns.edu.

Consent for participation in the study

I am willing to participate in the study. Print_____
Sign_____

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Vita

Name	*Steven R. Postiglione*
Baccalaureate Degree	*Bachelor of Science/Arts, St. John's University, Jamaica Major: Psychology*
Date Graduated	*May, 1998*
Other Degrees and Certificates	*Master of Education, St. John's University, City, Major: Education* *School Administrator and Supervisor (2007)*
Date Graduated	*May, 2004*