

The Duality of Equity and Quality in American History:
Through the Lens of Arts Education in Marginalized Communities in Chicago

BY

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DEDICATION

I thank God, who has called and trusted me with purpose and continually equips me with everything I need to bring Him glory. I thank my entire devoted family and in-laws, especially my TT and my selfless Mom for your love and unwavering support throughout my life in all of my many endeavors. I am truly blessed. Thank you to my leaders, Apostle & Prophetess Hinton; you make sure that I walk in excellence and have the support needed to do so. Thank you to my wife. You are my greatest supporter. You challenge, encourage, pray with and for me, and you somehow are confident I can do anything. Thank you for believing, sometimes, enough for both of us. Thank you to my precious gifts, Tia & Mila. You inspire me to be the best so that you can have a Daddy of whom you can be proud. Thank you to every extended family member who claims me as their own. I have been blessed with a community of loved ones, more than I could ever deserve. To my sons, thank you for choosing to love me. You are my purpose. Thank you. To my special friends, the few who know me deeply, I appreciate you from my soul.

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ABSTRACT

Examining the historical trajectory of American arts education exposes two intersectional themes: quality and equity. This research study addressed the need for equitable, quality arts programming in schools across America. The purpose of the study was to understand the equity and quality of arts programs in urban and marginalized communities in Chicago. The questions posed to address the problem were: “Is there a residual impact of past disproportionate educational experience still affecting students today? If so, what is the effect?”, “What are the characteristics of programming that determine quality for a preparatory arts education?” and “What are the characteristics of quality that determine an equitable experience for students in marginalized communities?” A review of literature provided foundational support for the researcher to examine the intersectionality of quality and equity in American education. Critical race theory and intersectionality was used to address the problem in the context of some historical racial events. The target population included artists from various art genres. The researcher used purposive sampling to select participants from a pool of musicians, as well as artists who specialize in the visual arts, graphic design, and photography, who have evidence of established careers and informed the research by sharing their experiences of how they were prepared for their careers in the arts while attending their schools in Chicago. A phenomenological design was chosen for this qualitative research study. The researcher conducted private, virtual, individual interviews with each participant. The interviews were recorded and transcribed into text data for analysis, which was then categorized and coded to explore key emergent themes. The researcher conducted this study to understand the quality of school arts programs and examine the practices of equity. The results of

this study can be used to incite awareness of the issue and provide solutions that promote positive change in initiating more equitable and quality opportunities for the students in urban communities in Chicago.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Students who have the privilege of studying fine and performing arts learn that the arts encompass a vast array of content defined as the use of skill or imagination to create aesthetic objects, environments, experiences, or any mode of expression that can be shared with others (Gould, 2017). Art has been and is primarily created by all manner of artists globally. Based on the many contexts of its existence, art can be deemed as one of the defining characteristics of the human species and is practiced by almost all human cultures (Morris-Kay, 2010). Traditional fine arts are illustrated by poetry, drama, stories, and visual arts including painting, drawing, and sculpture. Theatre, dance, and music, in their essence, are components of performing arts (Gould, 2017). Accessibility to programs that teach the breadth of fine and performing arts varies based on several factors. The focus of the research aligns with who studies art and how it is studied in America, with a central concentration on the impact in Chicago.

Study Background/Foundation

A review of American education, specifically arts education, results in two themes to be analyzed. The first theme is quality. Quality, in this context, deals with the terms of value to the beneficiaries. The second theme is equity, which is defined as valuable shares. It is also referenced in the principle of impartiality concerning opportunity. The themes of quality and equity, while significant separately, intersect when addressing who and how art is studied, especially within some urban communities in America.

Research shows that there is a disparity between the number of White and non-White students who participate, excel, and later invest in quality arts programs (Koza,

2008). According to the work that addresses the racial divide in the education system, Shaw (2018) suggested that recent reports have shown ties between race and low participation in the arts. The correlation between race and low participation is credited to the concentrated lack of access to enriched coursework (Shaw, 2018). The term used to reference the issue is considered “educational apartheid” (Shaw, 2018, p. 516). Students at a lower socioeconomic status, Hispanic students, and English language learners are often significantly underrepresented in arts programs (Kelley & Demorest, 2016). According to Kozol (2008), in 1975, a high school named after Martin Luther King was built located in an upper middle-class part of the city, near the Lincoln center. The goal was to attempt to integrate White students with Black and Hispanic students from the same neighborhood. White parents chose not to enroll their students despite the promising future of the school, leaving the school to become a neighborhood school for Black and Hispanic students who were not privileged to access alternative options at more successful schools. The disparity of participation in arts programs correlates to the issue of disproportionate education in schools across major cities in America (Kozol, 2008).

Current State of the Field in which the Problem Exists

Much like before the 1960s, the trend in contrasting schools across communities is illustrated in urban American cities today. Schools likened to those that predate the civil rights movement are highly segregated, proving economic and racial segregation within the education system (Ostrander, 2015). Even in places like New York, one of the most diverse cities in the world, children are segregated by both race and class, deeming it "carefully curated segregation" (Wexler, 2018, p. 20). Urban communities have a host

of disadvantaged children because schools are located in segregated high-poverty neighborhoods and have been beneficiaries of multigenerational segregation and poverty. Students who attend schools in marginalized communities are often not afforded the luxuries of having quality arts programs. This is the reality of many school communities across America, including urban Chicago.

Historical Background

Readers should understand that throughout the lineage of American history, since origin, racial segregation and inequality have been a prevalent fundament at the core of all policies, especially within the economic and education sectors (Ostrander, 2015). The current condition of the American education system is a reflection of the systemic institutional biases that underpinned founding legislature. In the 1950s, one of the most famous United States Supreme Court ruled that separation of Blacks and Whites in public schools was unconstitutional, following a lawsuit on the Board of Education by Brown. This act ended the separate but equal laws that governed America; however, a long history of disproportionality followed. Financial and economic issues negatively impacted funding in education back in the 1960s (Davidson, 2007). Migration of White people from urban areas in masses resulted in unfair financial cuts to urban school programs, especially the arts, which can still be traced to today (Davidson, 2007). The impact of our nation's past is not far removed. Recognizing one's history and assessing the current condition allows one to conclude there are problems in the systemic structure of the American education system, which need to be addressed.

Deficiencies in the Evidence

Deficiencies in the literature arise in the context of the themes of equity and quality. Neither equity nor quality, in their essence, have been studied in relation to arts curriculum, especially in schools in marginalized communities. Therefore, this study explores the intersectionality of the two themes, equity and quality, relating to arts curriculum. Researchers have addressed the significance of arts programs for all students and have promoted access to arts education resources. Organizations, including Save the Music Foundation, declare in their mission that every student deserves the opportunity to make music as part of their school day (Save The Music Foundation, 2020). Their mission is to provide students access to the arts. Access is vital for all students; however, it only serves as one of the foundational components of equity, the more important principle that should be established. Access is often marked by providing identical resources, usually money, to support the start of programs for students from various cultural backgrounds and neighborhoods, who have varying life experiences. The expectation of identical results across the varied dynamics is not practically nor morally responsible. Often, when equity is studied, the immediate resolution is to offer access by means of financial contribution. However, funds are often not an encompassing resolution to issues that relate to quality. Access is necessary but fails to be a sole solution to issues of equity, in whole. Therefore, equity, in its full essence, needs to be studied.

Principles that intersect with equity, like quality, often get silenced by the pacification of monetary donations. The issue of disproportionate arts education in marginalized communities is not solely solved by money, specifically because funding

does not directly equate to quality programming. Quality is a factor that has not yet been explored in literature concerning the evaluation of arts programming, especially in marginalized communities. There is little to no evidence that extends the conversation of meeting the needs of all students to include the quality of programs or curriculum. Therefore, there is a need to discover standards that have not yet been established, and that can be used to understand arts programs in marginalized communities.

Problem Statement

There is a need for equitable, quality arts programming in schools across America. Nearly 20% of the lowest income children in the United States receive no education in music (Stokas, 2016). This consistent trend across visual arts, dance, and theater compiled by the 2012 report reveals a correlation between socioeconomic status and access to education in the arts (Stokas, 2016). While some programs that specialize in the arts may be offered as extracurricular electives or after-school programs, there is disproportionate access to quality arts curriculum across cities and communities in America, especially Chicago.

There are several components that contribute to the problem. One facet of the problem is that urban schools have lacked the financial resources, support, and pool of qualified and passionate teachers to offer sustained, quality arts programs, especially ones that are culturally relevant to students in urban areas with low socioeconomic status. Governmental policies that mandate the way funds are allocated to schools for programming can be viewed as a source of financial issues. Another factor that plays a role is legislation requirements for testing that prevent students from experiencing the arts, for the sake of intensive core subject instruction. School districts in urban

communities with low performing schools increased instruction time in elementary school English language arts and math while decreasing time spent on other subjects, resulting in reduced or eliminated class time for music and art (Smith, 2009). This directly impacts student access and participation in arts programs for students in the urban communities, further steepening the racial divide of quality education as White students in high-performing schools are not subject to the same cuts (Smith, 2009).

Audience

The audience of this study encompasses a broad range of people from various communities. Generally, members of the Black and Latin communities across America, and specifically in Chicago, may have interest in the study because of the history of the America judicial and legislative systems as they relate to racially motivated laws and policies. Members of the education community may have direct ties to the study, considering the basis of education is one of the primary factors being studied. The arts community could find relevance to the purpose of the study examining an issue within the field of arts, especially impacting future generations. The study may also be of interest to advocates for and allies of each said community, as stakeholders have investment in matters that impact and affect the communities they serve. The community of students who seek and deserve a quality, equitable education, especially those who focus on the arts, is the central target audience, as this study is used to analyze the dynamics of the issue of equitable quality arts programming. The study should provide content for solutions to be drawn to address the problem, thereby directly impacting the future of student communities.

Specific Leadership Problem

Considering the purpose of the study is to understand the equity and quality of arts programs in urban and marginalized communities in Chicago, the broader context of the study relates to understanding the intersection of equity and quality as it impacts all Americans' lives. The leadership theory that aided in the effective analysis of the problem and guided the research study is path-goal leadership theory, conjoined with the theories of critical race theory (CRT) and intersectionality. These theories help to bring context and understanding to some of the historical racial events that have occurred.

Path-goal leadership theory is the foundational theory for the research. Evans (1970), House (1971), House and Dessler (1974), and House and Mitchell (1974), researchers most closely associated with the theory, suggested that path-goal theory involves setting the path for a follower to achieve their goals. Goal attainment is accomplished by the leader facilitating the process by providing information and resources as well as helping to remove obstacles that could thwart goal achievement (Martin, 2010). The effective leader identifies, manages, and works to satisfy their followers' needs, helps the followers identify the most effective path for goal attainment, foresees and alleviates hurdles, and then rewards their loyal followers for achieving their goals (Dixon & Hart, 2010; Martin, 2010). Exploring the quality of arts programs, and the impact it has on students directly correlates to the obstacles that students in marginalized communities must overcome to achieve success in the arts. A closer examination of subsidiary underpinnings that cause disparity leads to a better understanding of the issues of racism and classism, which can be traced in the lining of American history.

Critical race theorists argue that most of the racism remains hidden beneath a veneer of normality, and it is only the more crude and obvious forms of racism that are seen as problematic by most people. Milner and Laughtner (2015) proposed that issues of race are everywhere, and race will continue to be an area of importance for inquiry and examination in society and subsequently, education. The CRT framework challenges historicism by stressing the need to understand racism within its social, economic, and historical context (Matsuda et al., 1993). The essential framing of critical race theory is that race should be centered in discussions of equity and justice. Critical race theorists focus on disrupting, exposing, challenging, and changing racist policies that perpetually subordinate and disenfranchise certain groups of people, and ones that are used in attempt to maintain the status quo. An example of the work of CRT would be to implement the practice of a curriculum, or set of curricular policies, in teacher education that centers poverty, race, and their intersections, and demonstrates social justice-oriented action that aligns with and applies the principles of CRT (Milner & Laughter, 2015). Intersections of themes of achieving equity and quality are the core of this study.

The idea of intersectionality is a widely used, sometimes misused, concept in contemporary social science. The term addresses the question of how multiple forms of inequality and identity interrelate in different contexts and over time, such as the interconnectedness of race, class, gender, disability, and the likes (Gillborn, 2015). Intersectionality is an idea that derives from issues within critical race theory. Kimberlé Crenshaw (1995) is the leader of the intersectionality theory that was studied. Crenshaw first introduced her theory of intersectionality in 1989 when she argued that the courts had a narrow view of discrimination, limiting their thinking to linear issues in complex

situations like racism and sexism. For example, Crenshaw posited that the law disregarded that Black women were both female and Black, independently of each other and simultaneously so. Therefore, they were subject to discrimination for each factor and combination for both components of their being. Crenshaw argued against CRTs seemingly utopian ideas that once the racism and biases were removed from legal and socioeconomic sectors, all would have a neutral playing field. Instead, Crenshaw posited that discrimination is still prevalent in society since the American socioeconomic and legal infrastructure was founded on racist ideas. The underpinning of Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality overlaps with the intersection of the two themes: equity and quality in arts education in urban communities in America. The direct addressing of racist foundations in which the legal establishment has perpetuated segregation in America's education system acts as a framework for the researcher in this study to address the foundations of disproportionate quality in arts education in urban communities in Chicago. The researcher used the framework of path-goal leadership, foundational components of critical race theory, and integrated principles of intersectionality to address issues of inequity, inequality, and historically racial and class geographical disparities succinctly. The direct approach prompts readers to analyze the why component of the current societal conditions as well as challenge and promote necessary change in favor of the students in the marginalized communities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological research study is to understand the equity and quality of arts programs in urban and marginalized communities in Chicago. Students need to receive quality instruction (Ismail & Anur, 2020). The research addressed how to

establish standards of quality and accurately identify where programming can and should be implemented to address the access to quality arts programs in marginalized communities. The more extensive issue of equity is elusive. The significance of this study is to inspect the quality of arts programming that has been established and determine the equity of programming for the students in marginalized communities in Chicago. More important than the matter of funding and supplying programming as a passive means to addressing disparity, the study is designed to understand both the equity in access to programs and the valuable quality content provided to students in the disenfranchised communities in Chicago to ensure that their specific needs are met.

The results illuminated systemic structures and policies that have been established and practiced concerning arts education in urban districts of Chicago. Two factors emerged from the significance of the results. The results that provide evidence of equitable, quality arts programs in Chicago allow the researcher to replicate these successful aspects and incorporate those practices into solutions. Inversely, results that show aspects of arts programs that are inequitable and/or have components of poor quality lead to the researcher addressing the issue by providing solutions that incite awareness of the issue and promote positive change in initiating more equitable and quality opportunities for the students in the communities being studied.

Methodology and Research Design Overview

The research problem was addressed using a qualitative study that is phenomenological. Individual interviews were used to gather data and information pertaining to the subject. Phenomenology is used to study the structures of consciousness experienced from the first-person point of view by examining the lived experience of

humans (Smith, 2018). Using this design, the researcher gathered data derived from in-depth interview transcripts. The questions in the interviews were designed to explore participants' experiences with the subject. The sample included five participants. The participants were selected from a pool of candidates who met the following criteria:

1. Former students who lived in the city or suburban, urban areas of Chicago during their elementary and or high school years.
2. Former Chicago students who did and did not experience an arts curriculum during school hours.
3. Artists of any medium, who attended school in Chicago, and now have careers in the arts or college students who are pursuing studies in the arts.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to explaining the details of the methodology and design of the study and share how they achieve the purpose and address the problem.

Research Questions

This study concerning quality arts programming in marginalized communities in Chicago is explored through the lens of quality and equity. The study was a qualitative methodology that used a phenomenological design. An interview method was used to gather data from the participants and incorporated the following research questions:

1. Is there a residual impact of past disproportionate educational experience still affecting students today? If so, what is the effect?
2. What are characteristics of programming that determine quality for a preparatory arts education?
3. What are the characteristics of quality that determine an equitable experience for students in marginalized communities?

These research questions guided the interviews and helped the researcher to collect data that was analyzed to address the need to establish standards for evaluating arts programs in marginalized communities.

Study Limitations

The research process in this study was subject to limitations due to the inherent bias of the researcher. The researcher's experiences were similar to the participants' experiences. This situation, theoretically, could have been grounds for the insertion of bias in the interview component of the data collection and analysis process. However, the researcher was able to "refrain from judgment" by using a method of bracketing and acknowledgement of bias, referred to as epoch (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33). Anderson (2010) offered in article that discussed the structure of qualitative research, when gathering data, although unavoidable, the researcher's presence can affect the participants' responses. Therefore, the researcher reduced facial expressions and tone inflections that may have implied agreement or disagreement with the participants' responses. Doing so helped to mitigate the risk of the research being influenced by the researcher's personal biases and idiosyncrasies to maintain the quality of the research (Anderson, 2010).

A limitation specific to this study was the population. The participants in the study were limited to artists who have been able to establish successful careers in their fields of the arts, in respect to their positive or negative experiences in their arts education programming at their schools in urban communities in Chicago. Limiting the study to successful artists eliminated the possibility to learn from former students who may have exhibited promising careers in the arts. The students who do not have successful careers

could offer a unique perspective to the study as talented individuals who have potential but may not have achieved a successful career due to their arts education preparation program.

Study Delimitations

The study primarily focused on the culture and climate of arts programs at schools in urban communities in Chicago. Therefore, the scope was narrowed to only include the experiences of former students who attended schools in Chicagoland area. While students who attended schools outside of Chicago may have shared experiences, this study focused on a very specific group of participants. Therefore, the findings and results may not necessarily generalize to other subjects, locations, or future time periods.

Definitions of Key Terms

The research concerning arts education utilizes some operational terms. These terms are defined for the purpose of the study as follows:

Arts Education

Encyclopedia Britannica (2020) credits the work of László Moholy-Nagy, a Hungarian-born American painter, sculptor, photographer, designer, theorist, and art teacher, whose vision of a nonrepresentational art consisting of pure visual fundamentals contributed to the fine and applied arts in the mid-20th century. Arts education is broadly defined as the process of teaching and learning how to create and produce the visual and performing arts. Arts education includes learning to understand and evaluate art forms created by others (Arts Education Partnership Working Group, 2020).

Critical Race Theory

The critical race theory movement is a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationships among race, racism, and power (Cabrera, 2018). In a scholarly journal, Cabrera (2018) determined that CRT is comprised of six tenets. First, *racism as normal*, which established that racism is not a mere function of a few racist individuals; rather, it is a structured part of everyday life in the U.S. Second, *interest convergence*, which argues that the interests of People of Color will only be advanced to the degree that White interests are advanced. Third, *social construction*, which posits that race is socially constructed and therefore should not be essentialized, meaning racial groups have no inherent characteristics. The fourth and fifth tenets, *differential racialization* and *intersectionality*, correlate to anti-essentialism. Differential racialization examines the trends of racial marginalization across racial groups, while intersectionality examines multiple established forms of oppression that contextualize lived experiences as in being Latinx, poor, and/or gay. The sixth tenet, *unique voices of color*, is aligned with non-White people's experiences with racism, garnering them the perspective that is different than Whites, therefore emanating racial truth. Additionally, two other tenets are sometimes included in CRT legal analyses. The permanence of racism is used to argue that racism is a prevalent, permanent feature of society. *Whiteness as property*, another tenet, is two-fold, positing that the United States legal system is founded upon property rights and that Whiteness has historically functioned, and continues to function as a form of property.

Equity

Equity in the field of education is a diverse term that takes on various avenues of conversation. The varying meanings of equity likely generate disagreements that argue equity by definition or how it should be measured (Rivers & Samuel, 2002). In this paper, equity is used in the context of justice (Kraehe, 2017). Beyond the shared relation to equality, equity will be explored for its complexity in how it can be applied to the study's problem.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a type of analysis used by scholars to study and theorize cross-sections where points of differentiation intersect and raise concern for structural inequalities (Lizzio, 2013). Subjects that trend with the theme include gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, and disability.

Quality

Quality is a general term that is superficially understood but often not defined. Quality is a more complex term than it appears. Often, professionals struggle to understand the concept as dictionary definitions are typically inadequate and experts define quality in various ways. A variety of perspectives can be utilized in defining quality. A modern definition of quality is essentially meeting or exceeding expectations (Sower, 2011). In this study, the term quality refers to standards of excellence. This study helped to define benchmarks of quality as it relates to Arts education.

Summary

Urban schools have lacked the resources, support, and a pool of qualified and passionate teachers to offer sustained, quality arts programs, especially ones that are

culturally relevant to students in urban areas with low socioeconomic status (Ostrander, 2015). Financial and economic issues had a significant adverse effect on music and arts funding dating back to the 1960s in education, primarily when it was known that white flight from urban areas resulted in cuts in financial support for school programs, primarily the arts. Schools in affluent suburbs had parents who would support instrumental music, while in many urban school districts, music was considered a luxury (Davidson, 2007). Most schools in the urban community lack a sequential arts program that would allow students to develop the necessary skills to access higher-level arts education classes, making it highly unlikely for students to successfully pass the entrance audition for high school and college music and art programs. This research is designed to understand if students in urban and marginalized areas are prepared for careers in the arts by their school system. Chapter 2 highlights the significance of quality and equity, which are lacking in the field of arts education by reviewing the history of the American education system. Chapter 3 will discuss the methodology and design used to conduct the study. Chapter 4 is a report of the findings the researcher was able to acquire through the form of semi structured interviews with participants of the sample. Chapter 5 is the final chapter that includes an in-depth analysis of the findings from the study. The analysis is then used to formulate and pose solutions that address the problem.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Organization, Strategy, and Justification of the Study

Organization of the Review

The purpose of this qualitative, non-experimental study was to examine the work that has already been done concerning the intersectional themes of equity and quality in arts education (Hart, 2009). The researcher has used the literature to be informed of the historical and political structure of the subject, highlighted relationships between ideas and practice, and provided a new perspective that relate to application and implementation for achieving progress in arts education (Hart, 2009). The literature is used to substantiate the problem and provide insight into what, if anything, has been done surrounding the issue. Specifically, learning how quality has been used and how equity is or is not factored into decisions indicated areas of support for the researcher to pose suggestions that can be implemented as a goal to establishing standards of quality for arts programs for students in marginalized communities. Using the literature to understand the historical events and foundational structures that have led to the current condition in the field arts education in America will help to illuminate the contributors to the problem of disparity in urban communities.

Justification of the Study

The significance of this literature review was to gather information that helped the researcher inspect the quality of arts programming in urban communities. The literature allowed the researcher to determine what has been established and determine the equity of programming for the students in marginalized communities in Chicago with more affluent communities. A review of literature allows researchers to achieve pertinent goals

in the research process. The literature review was designed for the researcher to dissect the significance of the problem being explored and to study examples of methodologies and techniques used in the past to address the subject (Hart, 2009). The result of the research led researchers to make observations and assertions that there is a disparity between the amount of Black and Latinx and White students who participate, excel, and later invest into quality arts programs (Hart, 2009). One of the primary intents of the literature review is to address specific questions that inform the overall research study. This review of literature is used to address questions pertaining to equity and quality in arts education through an extensive review of both historical and present influences.

The Past

Racial segregation and inequality can be traced throughout the lineage of American history. The origin of racial injustices and inequalities can be traced back to days of slavery in America when laws deemed it illegal for Blacks even to be taught to read (Rasmussen, 2010). In an excerpt from the 1740 South Carolina Negro Act, hefty consequences were listed, stating:

Whereas, the having slaves taught to write, or suffering them to be employed in writing, may be attended with great inconveniences; Be it enacted, that all and every person and persons whatsoever, who shall hereafter teach or cause any slave or slaves to be taught to write, or shall use or employ any slave as a scribe, in any manner of writing whatsoever, hereafter taught to write, every such person or persons shall, for every such offense, forfeit the sum of one hundred pounds, current money. (Rasmussen, 2010, Para. 4)

Having such a lengthy history of sects of people intentionally disenfranchised throughout countless generations, one can reliably and with validity connect the current culture and practices. Both surreptitious and overt, disproportionate equities are

demonstrated today through the systemic evolution genuine to American tradition of White supremacy.

The era of the 1960s became a historical pivot, when activists fought for civil rights and racial equality, especially in education. Formerly being underrepresented in schools across the nation, there has been a significant increase in Latino and Black children who attend school since the 1960s (Ostrander, 2015). However, today, schools are resembling those that predate the civil rights progressive feats by becoming increasingly more segregated than they have been in the last 40 years (Ostrander, 2015). This regression is primarily due to the systemic low property values and resources that are conventional in urban and migrant communities where Students of Color tend to reside. This divide perpetuates economic and racial segregation within the education system (Ostrander, 2015). A retrospective examination of the beginning of race relations and the origin of laws on the matter helps provide context for the present condition of segregation in the American education system today.

In a book that spoke to the condition and events of the United States' past, regarding education concerning race and class, Upchurch (2016) recapped the challenges of racial inequality following the Civil War that federal and state leaders faced about positioning Black Americans. Equating the fundamental constitutional rights of White Americans to Black Americans was not an idea that was easily digested by most Southerners and some Northerners. Among instances that highlighted the issue, Oliver Brown, a Black man who sought to enroll his daughter at their all-White neighborhood school, was denied and appointed a segregated Black school, miles away from their residence. Refusing to accept the decision, Brown sued the Board of Education, and the

case went all the way to the United States Supreme Court. After much deliberation, on May 14, 1954, the Supreme Court ruled the separation of Blacks and Whites in public schools unconstitutional, marking a significant turning point in society and the future of education in America.

Victory did not come without implications. Upchurch (2016) reported that the ruling resulted in the loss of jobs, ownership rights, identity, culture, and respect for some Black Americans due to some of the flawed conditions of the integration. Many Black educators who had earned master's and doctorate degrees at integrated universities like Columbia, University of Michigan, and New York University had better credentials than their White counterparts who studied at the segregated institutions of higher education in the South that barred Blacks. However, after the Brown verdict, thousands of Black teachers and principals faced dismissal, demotion, or were forced to resign from their positions at the Black-only schools to make way for the integration where White superintendents refused to yield authority to Black administrators and teachers (Will, 2019). Court documents accounted for eleven certified Black teachers, including at least one who had a Ph.D., were dismissed from their jobs in the Mobley, Missouri school district following the Brown decision, while less qualified White teachers were able to maintain their positions (Will, 2019). Seven of the Black teachers filed a lawsuit with the Supreme Court for wrongful termination against the district. The courts refused to hear the case. In an article that traces the history of American education, Will (2019) referenced “The Lost Education of Horace Tate”, a book that tells the story of a former Black principal of 14 years. Tate's career was ripped apart when the district began to integrate by transferring half of his students and teachers to another school and then

docking his salary by \$3,000. He eventually lost all of his students and was transferred to the superintendent's building, where he was given a room in the attic without a window for an office. Tate, humiliated, was forced to hand in his resignation. Will (2019) recounted the work of Fenwick, the dean emeritus and professor at the Howard University School of Education, who posited that integration decimated the Black principal and teacher pipeline and it has never been rectified. The tragic loss of jobs was a major hardship faced by Blacks after integration, but more significant was the issue to reclaim the additive model of what it means to educate all children, as promised in the Brown verdict.

The journey of Blacks in America seeking education is a tale of grit within a disproportionate system. Blacks esteemed education a priority. Upchurch (2016) reported that in 1863, only seven percent of the Black population was literate. However, by 1953, almost 90% of the Black population was proficient in literacy. The resilient individuals who pursued education risked beating and harassment. In an article about the history of race and education, Wolters (2008) noted that in the early 1960s, advocates for integration demanded that schools take steps to achieve better racial balance in classrooms in each school because many Black students, although now literate, still trailed White students in academic achievement. The latter attended schools that were exceptionally superior to the neighborhood schools in Black communities. The trend in contrasting schools across communities can still be delineated across American cities today.

The Present

Presently, according to data attained by the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR), results confirm that significant racial disparities in educational opportunities persist (Kelley IV, 2017). From 2013-2014, Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) surveyed 99.5 % of all public schools across the United States in efforts to assess the current landscape of educational opportunity for historically disadvantaged groups (Kelley IV, 2017). The research gathered highlighted topics that included but were not limited to student discipline, college, and career readiness, access to teachers and other school personnel, instructional materials, building facilities, infrastructure, and finances. In summary, their findings revealed trends that align with racial inequities in education in America (Kelley IV, 2017). Wexler (2018) proposed in an analytical study concerning access to equity in education, segregation in education and housing and the contemporaneous inequity of cultural privileges are likely the root sources of racism in America. Addressing the segregation still widespread today, Wexler posited that intentional integration rarely occurs unless it benefits White students. Even in places like New York, one of the most diverse cities in the world, Wexler (2018) continued, children are segregated by both race and class, deeming it "carefully curated segregation" (p. 21). Schools that the most disadvantaged children attend are segregated because they are in segregated high-poverty neighborhoods, far from genuinely middle-class neighborhoods. Living in such high-poverty neighborhoods for multiple generations adds a barrier to achievement, and multigenerational segregated poverty characterizes many African American children today (Wexler, 2018).

Segregation Perpetuation

The present condition of systemic segregation can be attributed to the constitutional policies that pose apparent ambiguity surrounding the jurisdiction of the responsibility of education. In the study that explored the adequacy of education for all students in the United States, Ostrander (2015) noted the abstruseness of interpreting the constitutional mandates in the Tenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution that is intended to lay out the duties of the states with regards to what constitutes a proper and adequate education, but also suggests powers that are not explicitly delegated are reserved for the states. The constitution determines states are responsible for funding their educational systems and their standards vary among the states. Therefore, varying state laws leave adequacy of education up for interpretation by state. Some states posit that education should be adequate as an institution, while others declare that the state has the responsibility of providing an adequate education for every individual child within the state.

Another factor that directly fuels segregation is that education policy is constrained by housing policy. In an article that explored the racial achievement gap through the lens of the constitution, Rothenstein (2014) postulated that it is impossible to desegregate schools without intentionally desegregating low-income and affluent neighborhoods that house the schools therein. Rothenstein attributes the growing ignorance of the nation's racial history to the menial policy motivation for desegregating neighborhoods. Policymakers conventionally claim that it is by accident that "the de facto" residential isolation of low-income Black children is because of economic circumstance, demographic trends, personal preference, and private discrimination.

However, based on America's historical record, residential segregation is "de jure", "the consequence of racially motivated and explicit public policy that still impacts education" (Rothenstein, 2014, para. 2). Policymakers allow their ignorance and/or opposition to acknowledge the history of state-sponsored residential segregation to prevent them from taking meaningful steps to understand or fulfill the constitutional mandate to adequately educate all students and remedy the racial isolation of neighborhoods, or the school segregation that flows from it. The responsibility of funding schools left to the states, combined with imprecise language to mandate the assurance of equity across communities, results in systemic practices that perpetuate racial and socioeconomic segregation. Through the years, as the funding disparity grows and unequal distribution of resources in schools continues, marginalized communities continue to witness talent migrate to the districts that receive more funds. Educators with credentials and experience choose not to teach in low-paying districts that lack funding (Ostrander, 2015). Given the lack of adequate resources leading to a reduction in programming and fewer qualified teachers, standards of quality must be assessed for schools that serve students in historically underfunded communities.

Testing, Testing

In work focused on the themes of access and equity in the fields of Arts and Education, Wexler (2018) pointed to the underlying root of segregation as a significant component in the disparity of quality arts programming in America. The arts are considered to be one of the cultural privileges that are made available to predominantly White, middle-class schools. Children in substantially resourced schools who usually have high test scores are allowed to enjoy the arts and everything that makes school

joyous overtly. Adversely, schools with low test scores, which are invariably segregated with Black and Latinx children, often face punishing effects including school closure, and often must forego the pleasures of arts programming to improve test scores. One can argue that low test scores are the unspoken code for the classification of Black and poor, further perpetuating systemic segregation. Considering who is most affected by the disparity of quality arts programs, history and present social practices reveal a subtle message that the arts are not for young people of color to enjoy, never mind envision as a future career (Wexler, 2018).

Concerning core subjects, lawmakers felt that articulating a clear set of expectations for the elements of quality education that every child must receive was vital. Focusing on whether those elements were fully present and working to remedy academic achievement gaps in core subjects was a poignant piece that was widely experienced as missing in many schools, therefore becoming the number one priority (Weckstein & Wermiel, 2008). The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) goal of every student becoming proficient in core subjects became the state's mandate. While the goal was intended to be optimistic, the NCLB act came with a myriad of issues. The No Child Left Behind act dictated specific proficiency targets for schools. The targets included a percentage of students in the school must achieve a particular test score, referred to as adequate yearly progress (AYP). In efforts to help the school attain required goals, schools often responded by strategically focusing on test prep efforts (Shaw, 2018). Shaw referred to the practice of favoring students near the proficiency cutoff, paying less attention to high and lower performers as educational triage. The triage practice has seemingly become commonplace, focusing on students considered to be on the proficiency "bubble". "These

students are often taken out of art and music electives for extra practice in math and reading” (Shaw, 2018). The practice of curriculum narrowing is recognized in concentrated settings high in poverty populations (Shaw, 2018). In 2006, the Center on Education Policy, an independent advocacy organization in Washington, D.C. conducted a national survey and concluded that 44 % of districts had increased instruction time in elementary school English language arts and math while decreasing time spent on other subjects, five years after enactment of NCLB. The same organization conducted a follow-up review in February 2008, which showed that 16 % of districts in the nation had reduced elementary school class time for music and art. The cuts averaged approximately 35 %, equating to about 57 minutes, weekly (Smith, 2009). Most of the time, the schools that were forced to make these cuts could not deal with accountability reforms, such as attaining adequate yearly progress (AYP). This resulted in an extensive reallocation of essential financial resources toward testing, further taking away from standards-based arts courses (Shaw, 2018). Schools in wealthy, White suburban communities do not experience these types of budget cuts and reallocations (Shaw, 2018). Therefore, the relevance of funding reallocation directly correlates to low-performing schools having to cut programs like music and visual arts in schools in urban communities, like Chicago.

Disproportionality

A report released by the nonprofit, Edbuild determined that in 2016, despite serving the same number of students, school districts that predominantly serve Students of Color received \$23 billion less in funding than mostly White school districts in the United States (Lowenberg, 2017). In an article concerning segregation and educational inequality, Meatto (2019) concluded school districts are often segregated by income and

racial and economic segregation continues to intensify educational gaps. Meatto determined over 75 % of students are in racially concentrated districts being, White or nonwhite, furthering divisions between rich and poor students, and between White students and students of Color. The implications of the segregated districts are perpetuated in arts education. When assessing the impact of racially divided districts on arts education, geography matters. The US Census (2019) reported that in 2019, the Northeast region of the United States of America was made up of 65% White, which is 60% more than the remainder of the country. The Median household income in the Northeast region is \$73,145. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which assessed nearly 9,000 eighth-grade students across the country, determined a student in the Northeast region of the United States is significantly more likely to attend a school with a full-time arts teacher than a student in the West or Midwest. It is important to note that arts education among White children has decreased slightly since 1982, according to a 2011 study by NORC at the University of Chicago. However, White students' participation in the arts has remained steady since 2008. The results show disparities along lines of race, income, and location, particularly a precipitous decline in access to music and visual arts experiences, both in and out of school among Black and Hispanic children (Loewenberg, 2017; Rabkin et al., 2011).

A review of the numbers substantiates evidence of disproportionality. In 2016, the results of the NAEP show that 42% of eighth graders across the country took a visual arts class and 63% took a music class. However, students in the Northeast were 68% more likely to have taken a visual arts class than students in the South (35%) and West (33%). Students more likely to attend a school with a full-time arts teacher live in the Northeast

states. The data highlighted differences between students who came from higher income families in white districts versus students from low-income families, primarily Black and Latino students. Fifty-five percent of higher-income students were more likely to own an instrument than 38% of low-income students. Additionally, only 9% of lower-income students reported taking private music lessons outside of school compared to 17% of their higher-income peers. Similarly, the assessment reported numbers for students who attended a theater performance outside of school. Asian/Pacific islander students were most likely to have attended a theater performance at 77%, followed by White students at 73%, then Black students at 65%.

In 2012, the National Center for Education Statistics published a comprehensive review of arts education availability in American schools. The report revealed that the higher the percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch, the lower the percentage of students receiving arts instruction (Stokas, 2016). During the academic year 2008–2009, less than a quarter of students attending schools that offered free and reduced lunch received instruction in music. Therefore, nearly 20% of the lowest income children in the United States receive no education in music (Stokas, 2016). This consistent trend across visual arts, dance, and theater compiled by the 2012 report reveals an indisputable correlation between socioeconomic status and access to education in the arts (Stokas, 2016). These numbers are direct data that substantiate the issue of disparity of arts education being accessible to Black and Hispanic students who populate the schools in marginalized communities.

Research shows that there is a disparity between the number of Black and Hispanic students and White students who participate, excel, and later invest in quality

arts programs (Koza, 2008). Recent reports have shown ties between race and low participation in the arts, in which Shaw (2018) considered the concentrated lack of access to enriched coursework, "educational apartheid" (p. 516). Students at a lower socioeconomic status, Hispanic students, and English language learners are often significantly underrepresented in arts programs (Kelley & Demorset, 2016). Research findings show that SES may influence access to and participation in music and arts programs (Kelley & Demorset, 2016). Conversely, White students with higher standardized test scores in math and reading and higher grade-point averages were overrepresented in music programs (Kelley & Demorset, 2016). This data encompasses the issue of disproportionality. The issue is not that White students are awarded arts classes; the issue is the overrepresentation of White students and the underrepresentation, or complete absence of Black and Hispanic students in arts education. One can conclude that if Black and Brown students were provided the opportunity to participate in quality arts programs, they would be represented in arts classes and therefore, later invest in the arts.

According to data issued by the National Endowment for the Arts, access to arts education is diminishing both in schools and other places, especially in Black and Hispanic communities, resulting in as low as only 26 % of African American adults reporting their experience of having arts education in childhood (Robelen, 2011). Within the data, one can trace a continuous decline in the arts programs for African Americans and Hispanics, which corroborates the idea that minority children and students are not allowed to participate in arts education to the extent of their non-minority counterparts (Robelen & Whelchel, 2000). The Tanglewood Symposium in 1968 was meant to

reassess national arts education practices and policies and to inspire educators regarding the urgency of social issues in the inner city and other areas with culturally deprived individuals (Whelchel, 2000). Today, there are many young Americans, especially many disadvantaged minorities, who are not granted access to adequate necessary studies in various fields, including music, dance, theatre, and visual arts (Whelchel, 2000).

Follow the Money

The issue of minimal access to the arts that often impact a particular demographic can also be attributed to finances. A report released by the nonprofit, EdBuild, determined that in 2016, despite serving the same number of students, school districts that predominantly serve students of color received \$23 billion less in funding than most white school districts in the United States (Meatto, 2019). In many urban school districts that have fluctuating budgets, determining where to operate on the budget seems to be an annual procedure (Shaw, 2018). According to a report by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), a significant issue is state and local governments' reliance on property tax revenue for school funding, which systemically results in the allocation of fewer monies to high-poverty schools that have a higher proportion of students of color (Kelley IV, 2017). High-profile cases of proposed or executed cuts include districts in Buffalo, Milwaukee, and Los Angeles (Shaw, 2018). Shaw offered that as a result of the budget cuts, the Center for Arts Education reported an 18% reduction in certified arts teachers at the middle school level in New York City between 2004 and 2012. Budget cuts are a subsidiary of geographic segregation that have negatively impacted arts education and the way students are taught in certain areas.

A social partition is created when some students are educated in particular schools, while others experience the results from excluding arts education or diminishing its presence. Continuing to avoid rectifying the issues in funding produces evidence of an implicit agenda to deliberately exclude low-income children from school-based arts education. Eliminating the opportunity for exposure to the beautiful arts deadens the innate equality of creativity inherent to the innocence of a child's life (Stokas, 2016). An aerial vantage of American education could artistically be depicted in an illustration that has the semblance of a monochromatic, cyclical pattern that is interwoven with disproportionate blotches of black and white paint. Chronologically, the American education system has risen to what seems to be the promise of change and forward progression, only to be drawn back into the gravitational orbit of unbalanced government policies, disparate property values, unethical funding, and historical racism and classism. The one resolution that would seemingly address the widespan issues within the system is equity. Superficially, a simple resolve, equity in practice, is a complex theme to explore in relation to the Arts and how they outline disparities in education.

Equity: The Arts - Luxury or Essential?

The theme of equity is prevalent in the discussion of arts education in America. Equity can be defined as the same or equal treatment that can, and often does, have disparately negative or positive consequences for individuals and groups; consequences that are overdetermined by each person's social location within historical matrices of power, discrimination, and exploitation (Kraehe, 2017). Equity carries an ethical component that may or may not apply to equality (Kraehe, 2017). The difference may be consequential for educators. Equity is grounded in a concept of justice, believing the

present is always in a relationship with the past and some imagined future. Gender discrimination, enslavement, racial segregation, expropriation of lands, and linguistic imperialism are defining U.S. history features that give context to the lineage of equity, or the lack thereof, in America (Kraehe, 2017).

One dimension of equity is distribution. Distribution refers to the allocation of material and human assets needed to create conditions for a quality arts education (Kraehe, 2017; Kraehe et al., 2016). Distributive equity drives consideration of how educational assets are disseminated. One must examine the differences in the quantity and quality of resources to ensure fair allocation across all social groups. Attention to distributive forms of arts equity reveals the difference in the number of resources and the quality and manner in which supplies, equipment, space, time, and trained art instructors are provided (Kraehe, 2017; Kraehe et al., 2016). Distributive equality is vital for creating impartial relationships between social, economic, and ability groups that support all learners' capacities to achieve, irrespective of their positioning in social and economic hierarchies. Some municipalities and schools receive more resources for arts education than others. Administrators are responsible for determining how the arts will be assigned to different student populations within the schools. Historically, minoritized racial groups and those living in poverty often are the recipients of distributive inequities when they are denied a fair allocation of arts education resources (Kraehe, 2017; Kraehe et al., 2016). How a district or government decides to allocate arts education resources communicates beliefs about who ought to be allowed to perceive and communicate the artistic qualities of existence from conscious participation in the physical world (Stokas, 2016).

Access is the second dimension of equity. It refers to the availability of arts education experiences and the ease with which members of any social, cultural, or linguistic group could choose to participate. It denotes the existence of available arts educational experiences and unobstructed pathways to participation. It is not enough to say that an arts program is open to all. It would be overly simplistic to suggest that, for example, an art program is accessible because admittance is monetarily "free" or officially "open" to the public. Access also depends on a person having the prerequisite dispositional, experiential, and symbolic means, which members of different groups are likely to know about and be able to take advantage of and feel at ease within the arts education opportunities made available (Kraehe, 2017; Kraehe et al., 2016). Access concerns the right and ability to gain entry and to partake in arts education resources. While likely implicit to the majority group, obstacles to access can often be a palpable deterrent for the minority groups. Distinctions can even be traced to institutions' physical infrastructure, like grand staircases at the entrances of major museums, which can be intimidating (Wexel, 2018). Limited access and equity barriers may also be a result of deeply rooted cultural habits of exclusion (Wexel, 2018).

It is essential to distinguish between equity as access and equity as participation (Kraehe, 2017; Kraehe et al., 2016). Participation, the third dimension of equity, refers to physical presence and engagement, or conversely, absence and disengagement. Making the arts physically accessible does not inevitably signify that historically underrepresented groups and those peripherally involved in the arts will automatically avail themselves of arts educational opportunities as they are currently designed. Therefore, the third dimension of equity is participation, which accounts for actual

attendance and non-attendance in arts educational settings (Kraehe, 2017; Kraehe et al., 2016). Social and cultural participation is shaped by unequal relations of economic and political power that inhibit the possibility for a genuine representation of the arts, practices, ideologies, and desires of minoritized communities. The fourth dimension of equity is recognition, which is directed toward inclusion, acknowledgment, and valuing diverse cultural expressions and perspectives. Recognition is mostly concerned with the way symbolic violence, privilege, and exclusion denies non-dominant group members full and equal participation in the making of culture. Inequalities yield privilege to the dominant perspectives, which creates a distorted social framework that silences the voices of non-dominant groups (Kraehe et al., 2016). Wexler (2018) posited that whether intentionally or unintentionally, the cultural capital and tastes of the White middle class become divisive spaces in art galleries, museums, and in zoned middle-class classrooms. The Black working-class public entering art appreciation spaces with ease identifies a self-efficacy issue. Wexler (2018) referenced the work of Amadasun, who noted that People of Color sometimes perpetuate injustice by unconsciously avoiding situations where marginalization might occur. Recognition is then illustrated in Black children seeing themselves reflected in the mainstream, and equally, for White children to recognize themselves as having color, de-orienting the Whiteness of art institutions and classrooms (Wexler, 2018).

Arts education policies and practices can appear universal and neutral yet are truly uneven in terms of their effectiveness and benefits for different social groups. The same inputs do not necessarily lead to proportionate learning outcomes for all (Kraehe, 2017). That is why effects, the fifth dimension of equity, refer to how students are impacted by

education processes, practices, program structures, or policies (Kraehe, 2017; Kraehe et al., 2016). Variances in student socio-economic status and access to private funding, and differences in the value placed on the cultural capital students bring from home likely impact students' earning outcomes. Additionally, when considering inputs, it can be concluded that built-in bias that advantages particular groups based on social status, cultural background, and language will play a role in teaching scenarios. Teacher efficacy may also be uneven for different student groups. The effects dimension of equity is used to achieve educational justice by shifting the focus from opportunity designed inputs to focusing on outputs: the results of the implemented input structures (Kraehe et al., 2016). The shift places attention on outcomes like disproportionality, which is a vital byproduct of educational policies and practices that can appear universal or neutral on the surface, such as colorblind and gender-neutral policies (Kraehe, 2017; Kraehe et al., 2016), which are accompanied by systemic corruption.

Transformation is the sixth dimension of equity (Kraehe et al., 2016). Unlike effects, for which the logical focus would be placed on resulting conditions, transformation specifies dynamic, transparent processes of individual, group, and societal change (Kraehe et al., 2016). Transformations likely occur when one, usually with a position of privilege or authority, has a revelatory moment of understanding themselves in relation to a larger community, and realizing one's coexistence with others, across differences. This interpersonal enlightenment then evokes feelings of empowerment to drive forward reconstructive action to make the world more unbiased and ethical (Kraehe et al., 2016).

Given the breadth of the intricate facets of equity, it can be determined that equity by explanation far surpasses the idea of equality. Equity is fashioned with the consumer in mind. Specific to this subject, equity should be designed with students at the forefront of decision making. Equity, in essence is a complex idea. To achieve equity, the initiative must begin with access as the fundamental standard for implementation. Concerning equitable arts programming, the conversation must first ensure students have the opportunity to experience the arts. Once access has been established, the other facets must be carefully crafted to ensure the students are being properly served in a way that is profitable to them, versus an end-all approach of equality.

Arts Education for All

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was developed as an initiative by the federal government to make education a priority. The act was established to study and make recommendations for positive change in low-performing schools with students from racial minority backgrounds. Studies have shown that the family background and the parents' level of education is a direct indicator of a student's propensity to achieve. Parents who were raised in urban and migrant areas are at an educational disadvantage because they generally have the lowest level of education, highest levels of poverty, and cannot meaningfully contribute to their children's education. Therefore, the cycle of homogenization of marginalization is powered by keeping low schools low funded (Ostrander, 2015). Without a quality education, students in low-performing schools unjustly and inequitably must maneuver the arduous challenge of becoming productive members of society (Ostrander, 2015). Schools should serve as the liaison that exposes children to essential opportunities and experiences that their

parents are not always able to provide. The United State Supreme Court determined that education is vital in the formation of cultural values and is at the core of strong citizenship. The absence of a quality education prevents children from being adequately prepared to participate in professional life. The court stated that "Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms" (Ostrander, 2015, p. 10).

Equal terms for all, concerning education, should be marked by not only the number of resources but should also reference the quality whereby students are equitably able to access facets of what signifies a quality education. Opportunities to study high-quality arts both in-and out-of-school throughout their K-12 years are accessible for children in economically affluent communities (Seidel et al., 2009). The students in high-performing schools see art in museums, theaters, and concert halls. They often have the chance to study with skilled and accomplished art teachers and artists. The impact of the luxury of racial invisibility and privilege that affluent White people enjoy and recognize as essential, if awarded to people in marginalized communities, may aid in the reclamation of cultural capital and thus influence a child's (or adult's) social, cultural, and educational development and progress (Seidel et al., 2009; Wexler, 2018).

In a study that weighed in on contrasting experiences of minority students and their non-minority counterparts, Koza (2008) explored several accounts of personal experiences that illustrate inequitable opportunities for students in various areas concerning arts education. Koza highlighted the importance of minority students receiving a quality arts education in the early formative years, which allows them to be equipped with competitors when auditioning for college acceptance and future

occupations in the arts. Koza (2008) claimed that students who have not already privately studied voice before auditioning for college and university music programs have little chance of being admitted. The absence of a rigorous school music programs offered in elementary through high school settings does not adequately prepare students who aspire to study music and arts at the collegiate level (Koza, 2008).

A standard of substantiated factors of quality must be established to fully comprehend the benefits students amass with the presence of an excellent art program. The same standards determine the magnitude of disadvantage caused by inadequate programming or the absence thereof. In arts education, the theory of quality excellence is challenging to conceptualize, aside from achieving and sustaining it. Simultaneously, striving for quality is at the very essence of the arts, which indicates that arts education is a prolific threshold of exploring the meaning of quality in general education (Seidel et al., 2009). Understanding quality is necessary to move the conversation forward in achieving an equitable system of providing students arts programs that are conducive to yielding students who will experience success in the arts.

Quality Defined

In a report by the Wallace Foundation that included researchers' attempts to understand the characteristics of quality in arts education, Seidel et al. (2009) postulated that quality could be perceived through four different lenses: learning, pedagogy, community dynamics, and environment. In the arts classroom, students should have both experiences with and experiences of quality. Experiences with quality should include masterworks of art in multiple mediums, and students should work with and be able to explore excellent materials. Experiences of quality include witnessing and creating

powerful group interactions and ensemble work. Quality experiences should also include performances that make them feel proud, rewarding practice sessions, technical excellence, and intense expressivity (Seidel et al., 2009).

A quality arts program encompasses specific criteria that nurture artistic dexterities in the students, allowing them to produce quality art in the result. According to the Wallace Foundation study, Seidel et al. (2009) determined that an arts program should foster broad dispositions and skills, especially the capacity to think creatively and make connections. The program should include teaching artistic skills and techniques without making them primary. The skills should be able to be applied toward various mediums and genres. Arts programs help students to develop aesthetic awareness and provide ways of pursuing an understanding of the world. The programs help students engage with the community, civic, and social issues. In essence, with a quality arts program, students are awarded a venue to express themselves, and students are supported in their development as individuals. A research study by Kelley and Demorset (2016) was conducted to compare music instruction in charter schools and traditional public schools within the geographical region of Chicago, Illinois. They determined that some factors that identified standards that signify quality included required, elective, and extracurricular arts offerings, facilities, the number of art teachers, teacher expertise, and frequency of instruction.

The arts are interpretive to both the creator and the consumer. Therefore, quality should not be deduced only to encompass the elitist and traditional means of art appreciation or creation. When exploring the evaluation of a quality arts program, it can be concluded that equitable access, participation, and recognition directly impact the

effects and transferability of quality arts. Equitability can be achieved across general demographics of students. Students must feel welcomed to learn and create art that meets standards of quality and incorporates facets from their environmental backgrounds and psychological schemata; this may be illustrated differently across communities. A renowned violinist providing masterclasses may be an adored commodity in some communities, while an open forum with a rap lyricist may be more favored in a different community. Therefore, quality arts programs are ones that yield experiences of excellence and produce valuable results.

Arts Curriculum: The Present

In recent years, some districts have implemented arts education programs that have fundamentally shifted to embrace arts integration. Others have placed general education classroom instructors, like primary school teachers without specialized arts backgrounds, into art instruction roles, to replace the specialists that had been eliminated for budget cuts (Shaw, 2018). Reports state that most public schools in the United States offer music education. However, schools in urban areas do not always provide the same breadth of music educational experiences as suburban schools (Kelley & Demorset, 2016). The location and geographical demographic correlates to the quality of instruction.

While re-incorporating arts back into the curriculum may be a positive transition toward providing access to the arts, researchers oppose this practice, suggesting that classroom teachers mostly lack the expertise, confidence, and/or interest necessary to teach the arts with fidelity (Shaw, 2018). Arts instruction by general education teachers is consistently reported to be inconsistent, superficial, or nonexistent (Shaw, 2018). States differ in their policies that govern certification for arts teachers and mandated

instructional time for the arts. In turn, access to high-quality arts instruction is decidedly local (Shaw, 2018). One of the main factors enabling cuts to specialist positions occurred when districts began to place non-endorsed teachers into art, music, and physical education positions at the elementary level (Shaw, 2018). In Michigan, elementary teachers in most situations were highly qualified by passing the MTTC Elementary Education Test, which certifies the elementary teacher to teach all subjects. The certification was granted after changes to preparation programs required general education teachers to take one or two courses in integrating performing and visual arts as part of their degree program (Michigan Department of Education, 2008; Shaw, 2018). Although general education teachers are certified in all subjects, the teachers are not intended to be assigned as specialists in a program outside the self-contained classroom context, according to official guidance (Michigan Department of Education, 2008; Shaw, 2018). The significance of having teachers specifically certified to teach in arts education classrooms directly points to the theme of quality being studied. Classroom teachers may have the capacity to teach any subject, by merely understanding general teaching methods. However, the quality of instruction is to be assessed when teachers who have not been groomed to teach arts education classes are poised to do so.

Summary

The literature is used to provide context and revelation to the questions posed for research. Considering the question, when and how did the issue of disproportioned academic standards originate in American schools' history? It can be determined that inequitable academic resources and practices are the results of a much larger systemic issue stemming from a historical lineage of race relations in America. As discussed in the

literature, the civil rights era in the 1960s was a progressive time when advocates worked to end segregation (Wolters, 2008). However, while the current condition of society seems to have advanced on the surface, the introspective scope reveals that systemic racism and inherent inequities still have a negative impact on education systems in America today.

The questions, “Is there a residual impact of past disproportionate educational experience still affecting students today? If so, what is the effect?” are answered in the literature. The review of literature provides evidence of the effect of segregation, White flight and red lining that correlate to the issue that exists and serves as context to the factors that are the cause of the issue of access. The impact of disproportionate educational experiences can be identified in the text and are linked to the lack of opportunities to experience an arts program and details the inconsistency of quality of the programs by defining what quality programs should resemble. One can justifiably conclude from the reading that students who do not have access to programs, and those who have access to less than excellent programs, are at a more significant disadvantage than their more privileged counterparts.

The questions, “What are characteristics of programming that determine quality for a preparatory arts education?” and “What are the characteristics of quality that determine an equitable experience for students in marginalized communities?” are also addressed in the text. As stated, practices that have already been implemented are content that can be reviewed, analyzed, and incorporated into practical solutions. Understanding the efforts made in attempting to address the problem help to validate the urgency of the problem and may illuminate possible future research angles. Reviewing some of the practices that

have been initiated on the governmental and local levels are steps in the direction of addressing the issue of access to quality arts programs. The necessity of having quality arts programming in marginalized communities being a valid and recognized issue has garnered attention. Research will need to be conducted to further establish standards of quality and identify where programming can and should be implemented in response to the access to quality arts programs in marginalized communities. The next chapter contains discussions of the methodology that was used to conduct the research study. The chapter includes the research design, methods, and discuss the participants selected.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

A qualitative phenomenological study was selected to be the design for addressing the quality of arts curriculum for students in marginalized communities in Chicago. The researcher considered this research design optimal. The primary focus of quality and equity guide the study. Both themes of equity and quality are respectively complex. Both terms may be expressed and interpreted conjointly and uniquely. The interpretation of quality may vary among participants; therefore, the researcher desired to collect each participant's accounts related to their experience of the phenomenon of arts education in school. Each experience would inform the analysis for the researcher to draw conclusions and suggest feasible solutions.

Research Method

This research study is qualitative. Qualitative research, rooted in anthropology and sociology, deals with research questions from an approach likened to humanism or idealism (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Pathak & Kaira, 2013). Qualitative research focuses on understanding. Qualitative research is constructed in the idea that individuals socially conclude meaning from their beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behavior, and interactions (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Pathak & Kaira, 2013). Researchers explore how individuals experience and understand their worlds socially in specific contexts at specific moments in time (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). The researchers seek to understand the meaning individuals garner from their experiences.

The qualitative research methodology is achieved in the participant's voice in the study, as they share their experiences, which adds a different element to research that cannot be obtained through mere variable measurements. The researcher and participant

relationship are different from the more formal quantitative research methods and yields non-numerical data (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). According to Creswell (2018), quantitative research uses a deductive approach, where the hypotheses are tested via statistical analyses. A quantitative approach would not be appropriate in the context of this study as the findings would not produce the rich, thick descriptive data desired in this study. The quantitative and mixed methods approach to research would provide limited quantitative data that are primarily numerical descriptions, rather than detailed accounts of human perceptions, as in qualitative research.

Research Design

A phenomenological study was selected for this study so that the researcher would be able to analyze each participant's personal experiences objectively. The proposition of phenomenology is captured in a single encompassing question, "what happens when spontaneity, unpredictability and our capacity to be surprised by ourselves are not explained away but kept at the very heart of an account of the evolution of sense-of-self-in-the-world?" (Van Manen, 2017, p. 10. Phenomenology is the art of excavating meaning from the complex mesh of ideas, feelings, and interpretations that make up our lived experience (Van Manen, 2017). Phenomenologists do not believe that knowledge can be qualified or reduced to several statistics (Byrne, 2001). This idea is counter to the empirical approach. It is in direct opposition to objectivism, which posits the worldview grows from modern natural science and technology beliefs that have been spreading from Northern Europe since the Renaissance. Objectivism maintains that the data of sense experience is the only object and the supreme criterion of human knowledge (Hoodson & Watts, 2017).

Phenomenology is used to comprehend the structure of various human experiences, including thought, memory, imagination, emotion, and desire (Smith, 2018). Phenomenology is one of many types of qualitative research that examine the lived experience of humans. Researchers use phenomenology to study structures of consciousness experienced from the first-person perspective (Smith, 2018). In its most basic form, phenomenology is used to create conditions for the objective study of the content, or product, of conscious experiences (Smith, 2018). There are several traditions of qualitative study that are used in research, including action research, narrative analysis, ethnology, and auto ethnology, which are all established and academically accepted.

In phenomenology, personal accounts by participants will yield more specific data that will inform qualitative analysis and solutions. The phenomenological study follows a specific design to garner the most accurate accounts from the participants. Although there are other traditional forms of qualitative approaches, the researcher narrowed the study to only use the phenomenological approach. Approaches including ethnography, which researchers use to study focus on studying an intact group of participants in a setting over a long period of time (Creswell, 2018), were ruled out. The researcher also omitted grounded theory, as the objective was not to develop a general abstract theory of any process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants in the study (Creswell, 2018).

The researcher implemented a course of action to facilitate the data collection process. Concerning design, the data derived from the in-depth interview transcript in a phenomenological study was designed to explore the experiences of the sample members. Interviewing is a useful technique for collecting data about participants' lived experiences

(Van den Berg, 2005). The participants' descriptions of the investigated phenomenon allow the researcher to uncover the invariant structures or essences of the phenomenon investigated (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015). The interviews were designed to create a less restrictive environment. The setting for the interviews were in a comfortable, quiet space to minimize any distractions. Participants were provided with a detailed consent form as a preliminary step to the interview, which outlines the purpose, eligibility, participant commitment, discussion of risk and benefit of involvement, and confidentiality of the experience. The interviews included virtual, conversational interviews with the interviewer and participant to maintain an uninfluenced, valid, first-hand account of the individual's experience.

The researcher used a semi-structured interview data collection strategy to ask participants a series of predetermined, open-ended questions (Ibrahim & Edgley, 2015). As opposed to unstructured interviews, the researcher has more control over the topics in a semi-structured interview. Ibrahim and Edgley (2015) posited that a semi-structured interview's openness allows new ideas to be evoked during the interview. As a result, information is shared by the participants. The semi-structured interview process is conversational and provides the researchers with opportunities to garner details by probing and gathering precise data about what the participants believe and feel about their experiences. Semi-structured interviews provide meaningful data that is used to inform the researcher. The predetermined questions in the interview were flexible, allowing the interviewer to inquire more in-depth and clarify responses (Ibrahim & Edgley, 2015). Each interview was recorded and transcribed.

For interviews executed via communication software, including platforms like Skype, Zoom, or Google Meets, a password-protected call was established. The interviewer asked the participants if there was anyone in the room during the call and if so, that they be excused. The audio/video footage was recorded by the interface and delivered to the researcher's computer. The video was then moved to password-protected folders to mitigate the risk of exposure. The study presented minimal risk to participants, as their identities were secured from any qualifying identifiers to anyone other than the researcher. To maintain anonymity, a roman numeral was assigned to each participant in the study. The participants gave consent in the consent form for notes during the interview process. Following the interviews, the recordings were reviewed and transcribed. There are benefits to utilizing transcription, as it allows a thorough examination of information shared by the participants. Transcription also helps overcome the natural limitations of human memory and permits repeated examinations of the participant's answers (Tai & Ajjawi, 2016).

The researcher's goal was to conduct a study that addresses the research problem and questions while establishing and maintaining trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is achieved by substantiating facets of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, each an individually significant component. Credibility refers to the trustworthiness of results garnered from transparent reporting that is both honest and open (Tai & Ajjawi, 2016). Credibility is achieved by establishing ethical soundness through prolonged engagement and persistent observation. The researcher then performs peer debriefing and member checking as means to determine referential adequacy. Credibility in this study was established through the process in which participants

provided personal accounts of their experience in arts education programs. The interviews included questions that evoked accurate, detailed responses, which would be analyzed.

Transferability refers to the transfer of original findings to another context or individual. The researcher aimed to establish transferability by asking questions that warrant each participant to describe a phenomenon in sufficient detail. The researcher drew conclusions by cross referencing the evidence that is transferable to the other participants' times, settings, situations, and people (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

Transcribing the interviews and coding the evidence helped with the transferability process. The researcher cross-analyzed the experiences shared by the participants in the study to understand arts programs in the urban community. The researcher then used the evidence to formulate standards and objectives that were used as criteria to understand the quality and equity of the school arts education programs.

The goal of dependability is to achieve primarily the same results if the study was to be repeated (Morse, 2015). Dependability is attained when the researcher clearly and concisely describes each step of the research process from the beginning, throughout the development, and then reporting the findings. All of the records that document the process were carefully maintained to yield a trustworthy framework to other researchers who wish to replicate the study (Kortzjen & Moser, 2018).

Confirmability ensures the collection of data is neutral, where the findings are shaped by the respondents, void of researcher bias (Kortzjen & Moser, 2018). To establish confirmability, data and interpretations of the findings must be clearly derived from the data (Kortzjen & Moser, 2018). The researcher in this study posed predetermined

questions that are unbiased and directed to the experience. The clarifying questions were used to ask for more information based on the information provided. In order to establish dependability and confirmability, the researcher conducted an audit trail for consistency. The researcher provided a complete set of notes on decisions made during the research process, reflective thoughts, and the emergence of the findings and information. An auditor would be able to study the research path and replicate the process if desired (Kortzen & Moser, 2017). Each participant was asked specific questions that produce data to support the analysis process. All data collected was in the form of transcripts, including information from interviews, all recordings, and consent forms. The data is stored in a password-protected drive and will be retained for five years following the dissertation approval. After five years, all information will be electronically destroyed permanently.

Participants

The purpose of qualitative methods in research is to understand how and why an issue occurred, the context of the situation, the setting and contributing factors of the experience, the process, and the social interactions that impacted the experience. Given the details unique to the experience, researchers are less likely to be concerned with generalizing that target a larger population. Unlike quantitative research methods that use a larger sample size and test the hypotheses, qualitative research focuses on more comprehensive details that lie beneath the surface (Dworkin, 2012). Dworkin (2012) referred to Morse who suggested that in phenomenology, a research design of qualitative research, data quality, the focus and direction of the topic of the study, and the depth of valuable information obtained from each participant are significant factors.

Creswell (2013) suggested that a phenomenological study involves interviews with up to ten people. This study included 5 participants to create a purposive sample to be studied. Purposive sampling is a form of nonprobability sampling. Purposive sampling, often considered expert or judgmental sampling, involves the researcher applying expert knowledge of the population to achieve the goal of specifically selecting participants who represent the greater population to be a part of the study (Lavrakas, 2008).

To study the effects of preparation by the arts programs on participants, the researcher used a virtual face-to-face interview design to garner in-depth personal experiences from participants. Criteria for selecting participants included:

1. Former students who lived in the city or suburban, urban areas of Chicago during their elementary and or high school years.
2. Former Chicago students who did and did not experience an arts curriculum during school hours.
3. Artists of any medium, who attended school in Chicago, and now have careers in the arts or college students who are pursuing studies in the arts.

The pool of candidates considered to be a participant included painters and muralists, professional background singers, celebrity rap artists and singers, and prominent photographers who were former students in Chicago schools and now excel in their field of art. The researcher focused primarily on participants who show evidence of productivity in their careers, in their respective fields of art. Examining their experiences as students who lived in Chicago informed the study of the impact their school's art curriculum played in their preparation to be successful artists. Selecting candidates from

this population produced a sample of participants where multiple perspectives can offer both depth and diversity (Creswell, 2013).

The candidates received an electronic invitation letter explaining the purpose of the study and a survey with indicators that align with the criteria for inclusion. If the candidates chose to participate in the study, they signed the letter indicating they would like to opt in. The researcher documented a copy of the letter electronically. The researcher confirmed participation by responding with an electronic thank you letter, outlining the expectations for the study and a link to a calendar to arrange a date and time for the interview. If the pool of participants who were asked to be a part of the sample declined the invitation, the researcher extended the sample to include students at colleges who are majoring in an art field. The students must have experienced an arts education program in an urban community in Chicago.

Data Analysis Methods

The data analysis portion of the study is a vital component that requires the researcher to utilize the information gathered in the data collection process and then perform specific steps. Transcribing the responses from this study allowed the data to be categorized and coded. Coded data helped the researcher observe the connections and continuity across participants and then draw conclusions from the coding patterns observed (Frey, 2018). Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenology data analysis model emphasizes conceptual patterns and describes the process used for the study. The data analysis procedures in a study should follow the steps below:

1. The researcher thoroughly reads and rereads the transcribed interviews to identify with the data and acquire a sense of everyone's background and experiences.

2. From the transcripts, the researcher identifies significant statements that pertain directly to the proposed phenomenon.
3. The researcher develops interpretive meanings of each of the significant statements. The researcher rereads the research protocols to ensure the original description is evident in the interpretive meanings.
4. The interpretive meanings are arranged into clusters, which allow themes to emerge. The researcher seeks validation, avoids repetitive themes, and notes any discrepancies during this process.
5. The themes are then integrated into an exhaustive description. The researcher also refers to the theme clusters back to the protocols to substantiate them.
6. The researcher produces a concise statement of the exhaustive description and provides a fundamental statement of identification, also referred to as the overall essence of the experience.
7. The reduced statement of the exhaustive description is presented to the study's participants to verify the conclusions and the development of the essence statement. If discrepancies are noted, the researcher should go back through significant statements, interpretive meanings, and themes to address the stated concerns (Marrow, 2015). A significant component in data analysis is to explore and share results. The researcher identifies repeated themes, makes connections, determines gaps in the research, and analyzes discoveries in the data (Tai & Ajjawi, 2016).

The MAXQDA 2020 software served as an electronic tool used to aid the researcher in the documentation process. The software was used to tag the video and

transcription from the interviews. The researcher ensured the accuracy of the transcriptions by listening to the audio/video recordings while simultaneously analyzing the text for accuracy. The text was categorized by themes and bracketed by similar contexts to formulate codes. The researcher used the software to perform axial coding, a qualitative research technique that helps to construct linkages between data (Allen, 2017). Following the initial analysis of the transcription and coding, participants were provided an overview of the analysis that contains information from their interview and a brief overview of themes that were extracted from the data. Having the participants review the analysis is considered member checking, a method used to establish credibility (Creswell, 2018). The participants had an opportunity to correct any misinterpretations as necessary and omit any direct quotes. The information from the analysis is stored in a separate electronic file folder from the interviews to maintain the anonymity of the participants' identity. All the information in both folders will be maintained for 5 years, as agreed upon in the agreement with participants. After the 5-year term, all data collected will be destroyed by permanent electronic deletion.

According to Sanjari et al. (2014), a vital component of qualitative research is learning from mistakes and conducting an ethical and credible study. The researcher must develop a plan of inquiry that can be adjusted as the study is conducted. Unlike in quantitative research that consists of numerical outputs, the researcher is considered the instrument and researchers tend to incorporate text production in qualitative research. Therefore, researchers must utilize alternative approaches to avoid bias and achieve credibility. The researcher in this study will achieve an ethical, unbiased study by

adhering closely to the plan of action and performing consistent self-checks during the interview process.

Limitations

The researcher addressed the research problem and research questions using the data gathered and the analysis completed. However, there may be limitations that must be acknowledged. One limitation of phenomenology is the requirement for researcher interpretation. The researcher in this study has experienced a similar phenomenon as the members in the sample. Therefore, researching without bias based on personal experiences and emotions may present a challenge. Considering researcher bias may be challenging to determine or detect, a phenomenological reduction is necessary to reduce biases, assumptions, and preconceived ideas about an experience or phenomenon. Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, used phenomenological reduction to indicate a reflective inquiring or interrogation back into consciousness (Pollard, 2019). The reduction is an introspective process to expunge one's experiences to embrace information with a novel perspective. The reduction was achieved by making connections only made apparent by the coding of the transcripts. The researcher refrained from making interferences and interjecting assumptions. An electronic journal was maintained and updated throughout the reduction process to track connections made from the codes in the evidence.

The study participants must be able to articulate their thoughts and feelings about the experience being studied. If there is difficulty in accurately expressing or articulating the experiences' details, the data may not align with the other members' experiences. If a participant could not answer a particular question, to best capitalize on the interview's

momentum, the researcher referred to previous questions and inquired more in-depth about the participant's information. Questions remained objective and centered around the participant's specific details to avoid bias in leading the participant towards answers that may coincide with other participants' experiences.

The population is a limitation specific to this study. Artists who have evidence of established careers in the arts make up the sample for the study. Learning their experiences in how they were prepared for their career by their arts education programming at their schools in urban communities in Chicago offers valuable data for this study. However, limiting the study to successful artists omits the opportunity for the researcher to garner data from former students in urban Chicago schools, who may have exhibited promising careers in the arts. Talented individuals who do not have successful careers could offer a unique perspective to the preparation programs in urban community schools. Their perspective would yield data that may widen the focus of the study; therefore, it is not included.

Delimitations

The delimitations of a study are the characteristics resulting from the researcher's decisions in the development process. The choices include objectives and questions, variables of interest, adopting a theoretical perspective, methodology, the framework, and participants (Simon & Goes, 2013). Delimitations narrow the scope of the study and its variables (Simon & Goes, 2013). This study's delimitations include addressing the current condition of only the arts education in urban communities and no other educational issues. The participants' accounts of phenomenological experiences will likely share some aspects because of the commonalities among the population. The researcher chose

to narrow the sample to only include experiences from participants who meet the criteria previously stated to substantiate the need for quality arts programs in marginalized urban communities in Chicago. The findings in the study are specific to the urban areas in Chicagoland and cannot be generalized to other areas of the greater Chicagoland area, or other parts of the country, due to the contrast of the environments. Therefore, the findings and results may not necessarily generalize to other subjects, locations, or future time period.

Summary

The research study is the juxtaposition of two theories of equity and quality, demonstrated through the lives of students who experienced the theories practically. Analyzing the participants' lived experiences and understanding if and how they were impacted by their arts education, or lack thereof, informed the researcher of the impact the arts curriculum, or lack thereof, has had on students in marginalized communities. The study methodology was carefully executed to ensure that the researcher was most apt to draw accurate conclusions and formulate solutions that directly influence the issue. The study reveals if, contrary to the literature, quality arts programs have no bearing on students in disenfranchised communities. This study was performed to yield the most accurate results to address the established research questions that the researcher will use to determine practical solutions to the problem. The results will be discussed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This qualitative, phenomenological study was conducted to understand the equity and quality of arts programs in urban and marginalized communities in Chicago. The researcher designed the research questions to directly address the problem. Semi-structured individual interviews were used to gather data and information pertaining to the equity and quality of arts programs in urban and marginalized communities in Chicago. The phenomenological study was used to study the structures of consciousness experienced from the first-person point of view by examining the lived experiences of the participants (Smith, 2018). In direct alignment, the researcher gathered data that is derived from in-depth interview transcripts. The researcher used the data to inspect the quality of arts programming and determine the equity of programming for the students in marginalized communities in Chicago. In this chapter, the findings from study will be discussed in relation to the research questions. Data was coded into themes that arose from the study that help to guide understanding of the principles of equity and quality in the schools in the urban communities in Chicago. Some secondary themes emerged, which served as insight into the nature of quality programming and its impact on the artists who were students in the marginalized communities. This chapter will conclude with a summary of the findings and transition into a discussion of analysis and solutions in the following chapter.

Presentation of Findings

The researcher used purposive sampling to apply expert knowledge of the population to specifically select participants who represent a greater population of those

impacted by the research problem. The participants selected for the study were made up of a sample of professionals who were: former students who lived in the city or suburban, urban areas of Chicago during their elementary and or high school years, experienced an arts curriculum during school hours, and now have careers in the field of arts. Originally, invitations were sent to artists who illustrated expertise in the fields of music, visual arts, photography, graphic design, and make-up cosmetology. Several individuals responded by accepting the initial invitation but failed to commit to the interview for various reasons. The study resulted in five semi-structured interviews that were conducted via video-conferencing software.

The five interviews consisted of two males and three females; all identified as Black/African American. All the participants were between the ages of 25 and 40 years old. The participants attended schools across the city and urban suburban areas in the city that classified as Title I schools, which serve high populations of low-income students. Each school represented had a demographic of predominately Black/African American students. All the schools were public schools, and one was classified as a vocational public school. While some of the schools varied in location, the findings of common experiences became evident after reviewing the interview findings.

The interviews were designed to garner in-depth personal experiences from participants to inform the study of the impact their school's art curriculum played in their preparation to be successful artists. Candidates received an electronic invitation letter explaining the purpose of the study and a survey with indicators that align with the criteria for inclusion. Once accepting the invitation, participants signed a consent form and scheduled the interview. Each interview was completed via conference software in a

password-protected, encrypted meeting. The audio/video footage along with a transcript of close captions was recorded by the interface and delivered to the researcher's computer. The data were password-protected into coded folders to mitigate the risk of exposure.

The data obtained from the interviews was compiled and the video and audio entered into the qualitative research data collection tool, MAXQDA 2020. Using this system, the researcher reviewed each interview recording and transcription, tag sections, and coded direct quotes into themes that pertained to the established research questions. The semi-structured interview questions were extensions of the research questions:

1. Is there a residual impact of past disproportionate educational experience still affecting students today? If so, what is the effect?
2. What are characteristics of programming that determine quality for a preparatory arts education?
3. What are the characteristics of quality that determine an equitable experience for students in marginalized communities?

The research questions were the foundational guide to a series of questions that were used to understand how each participant experienced their arts programs in relation to quality and equity. The semi-structured interview questions were designated into three categories: characteristics of quality, characteristics of equity, and qualities of an equitable experience.

Offerings

Concerning characteristics of quality, each participant discussed the offerings of their high school experiences. The consensus was that each of the schools required at

least one arts education class to graduate with a diploma. All students were permitted to take an entry-level arts course to fulfill the requirement. Participant I discussed the musical offerings that were available at her school as follows:

We had different types of music programs. . . . band madrigals which is more of a theatrical chorus, which is the regular core program show choir, which was an iteration of madrigals, but madrigals is more of a medieval, theatrical sort of experience; show choir was more acting and singing, it wasn't exclusive to medieval times

Participant II posited that her school was peculiar in its offerings of arts programming, stating: “My school had an amazing program for arts from the music department to band, to dance, and even like actual [visual] art they were very well known for those specific programs”.

Participant II continued by describing the unique experience of attending a vocational school, which is divided into houses and students select a major to concentrate on for the duration of their high school experience. In regard to music, Participant II shared:

If you were a music major, you had to participate. . . . they may not have forced you for solo competition, but you had to be a part of mixed chorus you had to participate in competition. There was no way you could be a major in vocal music and not participate in those competitions.

Participant IV shared a similar experience with Participant II, considering how his school was structured:

We had a house for arts and communication and then we had a stem or engineering house Band was open to anybody. You didn't have to be in a specific house to be in band. . . .

Each school offered some variation of arts classes across the participants' school experiences. However, the quality of the offerings became evident in the findings.

Participant I, whose school offered a variety of music ensembles shared the following sentiment in regard to art: “We did have art class It was bland”.

After establishing the arts education offerings with each participant, the next set of questions in the semi-structured interviews were centered around the characteristics of quality. The participants offered their experiences in high school arts programs. In these discussions, participants gave insight to characteristics that contributed to either their participation or their lack of participation in the programs.

Participant II shared the structure of what she considered to be a high-quality arts program:

My experience consisted of me learning different genres of music, my role playing those different genres of music, going to competitions even if we weren't in competitions we were required to go to watch to learn; to take notes. They were hard on us. It wasn't just like welcome to class, go listen to this jukebox and here you go . . . they were teachers who saw what we could do and pushed us. . . . They would advance just like the day would. They wouldn't keep us just playing recorders or singing, they changed with the times. As studio work became more on trend, they took it upon themselves to build a studio and teach us production and to do things that make sure to keep us with how times are flowing, so that's why I think it was a pretty good program.

Participant III discussed the quality of the arts course offerings, sharing that music theory was only provided for one year at the tail end of her high school experience. She noted:

There was a White male teacher teaching [music] theory. He was teaching solfege. I didn't know what that meant; I heard of do re mi fa so la ti do, but I didn't know that the name of that was solfège, so it was very much so an otherworld experience. I'm still glad that I had it because I was going to find out later how much that really helped me when I went to college.

Participant IV, who attended a school similar to that of Participant II, also shared his experience in his arts program, which he felt could be rated above average for what he was able to glean. However, he shared characteristics that prevented his school from having a top tier arts program, stating:

I wanted to be on the speech team . . . the speech team used to do acting and put on musicals . . . aside from that, all you would have for music was band. . . . We didn't have a theory class, when we learned theory, it was in band, the time we were actually playing. So, there was actually no theory class.

Participant IV shared that the band was a great experience for him. However, one of the issues that arose with band was the lack of faculty support in helping the program to flourish. He shared:

I think [the instructor] carried a lot of the load by himself. He didn't have as much help as he could have had to really make it. I feel like it was a great program, but I feel like if he had a little more help; the band parents would help out; but maybe even an assistant to help him come up with music or just be another set of eyes would have made him not have to necessarily take on everything by himself . . .

Instructors

The quality of instruction was a common trend that was discussed by the participants. The quality of programming directly correlated to the ability and management exhibited by the instructors responsible for the arts classes. The responses from the participants varied in relation to their experiences with instructors. Participant IV, who had previously discussed his art program's shortcomings, clarified that the failures were not due to the instructor himself, but the lack of support that the instructor had in operating the program. He spoke highly of the instructor, sharing:

. . . . He was so hard on us and was so diligent on excellence. He would always say excellence is not a final product, it's a process; he literally said that every year so people from like multiple classes, they know that line because he used to say it all the time. He didn't take no mess. when I look back, it's like this older White guy with all these Black kids, teach them about discipline . . .

Participant I enthusiastically recalled what she felt was a phenomenal life changing experience in the arts, which she attributed to her junior high school teacher, prior to high school:

Ms. VJ, if I could see her now, she's the reason why I sing . . . there was a different standard, and she knew that I had something that was great, and she always positioned me as a leader, so I did I never had a chance to half do anything . . . She fought for us. She fought for us to have those experiences and we would have played all the time. We had presentations and productions all the time . . . She had an eye for talent, she had a passion. She couldn't even hardly sing . . . She sowed seeds that produced stars. It gave us the confidence that this is who we were . . .

Participant I emphatically discussed the impact that her junior high school instructor had on her career. However, there was a disconnect as she matriculated to the high school program. Due to the lack of positive instruction and support from the school, Participant I was turned off and withdrew from participating in the arts program. She recounted the unfortunate situation of her high school chorus teacher, a White male in his late twenties, faced:

He had great intention but there were more African American students than he could really handle . . . he was very mild tempered he was a very, very sweet guy and we were freshmen in high school. . . I remember him crying because of how he was overwhelmed . . . he loved it but it just was too much for him. . . Because I was a student who loved music, I would pay attention . . . I wanted the whole experience but there was just so many people there who felt it was an elective and said let me just be here and let's run over the teacher . . . This is why when I transitioned into high school, I did not stay in music. . . because we did not have leadership that was qualified for that setting. And once we finally got somebody, I was concerned more with being a singer professionally on my own, I didn't want to be in it anymore.

Evaluation and Performance

The assessment of quality that extends beyond the instructor, leads to an analysis of the curriculum. The participants were asked about their experiences with the evaluative components of the programs and what kind of curriculum was being presented that helped prepare them for a career in the arts.

Participant II shared her experience, stating:

... Like other classes of that nature, we were given quizzes and tests, but we had a lot of projects. Every year we had to do a mock jury of whatever we learned over the year; like for instance, one year, my presentation had to be based off of Tina Turner, so I had to put together a show that was comprised of “what’d love got to do with it.” One year my final presentation was actually a competition. That competition was in the Bahamas. . . . I competed in seven categories and brought the trophy home for all seven categories. . . .

When asked about the competitions, Participant II continued:

These were city-wide, state-wide, sort of like all-state. We would know what we needed to improve on from a city level and a state level and then our teachers would of course tell us, this is not what we worked on, this is what you need to work on

Similarly, Participant IV shared his experience with assessments and competitions:

. . . . We performed regularly in marching band and symphonic band or concert band. We were always practicing for our own concerts. Then we would switch from marching to this thing called Solo and ensemble [competition], where you prepare either solo or duet with somebody else and you go before a judge, you play your piece, and you also played rudiments or scales to show your proficiency in your in your instrument. . . . I used to be on the drum line, so I would go in and play my rudiments let's say if it's like a five stroke or a seven-stroke roll, and I'll do it and then the judge would critique me, but he would also pull out some sticks from his drawer and say, maybe try it like this. He wasn't the best drummer, but he could explain it well. . . . we would have to do the same for our band director at end semester. We would have to know our natural scales, our natural minors, all those different type scales and play them for him and get graded on those.

Participant III recalled the assessment and evaluation components of her art and music classes in high school. Regarding the tests, she shared:

For music we would have to take tests oral and written. For artwe had projects due we were graded on if we completed the project, and not necessarily on the strength of it, or the quality, but more so the effort of did you try.

Career Preparation

The study is centered around understanding the characteristics of quality and equity in the arts programs of students in marginalized demographics. Considering the sample used for this study is comprised of men and women who are successful in their respective field of the arts, the researcher developed a series of questions that spoke to the nature of preparation that each artist did or did not receive as a student involved in the arts program at their high schools. The next section will discuss the matter of preparation for the participants' careers and will include the influences that both negatively and positively influenced the participants' career.

Participant II recalled her positive experience in her high school arts program that contributed to her successful career in the arts. She noted being called upon as a leader in classes and being provided unique responsibilities. She shared:

My junior and senior year, I ended up being the student conductor My teacher had told me, here's my curriculum, this is not your responsibility it helped me to become the person I am today in terms of my ear, teaching, singing, being versatile and able to sing whatever part I need to sing because I had to teach those parts

When asked if her arts program prepared her for auditions and career opportunities, Participant II posited:

In terms of me going in and being able to take on the music, yes, my acting skills, no. But for music, having theory . . . I was auditioning for an ensemble part, and they only needed altos, but I'm a first soprano, being able to be flexible to accommodate them singing alto; and being able to just say well I'm versatile enough that I can do this whole musical in alto and not have an issue sometimes people are stuck in whatever section they sing, but for me I believe I was prepared to be able to do whatever I've been in musicals, and I've been the tenor in a musical, so just whatever they needed I've been able to accommodate.

Participant IV discussed how his time in high school band equipped him with leadership experiences that continue to serve him in his career. He shared:

. . . . My senior year, I was a drum major, so I was able to be that extra set of eyes for my director. I would run rehearsals by myself and that definitely has helped me I use that today; I used it when I went to college and started actually being a music major and arranging and writing music for ensembles. It transitioned into working at churches. I worked at a church before; I used to work in my home church before I move actually moved to LA and I was over the entire music department That transitioned into Sunday Service with [major recording artist] where I'm literally just doing what I've been doing all my life. . . . just like singing, working with people, teaching songs and it's smooth, I'm not trying

When asked about preparation for interviews and auditions for career opportunities and employment, Participant IV connected that back to the competitions, stating:

. . . Ensemble contests getting in front of a judge, that's pressure right there and you're trying to perform under nerves. So that is like the same thing as an audition for anything that that was the beginning stages of me getting prepared

When asked if he had amassed the skills necessary to be an artist from his arts program in high school, Participant IV responded:

No. I feel like I had to live a little more life first, and overcome some things within myself first, to get comfortable; and to also change my perspective that regardless of what I audition for, what's for me is going to be for me.

When asked if her arts program positioned her to be successful in auditions for career opportunities, Participant III adamantly replied, "No." She went on to share:

. . . .I wish that we would have had choir, for real. . . . when I got to choir in college, most of the choir had come from predominant music schools. I didn't learn how to read music until I got to college. they had theory classes when they were in grade school. I just wish we had a real choir. The gospel choir was cool, it was fun, but that was church. I didn't learn anything from there. And then when the school did try to introduce the theory class, it was out of nowhere; and it wasn't consistent enough to grow, we didn't have it every day. So, I wish that we

would've had choir because with choir comes travel. when I was in college choir, we traveled in and out of the country. That changed my life and my scope, and view and perspective

Participant III further elaborated on why she felt underprepared by her music program in high school. She reflected:

In college, I had to audition to be in choir . . . if I had that in choir in high school, I would have found out so much more about myself than what I knew According to me, I thought I was an alto because I've been singing alto in church and also in gospel choir in high school. Low and behold, I'm a mezzo soprano. I did not know because I didn't have anything pulling me or stretching me there were no metrics! In gospel choir, that was church, you just get in where you fit in, sing where you've been. Well, I didn't get to do that in college, it was like, no let me see where you are.

Participant V shared extensively about his out of school participation due to his lack of investment in the school program. He felt that the school arts programs did not serve in preparing him for his career in the arts. Participant V attended a college for performing and media arts. When reflecting on his college experience as a result of high school, Participant V reflected: “. . . . It was a culture shock for me. I had already been on the music scene but when I got to [college] it was a culture shock for me”.

Participant I elaborated on why she also felt underprepared and explained the reason for the disadvantage, stating:

I was discouraged, I didn't know what to do or who to talk to. All of that stuff plays a part in your career when the four years or whatever that amount of time before, is not solid There was an imbalance. When you're not giving a full experience in one part of your educational career, it sort of spills over You could still have that desire but if you don't have the guidance, if you don't have the structure, your career is not given a chance. The same habits that same timidity, the confidence is not there that will have you make it

Participant II discussed some of the challenges she faced in her career as a result of her negative experiences in high school. She felt that her challenges could be attributed to a lack of preparation by a quality program. She continued:

I had not been practicing the integrity of theory and the discipline because I was not in a choral program I am very sure that not having the structure and that bad experience of not having leadership that was suitable, turned me off and then it spilled over into still having the desire but not having direction.

Extracurricular Participation

When discussing the experiences and opportunities that nurtured the participating artists the most in preparing them for their careers, each artist, including those who had a beneficial school arts curriculum experience, pointed to extra-curricular and outside opportunities. Each artist discussed how their activities positively impacted their career. Participant V, who shared that the school curriculum did not provide offerings that were of interest to him, depended on his outside experiences to prepare him for a future in the arts. He reflected:

There was never anything in school that would cater to what I was doing. . . . they had a rap club as an extra-curricular, but it just wasn't appealing It was all personal it was nothing around school. It was just me and my friends. It's what we were doing. I started writing music in fifth grade. I came up doing music with my best friends. One of my best friends said lets free style. I used to do it with my old friends. So, we started, and it turned into us trying to record We played sports and we would record ourselves. Like in the wintertime when it was cold, over winter break we started to record. My mom bought me a new radio and we just started recording freestyles. Then we started recording written stuff and just kept progressing.

Participant III spoke of her experience in her extra-curricular gospel choir, which was an extension of school, but without a curriculum or standards-based instruction. She shared:

We had a gospel choir. It was after school hours, and I like that because it just felt like home. I grew up in church. So, with people from school, we all come to choir. It's just fun. Its messy, it's fun, it's like family . . . so, this is another place that gave me a sense of belonging to do something I was good at.

Participant III continued by talking about her participation on the dance and cheer teams, prior to high school, which were also extra-curricular arts activities, but played a vital role in her career preparation. She shared:

In junior high, I was the captain of dance and cheer. . . . I had to audition to sing. they were looking for somebody to do the Star-Spangled Banner, so once I auditioned, I ended up being like the go-to person for that, or for any ceremony they needed singing.

Participant III recognized that her involvement in the extra-curricular activities did not provide the formal training and technique that should be afforded with a quality arts curriculum. However, she acknowledges that their career developing advantaged that served her by being a part of the activities. She posited:

. . . . I wasn't necessarily learning things about the arts, but it was definitely preparing me for the characteristics I needed to audition, to show up, to perform, to practice, to have a standard

Participant I, who discussed her challenges with the arts curriculum, was also a part of the gospel choir at her high school. She shared:

My whole time [in school] I was in the gospel choir. What I will say about the school is they were very agile with allowing us our space we didn't have any restrictions. We actually sang at, probably, all of the programs . . . I don't know how much funding we were provided because we raised money on our own. We were just an extracurricular activity that that was approved by the school

Participant I recounted the impact of her pre-high school experience:

. . . . I literally remember the feeling. I remember [the teacher]. I remember the experience of going. As an adult, just even thinking about how enriched I was with those experiences. People would think we were just going on a field trip, but we were seeing the possibility of performance in front of major crowds. It was a big deal to do those types of things

When discussing her preparation, Participant I vacillated in retrospect, comparing her junior high experience to her high school, stating:

. . . . In Junior high, I felt prepared because we prepared for those types of things, because we had competition. We knew the etiquette; we knew that. But in high school, I just wasn't [prepared] because I wasn't connected. I wasn't even connected

Passion

Upon hosting the conversations pertaining to the artists' involvement in both curricular and extra-curricular arts activities, one theme naturally emerged: passion. Participants spoke to how their passion was nurtured. An immediate observation was that even the two artists who highly rated their arts preparation programs did not agree that the arts education classes in their high schools did not serve to nurture their passion in the arts.

When asked if her participation in her high school arts program nurtured her passion, Participant II stated:

Nope. Church did, because I was a church baby I was in the choir at a young age. My home church choir was rocking. We had a good choir. So, it was the music and the choir and then my uncles; they sang quartet. I an uncle who sang the Blues. So, I had music all around me, completely. High school was just kind of like the icing on the cake for me. [Passion] was already there.

Similarly, Participant IV, who also had an influential arts program, stated: "I feel like my passion was more so at home and at church. School would just be an extension of that". The discussion about passion shifted from the contributors that influenced passion, to why the artists are passionate about the arts. The artists shared intimate details of the magnitude of arts in their personal lives and what having the arts as an outlet meant to them. Participant IV continued about his passion:

The Arts are powerful. You said the arts, and I feel like that just spans wider than just music how we express and how we communicate or the stories we tell can influence and change like people's lives and moods, actually entire generations. It's just powerful and it had it has the power to invoke change; and it gives me a personal sense of comfort; and happiness.

Participant IV continued by offering a perspective of allowing passion to lead career choices. He posited:

If you don't enjoy the work getting up to it, you're not going to enjoy the job. I was [initially] picking dentistry because there's not a lot of Black people in it, and [its lucrative] for sure, but then it's like, when you get there, are you going to enjoy it? I know I can wake up in the morning and sing for free and I'll be cool.

Participant V declared:

This is in me. This is what God put in me for some reason or another I always find a way, even when things would be down, I would come back. I always found a way to come back hard in music Ever since my first experience in the studio, I've never really left the studio.

Participant II shared:

I feel like [music] was all I had. It was what I knew. In life, I feel like sometimes people are given a gift, sometimes people are given multiple gifts. When I was younger, the gift that I knew and was certain of, was music And so, it was the most important thing me because this is what I know I can do. I'm going to take what I know I can do and groom it, instead of trying to go off to be a praise dancer. No, that's not that my field

Participant III led an insightful conversation of how her love and passion for music developed and how her personal expression is channeled through her art. She stated: "The arts gave me a sense of importance It gave me a place of belonging to do something I was good at . . ."

She spoke of how she would attend a weekly open mic night where other artists from all genres would showcase their art. She continued: "I started singing background

for artists and helping them with whatever. I just wanted to be apart because I just felt alive for the first time . . .”

Participant II shared her vulnerable connection as to why she is passionate about the arts. She shared:

I did not have mirroring. I didn't have anything telling me I was important, valuable, necessary, worthy, lovable. I had nothing saying that. Even if it was said it wasn't proven. So, I had nothing. Father wasn't there. So, it was just so many things. I just felt like I was just here, and that felt like torture. So, I'm saying all that to say, I didn't know passion; I had a lot of experience with pain. I did not know passion. So having all of this pain is why I'm in the arts, because it gave me an outlet to let it out I just had a lot of anger. So, I just started writing. When I was spitting what I was writing or singing what I was writing, I felt powerful instead of pitiful it made feel like I was here; like I was seen.

Participant II continued by describing the process of how she engages her passion:

My heart comes through that vein. I think a lot of times I don't even know what I'm feeling if I don't express it through that vein without my music or my writing, people could experience me as cold I think because for so long, when I had feelings and no one was there, I became used to putting feelings into words and into song; into something. So now when I'm feeling something, and I feel like I need to get it off of me, sometimes I can't just say let this go; I have to put in something. Sometimes, I can't even feel my emotions if I'm not in that vein.

No foreseeable future in the Arts

The relevance in students having opportunities in the arts is prevalent through the interview conversations. According to the participants in the study, having arts classes and programs that interest, inspire, and cultivate the gifts of artistry are essential. Some of the participants, aside from their passion, did not initially foresee a future in the arts.

Participant III shared:

. . . . At the time, I did not see a future for myself in the arts Ironically, even though I had been doing singing and dancing and writing and all of that, I still did not think that was a thing. Only other thing I knew I could do was hair I tried to get into hair school but that didn't work I was not prepared. I had

friends and peers who were getting acceptance letters and I wish I had a vision for myself, but I didn't . . .

The pivotal moment that changed her perspective was being introduced to a club of artists.

. . . . I got invited to an open mic night I went with a friend and literally my life changed. I didn't even know this existed. It was the first time I met people who were full time poets. I don't even know you could be a full time, independent artist, let alone a poet; like you pay your bills off poems? I did not pursue colleges straight out of high school because I didn't think that there was a place for me. What would I do? All I was ever good at good at was creative stuff. Everybody is going to school to be doctors and lawyers . . . I don't want to do that. So, because I did not see a place for myself, I didn't try.

Participant IV also shared a similar story of doubt in a future in the arts. He recalled:

I was in Health and Human services because at the time I wanted to be a dentist . . . TO me, [music] wasn't a real-life career. As far as me being an artist, it was so farfetched. If I was considering music, it would be like a music teacher or working at a church or something

Participant V recalled prioritizing sports over music, stating:

I had basketball practice and football practice and they wanted me to do band. I said no, my schedule is full. The teacher called my mom saying that I had an ear for music, but I wasn't interested. I found out later that he was right, and I wish would have participated then

Participant II recalled her reluctance to committing to the music program, prior to deciding to pursue the arts.

When I got to high school, I didn't sing right away because I was going to pursue cosmetology My freshman year, I said, I'm going to do cosmetology, I'm going to do hair, and I can still sing. But I was still seeing the music majors and I thought, I want to be going to competition more than I want to be doing these finger waves right now; or more than I want to learn how to do a process. So, I had to be sure of what I wanted to do with myself before sophomore year.

The conflict between passion and preparation can be traced throughout the journeys of each of the participating artists. Even being involved in an arts program that seemingly had standards did not fully prepare the artists for a career in the arts. There were missing components of both quality and equity. The conversations that ensued next were centralized to the hope for successful implantation of quality and equitable arts programs for future generations. Artists shared skills that should be developed and metrics that could be used to establish standards for equitable, high- quality arts programs.

Skills

The participating artists offered skill sets that aspiring artists should work to develop during their tenure in an arts program. The artists spoke from learned positive and negative experiences to render beneficial advice for the next generation to excel in an arts program.

Participant IV began with the idea of technical skills being essential, suggesting: “. . . Technique. Working the basics like breathing and tone and diction and all of that underway”. He then continued with the technical skills, stating:

Students should learn to do more than expected. . . . I say that to say, every student might not love it the same way, but teaching them how to you know pull from a place within their personal lives because perfection on in your craft doesn't necessarily mean that people will respond people respond to honesty; people respond to heart; people respond to passion a lot of times that doesn't sound like crispy clean notes; that doesn't sound really pretty. A lot of times that may be a crack in your voice or it might be using the wrong note, but you feel that I feel like when more musicians start understanding that that's a whole other level of musicianship.

He continued with another developmental skill: “Keep going. Learn how to continue even though you make a mistake”.

Participant II shared similar skills that are necessary for student success. She offered:

Students, especially a singer, needs to know the importance of site singing the theory preparation vocality knowing what to do and what not to do; the breathing and all of the technical things. I think we get a lot of singers and students who are thrown into the world who are great singers and musicians but then they don't have any knowledge or are unlearned about a lot of things behind it. So, I think those things are the most important; making sure that they know the theory, making sure that they know what they're singing; making sure that they're able to tell the musician no I'm a natural A-flat, as opposed to letting them put you in E-flat and now you're struggling.

Participant II also noted that she wished for the next generation, classes that offered independent study or private lessons to enhance musical ability, as opposed to her whole group experiences in choir. She stated:

I wish there were classes that only focused on vocal coaching, breathing and [technique]. . . . we warmed up but there was no class that focused specifically on that, and I think as a singer that's one of the most important things for us.

Metrics

The participants' interviews yielded a series of developmental skills that would be essential to nurture in students involved in a high-performing arts program. The natural extension of conversation led to discussions of the necessary inclusions for an equitable arts program. The researcher posed questions that pertained to the development of metrics to use for assessing standards of arts in a quality, equitable program.

However, the responses from the artists seemed to veer into the artists providing identifiers of a quality arts program, which may have included standards-based metrics that can be used to assess skills. The metrics that were discussed, although different than

those anticipated from the line of questioning, were valuable and directly correlate to the principle of equity within a quality arts program.

Participant III illustrated how her idea of metrics is theoretical but necessary. She shared her thoughts of what one of the fundamental metrics of a quality program should be as she pulled from her own college experience. She posited:

I believe the first metric should be engagement It's the natural tell if what is being presented, is being presented in a relative and relevant way, and if it's up to date. That's very important The days of teaching history because its history is over people have to know why. Why does this matter? why should I care? I feel like it's not necessarily gradable , but it is gradable. if the kids are engaged then you will have a more accurate assessment of what's going on I just think [curriculum] really needs to be relevant for the students to really take it seriously.

She recalled the dated material that she experienced in her college program:

When I think back to my college curriculum, I think, wow, they didn't care if this was engaging. I don't even know how long they had the curriculum because it was so out of date. So, they didn't care

Much like Participant III, the idea of significance and care was an issue that the artists felt strongly about. The matter of intentionality was a reoccurring theme amongst the artists concerning metrics of a quality program. Participant I posited:

Nobody really takes music or arts seriously, even still today. I mean obviously, they continue to try to take them out [of schools]. . . . they don't understand that throughout a child's experience, as a child, as a baby, they learn through arts. Why do you think everything is color? Why do you think we learn ABCs through song ? Children are probably becoming more successful with gamified experiences [because of the engagement of music and arts]

Participant I went on to critique even some of the arts programs that do not fully nurture children's arts education. She stated:

Creative children in general deal with chronic depression because they don't have real outlets, and it's just about performance. There is not the value of the balance

that they need as an artist, or a creative, as an arts enthusiast, or whatever it is that you proclaim to be in that area.

Participant II had a similar perspective concerning how the arts are often undervalued. She discussed the importance of quality in an arts program that is equitable.

Participant II stated her desire for greater significance, sharing:

I want [schools] to be more intentional with arts programs I want them to put more time and money into it. I want them to realize that it's something that's needed; it's important In schools, nowadays, arts are like the peas and carrot medley that people put on your plate because it's supposed to go there but you don't really have to eat it if you don't want to; but because you're supposed to have a vegetable on your plate, it goes here if budgeting is weird, it's the first thing to go I want [arts] to be more intentional and for us to realize that music literally has saved a lot of lives. Music has kept a whole lot of kids in school and doing stuff when really wanted to drop out

Participant II shared some of her own current challenges with significance.

I don't think we take the arts serious enough. Even as a profession, [artists] will say, I'm a full-time artist; I'm a full-time singer; and people will say, really? That allows you to you make money. They don't take you seriously. But if you say, I'm a welder, they're like oh okay. Or if you say, I'm a nurse, oh okay. But if its, I'm a singer, its, oh so you sing at the juke joint singing on little Saturday nights There's no respect unless you are Beyoncé or somebody like that; then it's, oh you made something of yourself. But if you're not in that caliber, they don't take it as seriously; they don't believe that you can do it.

Participant II was able to summarize her ideas for metrics to include funding, support, and significance. She also provided standards that can be used as metrics to signify characteristics of quality in arts programs, specifically music. She stated:

One-on-One vocal training is number one for me Two being artist development three is artist knowledge because a lot of times we have people who are singers, but they don't really know who they are as a singer yet

Students' ability to understand themselves as artists is a principal that Participant V was very adamant about in his metrics. Being a self-made artist, he felt it essential that artists know who they are and understand the audience in whom they target. He shared:

Students need to understand their brand and who it is they are targeting if I'm making [drill] music, I'm not going to target the church goers there has to be a class that asks them, who are you, as an artist, who are you, as a fan There needs to be the introspective question, who is your art for? . . . the moment a student understands that their art is not for everyone, that will be life changing. They need to know that they can be themselves Be your times ten. Learn to be the best version of yourself at your best

Artistic Identity

The findings illustrate a consensus amongst the artist participants concerning the final theme that speaks to the nature of student artists involved in the arts. While discussing passion, preparation, target audience, metrics, and the challenges that each of the participants faced during their experiences in their preparation programs, one of the most significant trends to emerge was the idea of artistic identity and the importance of knowing oneself. The researcher concluded from the interviews that while it may be conceptual in nature, development in the area of artistic identity may be one of the most prevalent metrics of quality in ensuring an arts program is equitable.

Participant V, who spoke passionately about knowing oneself as an artist posited:

For those who say they want to be a musician, you might have even known how to sing your whole life; you might have the elements of standout quality artist, but I think what would help an artist is understanding who are you as an artist once people understand that nothing is by accident, it's about putting yourself in the right position, then they will understand that if it's just about putting myself in the right position, I can just be me

Participant IV shared a similar sentiment after reflecting on all of the many industry opportunities he has had to work alongside A-list artists and celebrities. He recalled once wanting to be comfortable in the background, but then recognizing that he had the wherewithal in himself to be an artist of the same caliber as ones he admired. He

shared that he had to learn not to care what others thought of him in order for him to be liberated enough to be free to explore his own artistry. He said:

. . . Things that were farfetched at one point, aren't any more. And I realized I just had to stop [caring] about what others would think . . . I had to stop worrying about what people thought I sound like, how I feel, being nervous . . . you have to literally let all that stuff go . . . You might as well just do you . . . It's like flipping attention . . . it's not what I can do to make them go, wow, but what I'm going to do to make them feel me . . . it's all about intention now.

Participant IV expressed the importance of being able to make artistic choices and having the confidence to present yourself in what you do. He continued:

. . . It spans across the arts . . . like acting and dancing, it's all about the choice . . . you make a choice; and that choice may not be in the script or may not be in the choreography, but it may be a great addition . . . the more you do it, the more in tune you are with yourself and your gift . . .

Participant II discussed the significance of artist identity from the perspective of doing the self-work it takes to perfect your craft, even if one has had a strong preparation program. Students need to continuously seek out opportunity to learn and grow. She shared:

A lot of what I learned, I learned on my own; even though I had been introduced to some of it, I had to really sit down on my own and go back and find out what works for me . . . if it's something you're passionate about, sit down and research it. Google will give you access to everything. It may take a little longer, but it'll lead you in the right direction of what you need . . . Don't just wait for somebody to do it for you. If it's something you want to do, you sit down and you do it. . .

Participant IV offered the same, self-motivation sentiment, saying:

. . . Nobody can teach you want it. it's cool to say, I love to do that . . . but if you don't if nobody is telling, and you don't go look for it yourself, you don't want it . . . nobody can teach you how to hustle . . . nobody can teach you how to give it your all . . . you have to want to do that. . .

Participant I shared an inspirational journey to artistic identity that can be motivation to young and future artists who are learning to understand and differentiate between themselves as an artist and a person. She shared:

I used to hide the fact that I could sing I didn't like the favor that I had. . . I was intuitive and I would think, if I couldn't sing would they still like me? . . . I think some of that was my own lack of nurture in other areas of my life, so there was probably some level of insecurity; but that made me question where I was getting attention; would that attention be translated in those other areas? . . . I think the one of the reasons why we need the preparation for those who are in professional arts and entertainment is because when you are not groomed holistically you will find your worth in your gift; and if something ever happens to your gift, you're not giving a full spectrum of what it is that you're actually providing

Participant I continued by sharing artistic identity technique she uses with her students to help them navigate themselves as artists. She stated:

. . . . When I talk to my mentees, the first thing that I do is I free them from comparison. After that I give them clarity about who they are, because who you are is what comes out through your gift; your gifts are interchangeable. If my voice is taken away from me right now, I will still be fabulous because it's the spirit that God has given to me. It could be translated in different ways. That is not too many entertainment professionals, which is why the suicide rate in our community is through the roof

The participants in the study concluded that artistic identity is a skill and metric of a quality arts program that would help students to understand their value, their audience, and themselves as a person, outside of the art.

Summary

The semi-structured interviews conducted helped to provide evidence to answer the research questions pertaining to the equity and quality of arts programs in marginalized communities in the Chicagoland area. The findings in the interviews helped the researcher to understand characteristics of quality that professional artists value in an

arts program. The themes that emerged from the interviews also helped the instructor to understand the characteristics of equity for the population of students represented by the sample of participants. The researcher concluded that characteristics of both quality and equity may not be substantiated or materialized into tangible standards. However, much like the arts in its essences, the characteristics of quality and equity can be elusive in nature, and yet essential to include in the systemic structure of a quality, equitable arts program. The next chapter will consist of an analysis of the findings that can inform solutions and recommendations that address the issue of quality and equity in arts education for students in marginalized communities in Chicago.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSIONS

The study conducted was designed to address the problem of the need for quality and equitable arts education. The purpose of the study was to understand the equity and quality of arts programs in urban and marginalized communities in Chicago. The review of literature was used as a baseline to provide context around the issue. The phenomenological design consisted of semi-structured interviews with artists who have exhibited expertise in their fields of arts. The researcher utilized these interviews to fulfill the purpose of understanding the characteristics of equity and quality that impact the problem. The findings from the study are analyzed to inform the researcher of solutions to be determined, which will address the problem.

Discussion of Findings

The findings yielded from the study align with the literature concerning historical disproportionate education provided to students in marginalized communities across America. Students in communities that have been historically disenfranchised are still plagued by educational systems that fail to provide the quality and equitable education that all students deserve. The participants in the study offered experiences that were unique to each participant, respectively. However, their accounts trend along the trajectory of innumerable students across America who have been products of the public education sector in communities that share similar demographics of race, social class, and opportunities. The findings in this study can detail the effects in response to the research questions.

Each of the participants attended a school that offered some degree of arts curriculum. Most of the participants acknowledged that their institutions mandated all

students to complete at least one entry-level course in the arts department to fulfill graduation requirements. The obligation was the extent of many students' experience in the arts. Even for some of the participants who have successful careers in the field of arts, their involvement in their school programs was limited. Participant V only met the minimum required art credits. Participants I and III participated in music classes but did not maintain involvement. Recognizing the participants' lack of participation, the initial question arose of whether there was a deficit in the number of offerings for students or legitimate offerings that the students chose not to be involved. Immediately, knowing that the schools provided visual arts and music classes would cause one to believe that the onus lies on the participants for not taking part in the class offerings. However, upon further investigation into the quality of programming, the perspective changed. Participants I and III talked about the instructors' lack of classroom management skills, which then led to turnover. Students who were taking classes to fulfill a requirement often distracted teachers from instruction and prevented interested students from learning. Teachers who were not adequately trained and equipped to manage behaviors were an issue that directly impacted learning.

When teachers do not positively engage students in relevant and exciting material, students are more apt to disengage, disregard, and act out, as displayed by the participants' classmates, discussing the third dimension of equity in Chapter 2. The third dimension of equity, participation, accounts for attendance and non-attendance in arts educational settings (Kraehe, 2017; Kraehe et al., 2016). As formerly stated, students must feel welcomed to learn and create art relevant to their environmental backgrounds and psychological schemata. The schools attended by Participants I, III, and V failed to

equitably meet the needs of the students in the standards-based curriculum of the school's arts education programs. It should be noted that these schools were successful in providing equitable access, per the second dimension of equity, found in the literature in Chapter 2, being the existence of available arts educational experiences and unobstructed pathways to participation. Although not a part of the arts education curriculum, the extracurricular activities still provided space and opportunity for students to explore their interests and engage the arts in a manner that was appealing to them.

In terms of quality, an understanding of the effects of a rigorous curriculum is found in the literature in Chapter 2. Koza (2008) noted the absence of a rigorous school music program offered in elementary through high school settings does not adequately prepare students who aspire to study music and arts at the collegiate level. Participant III discussed the effort-based compliance grading during her visual art. Participants I and III discussed the minimal standards-based offerings during the school day, where students would not engage in the material due to the classroom environment. Participant V mentioned how there was never any course that inspired him to desire to participate. They also noted the consistent rotation of substitute teachers who were not qualified or invested in the arts. In the literature, Shaw (2018) determined arts instruction by general education teachers is consistently reported to be inconsistent, superficial, or nonexistent. The experiences had by many of the participants in this study align with the findings in the literature. Therefore, based on the participants' experiences, arts programs attended by Participants I, III, and IV classify as low-quality with minimal equitability.

Participants II and IV, who both attended vocational-style schools, offered an alternative perspective to quality programming. Their experiences provided unique

opportunities for students to select a focus area to study for an extended amount of time and concentrate on a major of their interest. It should be noted that Participant II acknowledged the uniqueness of her experience in the arts was different from that of her friends. Participant II did not attend the neighborhood public school. Instead, she was selected from a lottery to have the advantage of attending the vocational school. In all, the music programs that were offered at the vocational schools provided foundational opportunities for the participants to learn the fundamental components of music performance. Reflecting on the conversations in the interviews, the researcher concluded that the primary focus of the programs that participants were involved in in the vocational high schools was centralized on music performance.

The music performance preparation curriculum was developed and implemented with the goal of rearing performers. When the goal is to educate performers, the emphasis is based on the result of student ability. The benchmarks and metrics of the programs directly correlate to the student's aptitude and efficiency therein. The fundamental principles, such as theory and history, are incorporated into the program so that students can understand to be able to execute their crafts better. Competitions and contests are designed to build efficacy and precision of performance skills. The time spent in the program allows students to have an immersive experience in music, which will expose them to opportunities to showcase their gifts and talents while in high school. These programs are rigid and require a high level of rigor from their students. Participants II and IV mentioned how hard their instructors pushed them to meet attainment on performance skills. High-performing instructors invested in their programs influence the students they

teach, leaving lasting, impactful imprints in their lives. Performance skills are best developed, sharpened, and promoted in programs that offer a concentration in the arts.

The shortcomings of a performance-based curriculum, or the lack thereof, are that a centralized focus on performance leaves the students at a deficit of the holistic experience of nurturing students to become authentic musicians rather than performers with a strong skillset. While skills are essential to the origin of any career, skills are only as practical as the vehicle whereby they can be mobilized. Student performers are taught to study hard and perform well. Participant IV discussed rigorous drill practices on the field at 7 am daily. Participant II discussed winning and bringing home multiple trophies from major competitions. They both discussed the time they invested and the influence their instructors had on them. However, both shared how their passion for the music they learned was not nurtured in their program. From one vantage, the work they did to prepare for competitions prepared them for auditions to come later in their careers. According to the literature referenced in Chapter 2, quality experiences should include performances that make them feel proud, rewarding practice sessions, technical excellence, and intense expressivity (Seidel et al., 2009). The vocational programs seemed to have achieved standards of quality. However, both participants consider themselves self-taught artists who had to learn about their musicianship outside of the arts programs they accredit to their success. Reflection on the participants' experiences in strong performance skills-based arts programs results in the classification: quality with an equitability deficit.

Quality programs provide students with the tools needed to be able to perform alongside their counterparts. Students can access and execute material with high

standards of performance. They will be able to walk into open doors of opportunities with the confidence needed to secure a position. The issue comes when considering investment. Even if students can sight-read on command, sing multiple parts, and achieve 100% accuracy on dictation, will the efficiency be enough to inspire them? Will rudiments be fulfilling enough to nurture their passion? Will awards and medals in one moment in their life be enough to promote a lifestyle with the confidence to perform as a full-time respected artist? According to the participants in the study, those questions will be answered with a resounding, "No". Without the equitable component of an arts program that engages students in ways relevant to their lifestyles, the students will always be searching for supplemental activities and resources that will provide them an opportunity to exercise their skills in a manner that serves them. If students are not allowed to explore the art, they work so hard to learn they are not being provided an encompassing education conducive to their future.

Application of Findings and Conclusions to the Problem Statement

At the core of this study, the problem statement is that there is a need for equitable, quality arts program in schools across America. The centralized focus on the arts is derived from the grander scheme of historical systemic issues of disproportionality and mistreatment of people of color that can be traced back to the origin of America. The literature in Chapter 2 was used to understand the context surrounding the distribution of education and resources that prevent specific students from receiving the quality education they deserve. Although a sect of the greater domain of education, the arts are a vital facet that can be used as a lens to reveal the purview of inequity witnessed by marginalized communities. There is disproportionate access to quality arts curriculum

across cities and communities in America. The findings from the study reflect the realization of the problem, as highlighted in the participants' experiences. The dynamics of the problem were deduced to two intersecting principles: quality and equity. The findings can be used to fulfill the purpose of understanding the equity and quality of arts programs in urban and marginalized communities in Chicago.

As stated in the problem statement, some programs that specialize in the arts may be offered as extracurricular electives or after-school programs. However, while access is vital for all students, it only serves as one of the foundational equity components. The literature review encompasses a study of the dimensions of equity. The dimensions are realized in the findings, as participants shared their experiences in low-quality and inequitable arts programs. The participants who experienced after-school programs for the arts spoke positively in support of the outlets. The extracurricular activities offered a place that felt like home, like church, felt familiar, and was a place of belonging. Participants recalled the skills developed by participating in said activities, leadership, grit, and accountability. The opportunities to perform and showcase their art were fulfilling, and necessary. Yet, the participants needed more; they needed rigor, needed to be pushed, needed standards, metrics, and quality. Providing arts for the sake of fulfillment is not sufficient for students who desire and deserve to be involved in an arts program that will prepare them for a successful future in the field of arts. There must be more. Therefore, equity without quality cannot exist if the goal is a holistic quality education.

Inversely, the paradigm of the problem is revealed when considering the principle of quality as a sole proponent of a quality arts education. Having arts programs that are

considered quality is not adequate. While performance skills-based programs are necessary and provide a foundation that opens doors for opportunity, programs that do not yield equity are not holistic experiences for all students. In the discussion of the literature in Chapter 2, Seidel et al. (2009) determined that an arts program should include teaching artistic skills and techniques without making them primary. Instead, the program should foster skills that build the capacity to think creatively and make connections. The skills learned should be able to be channeled in any direction. Developing aesthetic awareness and providing ways of pursuing an understanding of the world should be the overarching goal of a quality arts program.

Additionally, the literature in Chapter 2 references the fourth dimension of equity, recognition. Recognition focuses on inclusion, acknowledgment, and valuing diverse cultural expressions and perspectives. Wexler (2018) spoke on the standards of programming that do not consider all the lifestyle demographics of its participants. Wexler stated that whether intentionally or unintentionally, the cultural capital and tastes of the White middle class become divisive spaces in art galleries, museums, and in zoned middle-class classrooms. The issue is not the standards. The problem is the lack of equitable recognition when developing the standards of quality.

Reflection on the need for equitable, quality arts programming in schools across America prompted this study, where the researcher sought to understand the equity and quality of arts programs in urban and marginalized communities in Chicago. Upon reviewing the findings, the researcher concluded the significance of the problem must be centered on the clarifying principles of quality and equity, not respective of each other, but in tandem. The study addressed the need for research to establish quality standards

and therefore, identified where programming should be implemented in response to equity in quality arts programs in marginalized communities.

Application to Leadership

The general purview of this study relates to understanding the intersection of equity and quality as it impacts all Americans' lives. The immediate purpose was to understand the equity and quality of arts programs in urban and marginalized communities in Chicago. The goal was to analyze current societal conditions and challenges as well as promote necessary change in favor of the students in marginalized communities. As it pertains to leadership, the driving theory at the foundation of analysis is path-goal leadership theory with critical race theory (CRT) and intersectionality.

Path-goal theory involves setting the path for a follower to achieve their goals. In this study, the followers were the participants; the theoretical leaders were the school programs that were supposed to offer an equitable, quality arts education to all students. The goal was to prepare students to teach artistic skills and techniques and foster skills in students that build the capacity to think creatively and make connections. The goal was also to equip students with the tools necessary to be competitive in their fields of arts and have a promising career in the arts. The findings of the study conclude that the goals were not successfully achieved. While there is evidence that some of the schools were pivotal in nurturing the artist participants rearing, the cavities that students were left to independently satiate point to the failure of obstacle elimination along the path of followers in pursuit of their goals, as characterized in path-goal leadership theory. Acknowledgment of these failures is not intended to contribute to the disparity of equitable, quality arts programming for students in marginalized communities; instead, it

can serve as a blueprint for the leading institutions to rectify the failures for the future student followers who are in pursuit of their goal of a successful career in the arts. The failures must be analyzed for the contributing factors of inequity, as in intersectionality.

Scholars use intersectionality to analyze and theorize cross-sections where points of differentiation, like quality and equity, intersect and raise concern for structural inequalities (Lizzio, 2013). The theory is used to examine multiple established forms of oppression that contextualize lived experiences, like being Black and poor. The theory in practice helps researchers to see those factors, while relevant independently, create a different dynamic collectively. The model was used to understand how the participants in the study were impacted by equity and quality in arts education in urban communities in America. The findings were used to conclude the importance of understanding that a quality arts education program does not solely consist of quality or equity independently; participants who experienced programs supportive with standards of quality amassed one experience. Participants involved in programs that were stronger in the context of equity received a different experience. However, the conclusion is that neither experience supported achieving a holistic experience in arts education because of the lack of both quality and equity adjoined. Critical race theory is incorporated to examine the lived experiences for the sake of understanding the underpinnings of oppressive systems.

Critical race theory was utilized in dissecting the footings of the establishment of systems that do not equitably serve students from all demographics, leaving students from marginalized communities at a disadvantage. The fundamental framing of critical race theory is that race should be centered in discussions of equity and justice. The goal of CRT is to implement the practice of a curriculum, or set of curricular policies, in

teacher education that centers on poverty, race, and their intersections and demonstrates social-justice-oriented action (Milner & Laughter, 2015). It is a transparent, aggressive approach used to address why educational systems today can be restrictive and continue to leave specific demographics of students disenfranchised. As supported by the literature in Chapter 2, the response is that the norm of perpetuated marginalization is the status quo. Whether the root cause is the passive attempts to undo segregation of low-income and affluent neighborhoods and schools (Rothstein, 2014), or the pass-the-buck styled, blatant disregard of accountability battles between the federal government, states, and school boards across the country (Ostander, 2015), this is the way things are and have been.

Response to Research Question: Is there a residual impact of past disproportionate educational experience still affecting students today?

Understanding the context of historical American education compared to the findings garnered from participants in the study, the researcher uses evidence to respond to the research question: Is there a residual impact of past disproportionate educational experience still affecting students today? The response is yes, there is a residual impact that can be traced in the participants' experiences in the arts. As previously stated, critical race theorists argue that only the overt forms of racism cause upset, while the majority of racism remains hidden beneath a veneer of normality. Schools offering one course of the arts as a graduation requirement is normal. Underqualified teachers in arts programs is normal. Arts programs being cut from the budget is normal. Schools not offering rigorous arts curriculum is normal. Students being ill-prepared for a career in the arts after matriculating through an arts program is normal. All previously stated issues are normal,

but only amongst Black and Brown students attending schools in marginalized communities. As referenced in the literature in chapter 2 that discussed the demographic contrast of White and Black students in the Northeast region of the United States, studies concluded evident disproportionate arts education experiences for Black students. Inequity in quality is unacceptable (Loewenberg, 2017; Rabkin et al., 2011). There must be change.

Recommendation for Action

There is a need for equitable and quality arts programming in schools across America. The literature in Chapter 2 served as evidence that substantiates inconsistent access and participation in arts programs in communities across the country. Studies show that White students who live in communities with higher socio-economic status receive more access and inclusion in arts education that is considered quality than Black students who attend schools in neighborhoods perpetually stricken with poverty (Loewenberg, 2017; Rabkin et al., 2011). The study intended to understand the quality and equity of schools in the Chicagoland area by conducting research to address how to establish standards of quality and accurately identify where programming can and should be implemented to address equitable access to quality arts programs in marginalized communities. The findings in the research study are evidence that responds to the research questions posed in the study. There is a residual impact of past disproportionate educational experiences still affecting students today. Students are still challenged with systems and structures that cause them to be marginalized, disenfranchised, and disadvantaged because they are not provided equitable opportunities that prepare them for successful futures in the arts. The findings serve as evidence for the latter two

research questions: What are characteristics of programming that determine quality for a preparatory arts education? and What are the characteristics of quality that determine an equitable experience for students in marginalized communities? A review of the findings aligned with the research questions promotes a call to action in fulfilling the purpose of addressing the problem of disproportionate access to quality arts curriculum in marginalized communities in Chicago.

A brief overview of the demographics in Chicago, related to arts education preparation programs, helps to provide context for understanding the issue of equity and access. The Chicago Public School System is the third-largest school system in America, currently housing 638 schools (CPS Board of Education, 2021). Twelve high schools offer an arts education curriculum. Among the 12 schools, four are considered arts schools in their title; one school is a contract school with paid tuition, one a charter school, and two are neighborhood schools on the south side of the city. According to the CPS Arts Department (2021), the goal is to “give students intensive studio experiences in the visual and performing arts, credits beyond the high school arts requirements, and an accelerated general-education curriculum that promotes a high college and career readiness level” (para. 1).

Evidence in the literature supported the establishment that every student needs to receive a quality arts education. However, the centralized focus of this study was to research arts preparation programs for students interested in a career in the field of arts. In actuality, all students do not desire to invest in an arts program nor seek a future in the arts. The issue here ensues for the students who aspire to a career in the field of arts. At the basic level of equity, being distribution and access, the offerings provided by this

school system are not sufficient. There are not enough schools that can provide students with an immersive arts education. Therefore, the recommendation is to implement more schools in specifically targeted areas that are intentionally designed to nurture students in the arts.

Response to Research Question: What are the characteristics of quality that determine an equitable experience for students in marginalized communities?

Fine and Performing Arts schools allow students to explore their creativity in deep and meaningful ways. Students are provided opportunities to hone their crafts and learn skills to prepare them for college and careers in the arts. Students who wish to have a future in the arts need access to schools that will nurture their passion and teach them standards. As referenced in the literature in Chapter 2, an arts program should foster broad dispositions and skills applied toward various mediums and genres. The programs help students engage with the community, civic, and social issues.

Considering the community, the recommendation is that the schools be established in historically underserved communities. The awareness of disparity is evident, as supported in the literature. Whether White flight, redlining, or purposeful establishment of ghettos cause specific communities to be marginalized, the effects still impact students. To move forward with repairing the wrongs that have been done, the recommendation is to incorporate equitable decisions to advance the historically disadvantaged students. Equity should be achieved and illustrated by targeting the dimensions of equity as determined in the literature, distribution, access, participation, recognition, effects, and transformation. Transformation, which is depicted by dynamic, transparent processes of individual, group, and societal change (Kraehe et al., 2016),

occurs when those in authority and seats of privilege recognize, understand, and then use their power to rectify wrongs. Establishing quality fine and performing arts schools in communities that have not had the opportunities to access them in total capacity would be a stride in achieving significant, evident equity to combat the problem.

Equity is one-half of the intersection addressed in the problem. Quality is the other component that must also be addressed in recommendations. The findings from the literature and the findings from the study resulted in the need for established, performance-based standards and metrics that evoke both measurable and abstract character-defining skills within the students involved in the program. Quality, even though naturally elusive, is the commodity amongst all things desired. Often, time characteristics of quality are not created; instead, they are established. The evidence that proves the efficiency of quality is typically found in results. In an arts program where naturally abstract principles of art are studied, processed, and demonstrated, quality metrics must be established. Quality must be determined to signify prominence and validity. Therefore, the recommendation is to establish standards of quality that are universally accepted and equitably influenced.

Response to Research Question: What are characteristics of programming that determine quality for a preparatory arts education?

The response to the research question concerning quality is developed from the findings from the literature, together with the findings from the study. The evidence served as the blueprint for constructing a set of characteristics associated with an equitable and quality arts program. The recommendation is to establish performing arts schools in historically marginalized communities that focus on the following standards:

engagement, fundamental concentration, artist development, and socio-emotional development.

Engagement

Participant III posited, “I believe the first metric should be engagement It's the natural tell if what is being presented, is being presented in a relative and relevant way and if it's up to date”. Engagement is critical in all subjects of education. The Charlette Danielson framework for teaching (The Danielson Group, 2021), used by districts across America to evaluate teacher performance, has a domain that highlights the need for and encompasses characteristics of student engagement. Metrics used to assess student engagement include evidence that activities are aligned with goals; student enthusiasm, interest, thinking, problem-solving, etc.; learning tasks that require high-level student thinking, aligned to objectives; and students are highly motivated to work on tasks and persist during challenging tasks. Engagement is a characteristic of both quality and equity, as it is a means for ensuring students are invested in their learning beyond what is required of them.

Fundamental Concentration

Participant II suggested one-on-one training should be a requirement for music majors. The idea surrounding one-on-one training is for students to receive a unique experience in learning and master their craft in a specific way. The recommendation for fundamental concentration would encompass private lessons as well as hands-on, practical experience. Students would study from qualified mentors who are experts in their respective fields in the arts. Students will learn the fundamental principles of theory, history and culture, and performance in a way that they can intimately study curriculum,

glean from the experts, and practice honing their craft in an emotionally safe, nurturing environment.

Artist Development

Artist development was a characteristic of both equity and quality that was evident in the experiences of all participants. Participant V stated:

Students need to understand their brand and who it is they are targeting . . . there has to be a class that asks them, who are you, as an artist. . . . There needs to be the introspective question, who is your art for? . . .

The participants spoke in-depth about the challenges they faced both with external forces and within themselves. Artist development will allow students to take an introspective examination to discover their purpose and the factors that helped to create their mentalities, goals and dreams as well as their art. Examining themselves will allow them to execute visions and plans, build their capacity for growth, narrow their target audience, and build a sense of self-identity necessary to compete in college and a career in the real-world setting.

Social-emotional Preparation

Social emotional learning (SEL) is defined as developing and utilizing social and emotional skills (Khazanchi et al., 2021). Coping with feelings, goal setting, decision making, and the ability to empathize with others are among the skillsets acquired in social-emotional learning. These skills can be applied to all facets of life. Especially for students in performing arts who have to master the ability to perform and sometimes take on other personalities for the sake of the art, SEL skills play a vital role in student health and success. Participant I posited:

I think one of the reasons why we need the preparation for those who are in professional arts and entertainment is because when you are not groomed holistically, you will find your worth in your gift; and if something ever happens to your gift, you're not giving a full spectrum of what it is that you're actually providing

Social-emotional skills are a part of the holistic grooming necessary for students to have a healthy perception of self and others. Students, especially those who create, need to be secure in their identity as art is objective, but the opinions of observers of art are often subjective. Social-emotional preparation will give students the skills they need to be persistent, determined, and authentic to themselves.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study was centralized around the themes of equity and quality, as they relate to arts education. The narrowed focus allowed the researcher to study in-depth the characteristics of equity and quality. However, the study was limited to understanding the impact of equity and quality within the realm of the arts, thereby omitting a broader scope of how the characteristics impact education. A recommendation for future research could incorporate the effects of quality and equity in core curriculum for students in marginalized communities.

The findings were garnered from participants who experienced arts programs in an urban community. The evidence of disproportionality was substantiated in the literature. However, having only the opposing side limits a circular view of the problem. The recommendation for future research would be to study the standards of quality in communities where students receive arts education in schools that are not plagued by poverty.

The researcher chose to narrow the sample to only include experiences from participants who exhibit expertise in their respective field of the arts. Limiting the sample to successful artist participants excludes students who showed interest or promise in the arts but were underprepared by their school programs. A recommendation for future research in this context could include the experiences of students who were unsuccessful in the arts to determine if equity and quality impacted their experience.

A review of the findings led to the conclusion that most high schools require a completion of arts for diploma attainment. The mandate raises context for what could lead to further research related to the topic. One facet that could be studied is the correlation of mandated successful completion of arts classes to college and career readiness. Questions that arise are: if arts classes are essential enough to mandate as a prerequisite to higher education and the workforce, what aspects of the arts are vital in preparing non-arts majoring students to be successful in college and the workforce? Also, should there be more of an emphasis placed on the arts curriculum being presented? The literature and findings substantiate the impact quality and equity arts education has on students with careers in the arts. Future research could expound upon the influence arts education has on students who have successful careers outside of the realm of the arts.

The overall purpose and problem of this study was found within exploring the duality of equity and quality in American history but limiting the locus to the lens of arts education in marginalized communities in Chicago. By reviewing the literature and findings and understanding the impact race, socioeconomic status, and other classifying factors have had on education, further research would be beneficial in identifying

equitable standards of quality in other core subject areas including math, reading, and science. How would equity be achieved in the confines of core, concrete subjects as opposed to abstract, arts education? Would equality be more suitable? Would standards of quality be universal?

Concluding Statement

This phenomenological qualitative research study focused on two intersectional themes: equity and quality. Each theme is found at the core of America's history concerning education, especially the arts. Through this study, the researcher intended to understand the equity and quality of arts programs more fully in urban and marginalized communities in Chicago. A deeper understanding was achieved by interviewing a sample of participants who shared their experiences of how they were prepared for their careers in the arts while attending their schools in Chicago. In his findings, the researcher directly addressed the problem of needing equitable, quality arts programming in schools across America. The literature and study findings provided evidence to answer the research questions, "Is there a residual impact of past disproportionate educational experience still affecting students today?" The effects include a perpetuated systemic racist system that continues to cause racial divides that are apparent in school communities. Through the interviews, the researcher determined characteristics of programming that determine both quality and equity for preparatory arts education programs that serve students in marginalized communities. The literature served as foundational support for examining intersectionality, critical race theory, and path-goal leadership in relation to American education. The research study findings served as evidence for the researcher to establish recommendations for advancement in arts education.

The problem of needing quality and equitable arts education is only a facet of the overarching issue of historical racist systems woven into America's fabric. The researcher, a Black American male educator responsible for students' education, has the mantle to challenge and influence systems that directly impact all students, especially those who share the disproportionate disadvantages that still plague the Black American community. Therefore, this study is meaningful in targeting systemic racism within the researcher's locus of control. Equity and quality are two formidable principles that confront a history of marginalization and disenfranchisement. Understanding the impact of equity and quality and creating solutions that promote both principles conjointly will intentionally help to deteriorate an arduous history in America, starting with arts programs in marginalized communities in Chicago.

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