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The Effects of "Capturing Kids' Hearts" and Teacher Job Satisfaction in an Arkansas Elementary School Setting

Caroline Mildred Nail

The Effects of "Capturing Kids' Hearts" and Teacher Job Satisfaction in an Arkansas Elementary School Setting

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Caroline Mildred Nail

Bachelor of Science, Hendrix College, 1997
Master of Educational Leadership, Central Arkansas University, 2009
Curriculum Specialist, Arkansas State University, 2017
Superintendent Certificate, Arkansas State University, 2019

Dissertation Approval

This dissertation, "The Effects of 'Capturing Kids' Hearts' and Teacher Job Satisfaction in an Arkansas Elementary School Setting," by Caroline Nail, is approved by:

Dissertation Chair:

_____
Sarah Gordon, PhD
Associate Professor
Center for Leadership and Learning

Dissertation Committee

_____
Ellen Treadway, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Center for Leadership and Learning

_____
Sheena Williamson, EdD
Assistant Superintendent
Searcy School District

Program Director:

_____
John Freeman, PhD
Associate Professor & Program Director
Center for Leadership and Learning

Graduate College Dean:

_____
Richard Schoephoerster, PhD
Dean, Graduate College

Permission

Title: The Effects of "Capturing Kids' Hearts" and Teacher Job Satisfaction in an Arkansas Elementary School Setting

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Abstract

Social-emotional learning programs and character education models are currently being adopted across the United States as schools understand the importance of supporting the social-emotional development of children and its impact on their overall achievement. This qualitative study centered upon the experiences of elementary teachers who implemented Capturing Kids' Hearts in their classrooms for the last two to three years. The teachers who volunteered to participate in this research study were from two Arkansas school districts. The interviews were conducted virtually due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and participants answered nineteen questions and brought an artifact to discuss during the online interview. The teachers' responses were collected, analyzed, and then sorted into emerging themes. These findings resulted in implications for practice and future research regarding implementation of a SEL program or character education model for teachers and students in Arkansas public schools. The results of this research study implied that the daily time committed to implementing CKH is dependent on the teacher; a shared limitation identified by teachers is a need for additional support and consequences for individual student misbehavior that is repeated; teacher job-related stress was decreased due to improved student relationships with their peers and teacher; CKH EXCEL training is an essential factor to successful implementation; CKH components and strategies improved teachers' classroom management skills; and teachers saw positive student behavior between peers after implementation of CKH.

Keywords: Capturing Kids' Hearts, social-emotional learning

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I. Introduction

Background of Problem

In 2018, The Aspen Institute's National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (Commission) shared a vision that called for the incorporation of social, emotional, and academic development of children in American schools to ensure that all students will be prepared for success in school and life (2018). The Commission found that social, emotional, and cognitive development are highly interwoven, impacting student learning and their success in school and life (2018). Their report, titled *From a Nation at Risk to a Nation at Hope,* shared that schools in America could have a huge influence on students' social, emotional, and academic development due to the significant amount of time spent in the educational setting interacting with their peers and adults (2018). Commission members also found that a PreK-12 education centering on the social, emotional, and academic development fosters academic excellence, collaboration, communication, creativity, empathy, civic engagement and other skills needed for success in the 21st century American workforce (2018).

Schools already place a high value on academic student success, but the social-emotional development and practice of these skills must occur each day as well (Jones & Kahn, 2017). Social-emotional learning is a process through which a child will acquire and apply knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to understand and manage their emotions, set and achieve goals, feel and display empathy for others, develop positive relationships, and choose responsible decisions (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2005). Presently, schools have a momentous role in addressing and promoting critical social and emotional development with students

ranging from grades K-12. Along with supporting students in becoming life-long learners, a high quality educational environment must teach students to socially interact in respectful ways that allow for a safe and positive learning environment (Elias et al., 1997).

Since 1994, The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has promoted the incorporation of SEL frameworks into goals for school organizations across the nation (Beaty, 2018). CASEL (2020) has defined four areas for high quality, engaging SEL implementation in schools: foundational support and plan for SEL, strengthening adult SEL competencies and capacity, promotion of SEL for students, and facilitation of continuous improvement in practices along the way. There are five core areas of SEL competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. "SEL programs are gaining in popularity and are increasingly being integrated into school curricula" (Civic Enterprises, Bridgeland, Bruce, & Hariharan, 2013, p. 30). In Summer 2019, the Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) released G.U.I.D.E for Life to educators and families. The five components of the G.U.I.D.E for Life program (growth, understanding, interaction, decisions, and empathy) are related to positive academic achievement and children who grow to be "well-rounded citizens, stronger communities, and more effective employees" (DESE, 2020b).

Capturing Kids Hearts (CKH) is a national character education model with a social-emotional learning focus (Holtzapple et al., 2011). It has been adopted by schools across the US and is currently found in 47 states, including 13 school districts in Arkansas. Schools use CKH to help establish a positive learning environment and

develop strong teacher-student relationships (Holtzapple et al., 2011). Schools that have implemented CKH have seen positive effects for student outcomes, including a decrease in overall building infractions, classroom disruptions, and discipline referrals, and improvements in students' social competence and academic engagement (Flippen Group, 2004). Further, the five components of the DESE G.U.I.D.E for Life program reflect daily elements that overlap with those of the Capturing Kids' Hearts character education model, such as "Good Things" shared in the morning, which encourages understanding, interaction, and empathy as students share their personal experiences with one another. The CKH social contract built by the members of the class centers around growth and decisions, which directly coincides with DESE G.U.I.D.E for Life's assertions that students must develop skills to manage themselves and make responsible choices.

Statement of the Problem

As schools in Arkansas are expected to implement DESE's five guiding principles to build critical SEL skills in students, schools that are implementing the CKH character education model have already built the foundation to these required guiding principles. Although research has demonstrated the positive effects of SEL for children and the positive outcomes of CKH for students, little is known about teachers' experiences with this character education model. Because more schools in Arkansas are implementing Capturing Kids' Hearts, and teachers are primarily responsible for implementing the character education model with fidelity, more research is needed to understand how CKH affects teacher experiences and job satisfaction. Therefore, it is imperative to understand how Capturing Kids' Hearts affects teachers as they implement components of the character education model with fidelity in their classrooms. By understanding how

teachers perceive CKH, as well as studying its effects on their job satisfaction, classroom management, and experiences, CKH districts implementing the character education model will be able to gauge CKH's effectiveness in producing a positive learning environment that supports the whole school system (both child and teacher outcomes), an overarching goal of CKH.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study is to understand elementary teachers' experiences while implementing Capturing Kids' Hearts (CKH) in their classroom. The elementary schools are located in rural, central Arkansas with student building populations averaging between 450-700 students. The questions guiding this qualitative study are: (a) What are teacher experiences of implementing Capturing Kids' Hearts in their classrooms? (b) How do teachers perceive their own job satisfaction after implementing CKH in their classrooms? (c) According to teachers, how does CKH influence classroom management?

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are important to understand in the context of this study:

1. Capturing Kids' Hearts (CKH): "A skill intensive, systemic process designed to develop high-performing school cultures, align organizational and individual behaviors to outcomes, and increase school connectedness" (Holtzapple et al., 2011, p. 72).

2. Social-emotional learning (SEL): The process through which child and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to

understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2020). The goal of SEL is to help students have the skills to be successful in life as they mature into responsible citizens in our communities and society.

3. Job satisfaction: Job satisfaction is "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (Locke, 1976, p. 1304).

4. Classroom management: Classroom management as defined by Sieberer-Nagler (2015) is a system of many facets, examples being: tone of the classroom, student seating chart, communication methods, handling student responses, execution of routines, and collaboration.

5. Emotional regulation: According to Gross, Sheppes, and Urry (2011), emotional regulation refers to ability to control one's emotional state.

6. Self-regulation: Florez (2011) describes self-regulation as the ability to pause in a highly emotional time and to observe others' emotions.

Significance of the Study

The study will allow school administrators to understand the impact of Capturing Kids' Hearts on faculty members who are incorporating components that support a positive learning environment designed for students. The effect of Capturing Kids' Hearts on the teachers who are implementing the character education model currently has not been researched. Schools are investing money to provide training for Capturing Kids' Hearts for teachers. Teacher turnover is a major financial burden to school districts

that have invested thousands of dollars into Capturing Kids' Hearts professional development training and biannual check-up visits to their schools.

Assumptions

The assumptions in this descriptive study relate to the effects that Capturing Kids' Hearts has on Arkansas public school teachers who are incorporating this character education model in their classrooms to provide social-emotional learning for students. One main assumption would be that teachers are implementing CKH classroom components daily with fidelity. These required daily components with implementation strategies are provided to teachers during a 12-hour Capturing Kids' Hearts professional development training. It is assumed that CKH has a beneficial effect on classroom environment only when it is implemented with fidelity.

Limitations

The findings will be limited to the teachers involved in this study, though results could be transferable to other teachers, districts, or regions at the discretion of the reader. The other limitation of this study is the level of expectation from building administrators on how fully their teachers implement CKH. This could have a large effect on teachers' perception of the program, and therefore, how successful it is in creating a positive work and learning environment within the school.

Delimitations

The effects of Capturing Kids' Hearts on student outcomes, such as academic achievement, attendance rates, and discipline referrals, will not be studied. Two school districts representing central Arkansas will be studied.

Organization of the Study

In Chapter One, the background for the study is described. Additionally, Chapter One delineates the purpose of the study, its significance, research questions, definitions of terms, assumptions, delimitations, and limitations of the study. Chapter Two contains the theoretical framework for this study, along with a detailed review of the literature pertaining to development of social-emotional learning, positive effects of social-emotional learning, understanding CKH, and teacher job satisfaction. Chapter Three outlines the methods used for data collection for this study.

II: Literature Review

The purpose of this descriptive study is to understand elementary teachers' experiences and perceptions after implementing Capturing Kids' Hearts (CKH) in their classrooms. Research will be undertaken to understand (a) how teachers perceive job satisfaction after the implementation of CKH; (b) how teachers' classroom management is affected after the implementation of CKH; and (c) teachers' overall experiences in implementing CKH daily in Arkansas public schools. The literature review for this study addresses the following topics: (a) foundations of social-emotional learning; (b) positive impact of social-emotional learning on student learning; (c) Capturing Kids' Hearts description, training details, outcomes, and CKH in Arkansas; (d) CKH and teacher job satisfaction; and (e) self-determination theory as the theory that informs this study.

The process for reviewing the literature surrounding Capturing Kids' Hearts, a national character education model, and its influence on teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction included using search engines, such as Google Scholar, ProQuest, and EBSCOhost. The searches occurred over several months with search terms including, but not limited to: Capturing Kids' Hearts, teacher job satisfaction, SEL programming, Piaget cognitive theory, effective classroom behavior management, social cognitive theory, administration support for teachers, and self-determination theory. It is important to note there was a very limited amount of research articles about Capturing Kids' Hearts specifically.

Foundations of Social-Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning is a process through which a child will acquire and apply knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to understand and manage their emotions,

set and achieve goals, feel and display empathy for others, develop positive relationships, and choose responsible decisions (CASEL, 2005). The literature provides a strong foundational background of social-emotional learning as it has grown in importance in schools across the United States. The core competencies of SEL are (a) self-regulation skills with problem solving strategies; (b) positive relationship interactions; (c) responsible decision-making skills; and (d) the ability to value the feelings of others.

Presently, schools have a momentous role in addressing and promoting critical social and emotional development with students ranging from Grades K-12. Along with supporting students in becoming life-long learners, a high quality educational environment must teach students to socially interact in respectful ways that allow for a safe and positive learning environment (Elias et al., 1997). While many students succeed academically and are involved in various extracurricular activities, other children are found to be disengaged with school and floundering in their classes as they struggle with social-emotional deficits that affect their learning on a daily basis (Greenberg et al., 2003). For example, according to the Department of Health and Human Services (1999), close to 20% of American youth have experienced mental health issues during a year, while 75% of these young people do not receive help or interventions.

To understand how SEL has influenced the school setting, it is important to dive deeper into cognitive development of children to understand how these stages interact with the acquisition of affective SEL skills needed in a school setting. The following sections will outline the biological and developmental origins of SEL, along with the history of SEL in the field of education.

Biological and developmental origins of SEL. Social-emotional learning began to be specifically explored by developmental psychologists and researchers in the 1900s. Generally speaking, researchers have found that social-emotional learning occurs naturally and gradually during children's development through their ability to understand experience, express, and manage their emotions and to develop positive relationships with others (Cohen, Onunaku, Clotheir, & Poppe, 2005). SEL has been based on studies in which researchers explored how emotions and relationships are affected by how and what people learn (CASEL, 2007).

One of the common threads of research that focuses on SEL is how one's environment and experiences may shape social and emotional development across the lifespan. Prominent researchers of developmental psychology in the early 1900s, including Lev Vygotsky, studied developmental psychology, child development, and education and argued that development in children is a social process from birth onward as the child is assisted by their peers or adults within their zone of proximal development (Tudge & Winterhoff, 1993). The work of another prominent psychologist, Jean Piaget, also shaped what is known about social cognitive development (Huitt & Hummel, 2003). Popularized in the mid-twentieth century, Piaget was motivated to learn how young children think, since they tend to respond to situations and experiences differently than their older peers (Huitt & Hummel, 2003). As Piaget researched the process of cognitive development, his interest in how children adapt to their environment grew as well (Huitt & Hummel, 2003). Piaget explored how environment affected children's behavior, and he posited that complex cognitive capabilities develop in four stages from birth to adulthood and that people use two processes, assimilation and accommodation, to adapt

to their environment (Huitt & Hummel, 2003). Further, in the latter half of the 20th

century, Albert Bandura studied human behaviors, interactions, and social and

observational learning. Bandura developed social learning theory, which posits that

children learn social behavior by observing and imitating others (Bandura, 1986). He

found that children will also learn social behavior by observing rewards or punishment,

otherwise known as vicarious reinforcement (Bandura, 1986). Bandura also found that

influential models, such as parents, siblings, peers, teachers, and even characters on

television, affect social-emotional learning and development, because children often

observe and imitate these examples of behavior (1986).

   Taken together, the contributions of these prominent researchers (and the studies

that followed their theories) have helped establish a basic timeline of social-emotional

learning and development across the lifespan. Social-emotional development in children

occurs over four stages from birth until they are 18 years old. This development

encompasses a wide array of skills such as: self-esteem, emotion regulation, friendships,

and identity development (Cohen et al., 2005). The following outlines the four stages of

social-emotional development:

1. Early childhood (birth to 3 years old): This stage sets the foundation for the

    development of social -emotional development (Berk, 2013). Children's

    emotional ties to their caregiver are adaptive for survival (Bretherton, 1992).

2. Preschoolers (3- 6 years old): During this stage, children have begun to further

    understand their gender identity, cooperation and negotiation with peers, and

    conflict resolution skills (Berk, 2013).

3. Middle childhood (7-12 years old): Children will begin to self-evaluate and make social comparisons that will define their sense of self (Berk, 2013). They will be able to develop more complex problem-solving skills and self-regulation strategies (Berk, 2013).

4. Adolescence (13-18 years old): Adolescents will be about to understand situational factors that will impact their behavior and be able to understand why their behavior is different from peers or their caregivers (Berk, 2013).

SEL in education. In 1994, the Fetzer Institute was the first to introduce the term social and emotional learning as a framework to identify the needs of children and how schools should respond to their needs (CASEL, 2018). The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) was developed in 1994 to meet the goal of creating high-quality, evidence based SEL programming from preschool through high school. Since 1994, CASEL has promoted the incorporation of SEL frameworks into goals for school organizations across the nation (Beaty, 2018). In 1997, Elias et al. noted that schools had begun to add learning outcomes for affective domains with instructional curriculum spanning kindergarten through secondary school settings. Greenberg et al. (2003) noted, "… schools have to help students become more competent in the affective domain as much as they are expected to improve students' cognitive skills." Thus, SEL programs began in schools to bridge the need for SEL activities that were suitable for children's cognitive developmental stages.

In 2005, CASEL set goals of SEL programs in schools that would foster the progression of acquiring five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective, and behavioral competences: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and

responsible decision making. These competencies would allow for a solid foundation for student academic performance by reflecting more positive social behaviors, fewer discipline issues, less emotional stress, and increased academic outcomes demonstrated in grades and assessments (Greenberg et al., 2003). Bear and Watkins (2006) described how students who master their SEL competencies will result in a developmental succession from being controlled by external factors to functioning in success with internalized beliefs and values, including the display care and concern for peers, making positive choices, and taking responsibility for actions and behaviors. Social-emotional learning blends competence promotion along with development in youth frameworks so that risk factors are reduced and protective mechanisms for positive adjustment are developed (Benson, 2006; Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008; Weissberg, Kumpfer, & Seligman, 2003). Waters and Sroufe (1983) described students with high levels of competence as those "who have the abilities to generate and coordinate flexible, adaptive responses to demands and to generate and capitalize on opportunities in the environment" (p. 80).

Currently, schools are responsible for cultivating not only students' cognitive development but also their emotional and social development (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). Educators must prioritize instructional time to deliver content based on state required standards and implement SEL evidence-based approaches while experiencing pressure to raise student academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011). Coskun (2019) posits that students' academic achievement, relationships with others, and levels of motivation are influenced by emotions. Cognitive development, along with building affective learning skills, is paramount to the overall success of a child's experience in a school environment. Research shows that teachers who are

knowledgeable about childhood development are better equipped to support social, emotional, and academic outcomes (Comer & Maholmes, 1999).

At the heart of SEL programs are teachers implementing and incorporating these frameworks and strategies into their classrooms daily to support students. "SEL also helps teachers become more effective, by fostering their own social and emotional development and supporting a caring and challenging classroom climate. SEL programs are gaining in popularity and are increasingly being integrated into school curricula" (Civic Enterprises et al., 2013, p. 30). Ultimately, SEL programs must focus on the underlying conditions of problematic behaviors while still supporting the academic achievement of students (Greenberg et al., 2003).

SEL in Arkansas. Mental Health America (2020) notes that students are coming into Arkansas public schools with many mental health issues and multiple forms of trauma, ranging from divorce, abuse, witnessing of violence, and poverty. Schools serve a diverse student population with an array of skills, abilities, and motivation when it comes to learning (DESE, 2020b). Mental Health America (2020) recently provided the following statistics about Arkansas: (a) Arkansas is ranked 31st in the nation for prevalence of mental illness, (b) 35th in the nation (61.3%) for youth who do not receive services for mental health illness, (c) 45th in the nation for children with private insurance that does not cover mental or emotional problems, (d) 50th in the nation for implementing IEPs for students identified with emotional disturbance, and (e) Arkansas is ranked first nationally for most number of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). This data was shared during the 2020 Arkansas Administrators Education Association (AAEA) Summer Conference at a session led by DESE G.U.I.D.E. for Life presenters.

In summer 2019, DESE released G.U.I.D.E for Life to educators and families. The G.U.I.D.E acronym stands for Growth, Understanding, Interaction, Decisions, and Empathy (DESE, 2020b). The G.U.I.D.E. for Life program is designed to be led by Arkansas school counselors and educators to provide students in kindergarten through twelfth grade with a five-step process in which they can achieve success in life and at school (DESE, 2020b). The primary goal of this initiative is for teachers and counselors to incorporate the concepts from G.U.I. D.E for Life into the students' school experience, which will result in children potentially becoming "well-rounded citizens, stronger communities, and more effective employees" (DESE, 2020b). Through professional development, educators in Arkansas are expanding their core knowledge and skill set for SEL as expectations from DESE are to "instill real-world skills for success in all Arkansas students" (2020b). This initiative from DESE has created the need to understand how programs, such as Capturing Kids' Hearts, are impacting teachers in Arkansas public schools.

Positive Impact of Social-Emotional Learning

The second major topic of the literature review describes the positive impact of social-emotional learning in school environments. Research in this area focuses on the following themes: (a) relationships with teachers, (b) effects on the classroom/school environment, (c) academic performance, and (d) children in Arkansas public schools. These focus areas allow the reader of this study to understand how elementary teachers' experiences and perceptions of SEL are impacting their job experiences by reviewing research based on relationships with peers, how SEL affects classroom environments and student academics, and why there is a need in Arkansas schools for SEL programs.

Relationships with teachers. Students spend countless hours with their teachers in which opportunities arise for implicit learning during teacher-student interactions that can lead to positive student social-emotional outcomes (Harvey, Evans, Hill, Henricksen, & Bimler, 2016). Classroom teachers interact with their students daily by validating or dismissing their emotions, facilitating their emotional vocabulary, and helping them see links between their behaviors and emotions as they occur (Jun Ahn, 2005). Research has found that teachers who improve their positive emotional interactions with students have more successful outcomes than those in less supportive classrooms (Harvey et al., 2016). This type of positive teacher-student relationship is a strong predictor of student outcomes and creates a more enjoyable learning environment for teacher and students (Williams, 2017).

Brinkworth, McIntyre, Juraschek, and Gehlback (2018) shared a belief that teacher-student relationships lie at the heart of teaching and learning as they greatly impact student outcomes. Sparks (2019) defined teacher-student relationships as a critically important relationship that impacts how well students learn because of the teacher's belief in their students' potential, interests, strengths, and weaknesses. Positive emotions from teachers are closely linked to their own well-being as well as their students' well-being and increases in student achievement (Hagenauer, Hascher, & Volet, 2015). Teachers must be willing to pause and listen to their students' perspectives while offering genuine interest to set a precedent for classroom norms and accepted peer behavior. This type of classroom climate fosters a positive environment where children are more at ease and less likely to display aggression (Merritt, Wanless, Rimm-Kaufman, Cameron, & Peugh, 2012). Schools with strong emotional and academic focus have

greater influence on teaching and learning ties with students and teachers (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). Students not only learn from their teachers, but also from their peers and families. Emotions can accelerate or hamper a child's academic commitment, work ethic, progression, and success in school (Durlak et al., 2011).

Effects on the classroom/school environment. When teachers demonstrate emotional support in their classrooms on a daily basis, their students perceive them as more caring and supportive (Harvey et al., 2016). A teacher's ability to maintain successful classroom management while fostering positive teacher-student relationships is an important factor for school districts to target in professional development (Hagenauer et al., 2015). Teachers who are able to create a sense of community within their classrooms have students who are more cooperative, helpful, and display concern for others, whereby resulting in fewer discipline issues (Battistich, Solomon, Watson, & Schaps, 1997). Merritt et al. (2012) notes that there are three findings that support the positive impact of social-emotional learning. First, emotionally supportive teachers have lower cases of reported child aggression in their classrooms (Merritt et al., 2012). Second, children with a strong emotionally-supportive classroom are more likely to develop self-control than their peers in a less supportive environment (Merritt et al., 2012). Lastly, an emotionally supportive classroom is an important factor for students coming from lower sociodemographic levels (Merritt et al., 2012).

Academic performance. Students are more motivated and engaged at school when they have a strong relationship with their teacher (Gehlbach et al., 2016). Positive elementary school settings provide time for students to generate prosocial bonds that lead to academic success (Hawkins & Catalano, 1999). Researchers have shown that there are

several strategies that will increase student academic performance. Zins et al. (2004)

connected SEL programs to students demonstrating improved attitudes towards school,

improved behavior, and academic performance. These researchers noted that students

with high social-emotional competencies had positive academic outcomes, were

confident about their learning skills, managed stress better, and were self-motivated.

Another group of researchers found in their study that a connectedness to the teacher and

effective classroom management have a direct impact on students' behaviors and

academic achievement (Resnick et al., 1997; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993). CKH's

goal is to teach adults to model the desired character traits so students can reach their full

potential (Holtzapple et al., 2011). Educators must shoulder the burden of helping

students reach their fullest academic potential, while also instilling positive character

development traits that will last them through adulthood.

Capturing Kids' Hearts

The social and emotional learning field of study began by focusing on

comprehensive procedural interventions affecting behavioral and academic outcomes.

An increasing number of researchers are finding that investing in social and emotional

competence is more effective for the child in the classroom environment (Payton et al.,

2008). Children achieve social, emotional, and academic success when the school

environment offers prosocial interaction and encourages participation within the

classroom (Hawkins, Smith, & Catalano, 2004). As such, many programs and models of

character education have been developed to help facilitate social and emotional learning

into school curricula.

Capturing Kids' Hearts character education model is a product of the change in understanding of the relationship between the social and emotional domains and academic performance with a social-emotional learning focus (Holtzapple et al., 2011). The foundation of CKH is built on creating positive school climates in schools across the nation by implementing procedures daily in classrooms (Holtzapple et al., 2011). The following sections provide an overview of CKH, beginning with a description, followed by the background theory, teacher training, outcomes, and its history in Arkansas public schools.

CKH description. CKH's best recognized phrase is, *"If you have a child's heart, you have their mind."* Flip Flippen, CKH creator and chairman of the international Flippen Group, believes the purpose of their work is to help lead students to their personal best by winning over their hearts (Flippen Group, 2020). The Flippen Group, an international leadership development organization, developed CKH as a response to schools struggling to decrease problem behaviors. It focuses on the development of student character while facilitating prosocial interactions among children (Burgess, 2017). CKH began as an additional character education model along with other educational programs that attempted to meet federal initiative goals, such as smaller learning communities that would lead to healthier school climates (Flippen Group, 2009; Bernstein, Millsap, Schimmenti, & Page, 2008).

In CKH, students develop a classroom social contract with their teacher that is based on how they want to be treated by each other and their teacher. It is a guide for how to deal with social conflict and serves as a list to recognize peers who are following the expectations of the class social contract (Flippen Group, 2009). Four essential

questions are used by teachers to guide their students back on task without any major disruption within classroom instruction: 1) What are you doing? 2) What are you supposed to be doing? 3) Are you doing that? 4) What are you going to do about that? (Holtzapple et al., 2011).

In addition, CKH requires multiple components be embedded within the classroom environment each day through their EXCEL (Engage, Explore, Communication, Empowerment, & Launch) Teaching Model: (a) Engage has teachers greeting students at the door to develop an engaging relationship with each other. (b) Explore encourages teachers to have their students share "good things" each morning to practice social skills as the teacher models empathy, listening, and questioning. (c) Communication allows the teacher and students to communicate during sharing of "good things" and practicing of expectations from their social contract. (d) Empowerment occurs when students are able to practice what they have learned in a positive, safe environment of respect and empathy while growing their confidence in how they interact with others. (e) Launch occurs when teachers share a positive thought, song, or practice to ensure that their students leave the classroom on a positive note (Flippen Group, 2009).

Background theory. CKH is based on the theoretical work of Bandura called the social cognitive theory (SCT) (Holtzapple et al., 2011). Social cognitive theory is characterized by a behavior that is most likely to be repeated when the person's expectancy of the behavior will consistently lead to a particular valued outcome (Norman, 1991). CKH reflects Bandura's SCT, which asserts that behaviors are learned during an individual's observations in their daily environment (McLeod, 2016). Bandura posited that certain processes that occur between a stimulus and a response will dictate

what the response will be (McLeod, 2016). When children receive reinforcement for positive behavior, they will most likely try to imitate positive peer behaviors they have observed, or they will try to avoid negative consequences they have observed their peers receiving for negative behavior (McLeod, 2016).

Bandura (1986) asserted that a person must possess self-efficacy for a behavioral change to occur. The person would need to have the conviction that he or she could perform the behavior successfully prior to acquiring the behavior. This would be accomplished by the individual through observation of others and implementing self-regulatory mechanisms (Bandura, 1986). Therefore, Bandura's SCT provides CKH a strong foundation that its SEL intervention components will promote positive student and teacher behavior changes in the classroom (Holtzapple et al., 2011). Learning through observation is a four-step process outlined by Bandura, Ross, and Ross (1961):

1. Attentional Process - This is noticeable behavior and is easily copied if the child is paying attention.

2. Retention Process - The ability to store information by remembering what you paid attention to through symbolic coding, mental images, cognitive organization, and motor rehearsal.

3. Reproduction - The ability to perform the behavior that one observed and remembered.

4. Motivation - The individual must be motivated to imitate the modeled behavior for either a reward or punishment.

SCT asserts that children will most likely encode the behavior of their models to imitate at a later time, especially the models that are more like themselves (McLeod,

2016). They are also likely to imitate models that gain a response from others, either reinforcement or punishment, or those who receive approval from their peers (McLeod, 2016). Therefore, the use of modeling, reinforcement, and rewards are most likely to assist shaping their skills and choices (Hawkins et al., 2004). The social environment determines the situation in which a child will develop, and the nature of the environment will pilot the child either towards or away from positive social behavior (Hawkins et al., 2004). The mindfulness or expectations of an award or positive reinforcement will have a major effect on the behaviors that people will display (Hawkins et al., 2004). Elias et al. (1997) stated SEL is the progression of children gaining core competencies to recognize and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, and appreciate the perspectives of others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations constructively.

Grounded in Bandura's SCT, the purpose of CKH is to strengthen children's "connectedness" to their school by building close bonds with their teachers in grades K-12 while following a social contract for classroom interactions (Holtzapple et al., 2011, p 10.). Teachers must recognize their role is very important to the child sitting in their class. CKH places great value on building a strong bond between teachers and their students. CKH is based on a social cognitive theory in which learning is acquired by the observation of model behavior and through social experiences (Flippen Group, 2016). Student behavior is regulated by three systems: 1) teacher modeling of social expectations greatly influences students, 2) feedback, such as affirmations or positive experiences will typically lead to desired behavior by students, and 3) implementing CKH components in a consistent manner (Flippen Group, 2016). An integral component

of CKH is the social contract, which establishes classroom expectations. Also, students give affirmations to each other, check one another to refocus and engage in learning, or even "foul" their peers, if they are perceived to have crossed a line in the classroom expectations established by the social contract.

Teacher training. Teachers have shared via a national teacher survey titled *The Missing Piece* that it was easier to implement SEL in classrooms after receiving professional development to improve their own social and emotional competencies (Civic Enterprises et al., 2013). This led to teachers having a feeling of ownership of the process along with a personal goal to ensure SEL success as they became better at being positive models of SEL (Civic Enterprises et al., 2013). Capturing Kids' Hearts by Design is a form of teacher support training for schools implementing the procedures and practices of CKH.

Trainings provided by CKH representatives for lead teachers, administrators, and even paraprofessionals focus on social skills instruction that develops positive student behavior through teacher modeling, coaching, and behavioral rehearsal while eliminating competing behavior (Gresham & O'Shaughnessy, 2002). CKH training requires teachers and administrators to attend a three-day training focused on teaching school faculty the EXCEL leadership model described earlier, which builds on the necessary skills to model and teach relational skills, communicative competencies, problem-solving skills, citizenship, and consequential thinking (Holtzapple et al, 2011). These essential skills are the base for how teachers will construct positive classroom management strategies by engaging students, supporting expectations for classroom behavior, giving effective feedback to students, and providing a pathway for students to address conflict among

peers and adults (Holtzapple et al., 2011). School staff engage in creating social contracts, practicing daily components of CKH with coworkers, and developing strategies to implement CKH in their classrooms for their students (Flippen Group, 2009). Educators who attended SEL trainings have students who excel at social problem solving and engaging in emotional conversations as well as achieve a higher level of social competence (Reyes, Brackett, Rivers, Elbertson, & Salovey, 2012). Therefore, it is imperative that teacher professional development is provided to ensure that the character education model or program is sustainable and successful (Hans & Weiss, 2005).

CKH outcomes. Character education programs support schools as they try to develop learning cultures that foster ethical decision making and responsibility in students (What Works Clearinghouse, 2006). Longitudinal, evidence-based research studies have determined that effective classroom management by the teacher results in a positive impact on students' behavior (Resnick et al., 1997). A study by Holtzapple (2011) on CKH explains that the priority of implementing CKH is to develop high-performing cultures in schools through individual and school behaviors that are aligned to outcomes, and to see evidence of school connectedness with students and teachers. Expected outcomes include that teachers have an established connection with their students that is founded on an intentional culture, negative behaviors have decreased as learning is maximized, and students have developed skills in communication and conflict resolution that will help them in school and later in life (Holtzapple et al., 2011).

Schools that have adopted CKH with implementation spanning past the first year have seen benefits of the character education model (Holtzapple et al., 2011). Flippen Group (2004) shared that Nacogdoches ISD in Texas analyzed quantitative and

qualitative survey data from 100 participants in three schools to understand the impact of CKH. The following results were found: (a) 100% of the participants shared that the skills learned from the CKH training were valuable; (b) over 85% of the participants felt that CKH training had provided them with effective discipline strategies; (c) over 95% of the participants shared that would recommend CKH to other schools.

South Middle School in Kentucky participated in a longitudinal study about the impact of CKH. The committee conducted the research study compared fall 2002 and fall 2003 first nine weeks student data after CKH was implemented in 2003. The results of the study found: (a) decrease in overall building infractions from 1,719 to 1,110, (b) decrease in male infractions from 1,178 to 694, (c) decrease in female infractions from 541 to 416, and (d) decrease in classroom disruptions from 702 to 348 (Flippen Group, 2004). These results reflect findings from SEL program research that shows that multiyear SEL programs have built a strong foundation in improving social competence, academic engagement, and discipline referrals for students showing aggression in elementary schools (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2010). The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2004) shared how programs with the ability to increase students' attachment to their school typically are models for violence prevention. The National Longitudinal Study on Adolescents Health results indicated that student connectedness leads to reduced negative behaviors found in four fields of adolescent health and morbidity: emotional health, violence substance use, and sexuality (Resnick et al., 1997). Alderman (2004) described how teachers must have an in-depth understanding of the subject they teach but acknowledged that this alone will not lead to student success in their rooms. He further explained, "The knowledge base of motivation

is so extensive that the crucial factor is making the best choice for a particular problem" (Alderman, 2004, p. 15). Student motivation, classroom management, and effective teaching practices are very closely related while an environment of good will, respect, and cooperation help produce a productive learning climate (Sieberer-Nagler, 2015). SEL programs have been linked to higher productivity and better classroom management after teachers have improved their classroom organization based on components of the SEL program (McCormick, Cappella, O'Connor, & McClowry, 2015).

  CKH in Arkansas. The research on the positive impacts of social-emotional learning in schools reinforces why CKH has been adopted by many school districts in Arkansas. CKH representatives meet with district administrators, building principals, and building educator leadership teams as they decide to implement the character education model within their schools. It is imperative for Arkansas educators to understand that children's emotions influence them in a positive or negative way, can be triggered by certain stimuli, and can result in a behavioral reaction to that stimulus (Gendolla, 2000; Lang, 1995; Parkinson, Totterdell, Briner, & Reynolds, 1996). As such, as of the 2019-2020 school year, 13 Arkansas public school districts with a combined overall total of 67 elementary schools, middle schools, junior high schools, and high schools have implemented CKH in their campuses. Nine of these public-school districts are in their third year of utilizing CKH to build a connection between teachers and their students while sustaining a positive school climate. One representative from a school in White County that utilizes CKH shared their district had invested $300,000 dollars in professional development for teachers, administrators, and staff in grades K-12. At the time of the inquiry, the representative did state that referrals had dropped in grades K-6,

but the secondary schools were having a harder time getting buy-in with their teachers

and students. (S. Embrey, personal communication, October 19, 2020).

Teacher Job Satisfaction

As this study focuses on teacher perceptions of CKH and how (if at all) they

experience satisfaction in their jobs after implementation, job satisfaction research was

reviewed to understand how the required daily components of CKH may have an effect

on teachers' job satisfaction. Since CKH is meant to build a strong connection between

teachers and students and to instill a positive classroom culture, it is necessary to

understand how SEL programs, or character education models, affect teacher outcomes,

such as job satisfaction. Central to this understanding is the acknowledgement that

teachers foster children's motivation by being motivated themselves (Galinsky, 2010).

Teachers' motivation to implement vital components of CKH each day is imperative as

they support children's development of social skills and their ability to be engaged

learners who can self-regulate their emotions.

A widely used definition of job satisfaction is the satisfying or positive expressive

state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences (Locke, 1976). Some

may find a job to be rewarding and gratifying, while others view that same job as

unsatisfying or infuriating (Churchill, Ford, & Walker, 1976; Snipes, Oswald, LaTour, &

Armenakis, 2005). It is important to note that studies have shown that teachers are

typically satisfied with features of their job that relate to the work of teaching but are

dissatisfied with the aspects not directly related to teaching, for example, working

conditions, salary, and interpersonal relationships (Butt & Rehman, 2010; Crossman &

Harris, 2006). Further, Demirtas (2010) concluded that the connection between teachers'

overall job satisfaction level and their performance is invaluable. If schools in Arkansas continue to adopt CKH as an SEL initiative, then it is well worth the research to understand their perspectives and experiences with CKH and how it relates to their overall job satisfaction. The following sections outline the factors that relate to teacher job satisfaction, including demographics, school environment/culture, teacher/student relationships, classroom management, and support from building administration.

Demographics. Demirtas (2010) shared in a study that teacher job satisfaction is low when educators begin their careers. Although this can be concerning, it was found that teachers' job satisfaction levels rose as the teachers advanced in age (Bishay, 1996; Demirtas, 2010). Interestingly, when job satisfaction for teachers was researched through the lens of teaching experience, different results were found. Educators with 6-10 years of teaching experience were more satisfied with their jobs than educators with 21 or more years of experience (Demirtas, 2010). As far as gender differences found in teacher job satisfaction, Demirtas (2010) found no difference between females and males. Researchers Ho and Au (2006) shared that increased levels of stress or psychological distress could be impacting teacher job dissatisfaction.

School environment/culture. High job satisfaction in teachers can result in very significant gains through equalized work with administrators, students, and parents (Demirtas, 2010). Ho and Au (2006) described teachers' sense of job satisfaction as a perceived relation between what one wants from one's job and what one understands teaching as involving. Therefore, the product that results is from an attitudinal and affective response of teachers. On the other hand, Ho and Au (2006) explained how low teaching satisfaction is often correlated with work stress, psychological distress, and low

self-esteem. Teachers under stress experience feelings of exhaustion, irritability, tension, and headaches frequently (Dunham, 1984).

Research has shown that the organizational culture can also sway job satisfaction (Ma & MacMillan, 1999). Hoy and Miskel (2013) define organization culture as "a system of shared orientations that hold the unit together and give it a distinctive identity" (p. 180). A positive culture of collegiality and teamwork can result in job satisfaction while a school culture of remoteness will lead to teacher dissatisfaction with their jobs (Ma & MacMillan, 1999). The Flippen Group (2009) explained that implementation of the EXCEL Leadership Model results in a culture in which teachers and students model leadership qualities, show respect for one another, celebrate each other's successes, provide care and concern for their peers, show enhanced communication skills, achieve quick resolution of conflicts, and have a sense of being on a team. This study will explore how CKH strategies and components have impacted the environment and, in turn, the impact it has had on teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction.

Teacher/student relationships. The teacher-student relationship is an emotional connection, which is built on a strong relationship between teacher and student (Cohen, 1999). Teachers who have shown a high level of care for students produced higher engagement by students in their classrooms (Cohen, 1999). Wehlage, Smith, & Lipman (1992) discovered that teacher-student relationships are essential to engaging students and increasing student achievement. "Good teachers are able to empathize with students, understand their world, and listen to them. They are able to set standards and maintain control while allowing students to have responsibility and freedom to learn" (Levy, Wubbels, Brekelmans, & Morganfield, 1997, p. 85). Teachers shared the importance of

good teacher-student relationships through their careers in a study by Veldman, Tartwijk, Brekelmans, & Wubbels (2013). There was evidence between teacher job satisfaction and teacher-student relationships in which levels of job satisfaction fell when teacher perceived their relationships with students as less than good (Veldman et.al, 2013). During the same study, Veldman and her peers (2013) reported that a high score for teacher job satisfaction related to high scores for student-teacher relationships.

      Classroom management. Educators have identified that classroom discipline is the most crucial problem area they experience in their classrooms (Sieberer-Nagler 2015). Myers, Freeman, Simonsen, and Sugai (2017) shared that effective classroom management is a critical skill for all educators to instill so that students will be able to reach their full academic potential and experience social competence. However, teaching has been identified as one of the most stressful jobs with a quarter of teachers sharing that they find teaching to be extremely stressful (Johnson et al., 2005; Kyriacou, 2001). Factors that center around organization and social issues, such as lack of support, level of workload expectations, and classroom management issues, are the lead causes of teacher stress that affect job satisfaction (Klassen & Chui, 2010). There is a direct link between teacher perceptions of job satisfaction with classroom management and instructional strategies (Klassen & Chui, 2010). Betoret (2006) discovered in his research study that teachers with high stress levels resulting from workload and classroom management issues will have health problems, burnout, absenteeism, and retention. Chang (2009) and Spilt, Koomen, and Thijs (2011) found that teacher emotional engagement with students is the main reason for high stress in the field of education.

Support from building administration. Administrative support is a factor that can impact teacher perceptions about their job satisfaction and the school culture. It has been found that teacher leadership thrives in environments that are rich in encouragement, where collaboration among peers is ensured, and support is evident from school leaders (Demir, 2015). Wenner & Campbell (2017) share that principal support leads to the development of improved teacher leadership in school cultures. Importantly, a clear linear relationship has been established between the level of administration support provided and the fidelity of implementation of CKH by teachers (Holtzapple et al., 2011).

How Does All of This Relate to CKH?

A positive school culture relies on many factors, including the development of a safe, caring environment, a high standard of behavior, and the construction of healthy relationships in a professional culture that increases student connectedness (Lickona & Davidson, 2005; Smith, 2010). Capturing Kids' Hearts Campus EXCEL model is considered a character education and violence prevention intervention since it is aimed to strengthen the connectedness of students to their schools by increasing protective factors such as strong teacher-student bonds, clear expectations of conduct that are consistently upheld, and the development of students' poor social coping skills. With CKH, there is a mutual agreement to pursue significant academic pursuits, individual differences are respected, and conflict is resolved by the creation and following of procedures and guidelines. However, classroom teachers must shoulder the burden of ensuring that CKH components are implemented daily with fidelity. Teachers' perceptions of CKH on their daily walk as educators is an area in need of research. The majority of articles pertain to

CKH's effect on student achievement, discipline, and attendance (all factors that relate to job satisfaction) while our understanding of teachers' perceptions of CKH and its effects on job satisfaction is limited.

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by the self-determination theory. Psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan developed self-determination theory (SDT) at the University of Rochester. This theory posits that individuals are motivated by intrinsic and/or extrinsic causes (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Extrinsic motivation refers to behaviors influenced by external rewards or punishments; examples include money, grades, and praise (Cherry, 2020). Intrinsic motivation is behavior engaged in because an individual will find it to be personally rewarding (not because of outside influence or pressure). Examples include things like tidying up a room, solving a puzzle, or studying about a topic because it is fun (Cherry, 2020). SDT asserts that the basis of personal motivation is determined by just how autonomous or self-motivated the individual is (Deci & Ryan, 1985). This theory regards positive human tendency as a need to advance towards growth with three core needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) that will help with this growth (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Deci and Ryan (1985) determined that if these three needs were met, then motivation would increase in individuals. Prompting from peers that an individual feel connected to usually will result in extrinsically motivated behaviors (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

The three needs listed in SDT must be met for a person to be motivated; these needs are (a) autonomy - the desire to control own's own behavior and goals, (b) competence - the need to learn and develop mastery of skills and tasks, and (c)

relatedness - feeling a sense of belonging and attachment to others (Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006). These needs are dependent on each other, as relatedness gives security when a person begins a new task, autonomy promotes the feelings of competence once the task is completed, and in the end this generates a greater sense of competence for the person since they feel accepted and able to relate to those around them (Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006). A person's sense of relatedness reinforces feelings of respect and care from members of the peer group (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Lastly, Ryan and Deci (2000) shared that a person feeling competent with a skill set will then most likely internalize until it leads to an internal motivation.

This theory informs this study since educators must be motivated to focus on promotion of social and emotional competence while also ensuring that instructional content is delivered to students each school day. As Schonert-Reichl (2017) noted, "Teachers are the engine that drives SEL programs and practices in schools and classrooms" (p. 138). As educators are implementing components of CKH in their classroom each school day, SDT can help explain how and why teachers are motivated to implement and carry out the daily components of CKH. Their feelings of being competent in implementing CKH components, developing positive teacher-student relationships with all students, and maintaining a positive classroom culture each day will affect how motivated the teachers are to follow through with the process. This would have an impact on the teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction. CKH also reflects Bandura's social-cognitive theory (SCT), which asserts that behaviors are learned during an individual's observations of their daily environment (McLeod, 2016). Bandura

determined that certain processes that occur between a stimulus and a response will dictate what the response will be (McLeod, 2016).

Recent research studies suggest that teacher-related factors impact the success of SEL program implementation (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). The fidelity of SEL program implementation is related to the following teacher-related factors: beliefs regarding if the SEL program is aligned with their teaching approach, level of comfort with delivery, beliefs about classroom management, dedication to helping students acquire social skills, support perceived from administration, and perception of their school's culture as it aligns with the SEL program of choice (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Each of these factors have been shown to relate to job satisfaction, which informs Research Question 2 for this study, "How do teachers perceive job satisfaction after implementing CKH in their classrooms?" Further, relatedness is the "need to love and be loved, to care and be cared for" (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p.88). CKH is founded on developing a safe, supportive, and positive classroom with healthy relationships for all participants (Holtzapple et al., 2011); this helps inform Research Question 1 ("What are teachers' experiences of implementing CKH in their classrooms?") and 3 ("According to teachers, how does CKH influence classroom management?")

Summary

This quantitative, descriptive study explored the relationship between elementary teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction and their classroom management after implementing CKH. Cohen et al. (2005) demonstrated how social-emotional development that occurs from birth until 18 years of age comprises many skills such as self-esteem, regulation of emotions, and friendships. The literature review further

included the evolution of SEL in education and described how SEL has grown in

importance in education across the United States since 1994 (CASEL, 2018). The review

also presented information about SEL in Arkansas, including current statistics from

Mental Health America (2020) that expounds the need for SEL programs to support

students. DESE (2020b) shared that educators in Arkansas must develop a SEL skill set

and a core knowledge of SEL to ensure success for all Arkansas students. A brief review

was provided on the positive impact of social-emotional learning on teacher-student

relationships, classroom environment, academic performance, and children in Arkansas

public schools. Harvey et al. (2016) shared how teachers who develop positive emotional

interactions with their students will increase the opportunities for successful student

outcomes.

Essential to the literature review was the examination of Capturing Kids' Hearts,

which is designed to create high performing school and classroom cultures while

increasing the students' connectedness to their school. The literature review provides an

outline of the character education model's description, theory, training outcomes, and

CKH in Arkansas. Research has demonstrated that investing in multi-year SEL programs

with a strong foundation results in positive growth in social competence, academic

engagement, and decreased discipline referrals in elementary settings (Conduct Problems

Prevention Research Group, 2010). The researcher then used the literature review to

examine the relationship between CKH and job satisfaction, school environment, teacher-

student relationships, classroom management, and support from administration. Previous

studies have shown that high teacher job satisfaction is related to the work of teaching

and not to aspects of non-teaching requirements (Crossman & Harris, 2006).

This literature review concluded with a detailed explanation of the self-determination theory (SDT) as the theoretical framework for this qualitative study (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and a detailed explanation of how SDT provides support for the research questions that will be guiding this study. Chapter Three will describe the methodology of this research study, including the procedures that were used to collect and analyze the descriptive data related to the study's research questions.

III: Methodology

Introduction

   The purpose of this descriptive study was to understand elementary teachers'
experiences while implementing Capturing Kids' Hearts (CKH) in their classrooms. This
chapter provides details on research design, participants, sampling, data collection
methods, credibility, data analysis, and a chapter summary. The questions guiding this
qualitative study were: (a) What are teacher experiences of implementing Capturing
Kids' Hearts in their classrooms? (b) How do teachers perceive their own job satisfaction
after implementing CKH in their classrooms? (c) According to teachers, how does CKH
influence classroom management?

Research Design

   This study was qualitative with a descriptive approach. Qualitative research is a
research design which emerges from observations and interviews in the real-life settings
by researchers (Patton, 2015). The methods that are often used in evaluations are
participants' stories and perspectives that share what happened to whom, when, and with
detailed consequences (Patton, 2015). Therefore, researchers in qualitative studies will
observe people in their own environment making sense of the world around them (Kirk &
Miller, 1986). This approach recognizes that people are experiencing their version of
what is true; therefore, multiple realities will exist within the qualitative study (Lincoln &
Guba, 1985).

   The descriptive approach within qualitative research permitted the researcher to
focus on the phenomenon or lived experiences of individuals (Patton, 2015).

Additionally, the researcher sought to understand the experiences of individuals and the meaning that was attached to their experiences (Gliner, Morgan, & Leech, 2017). The goal of this study was to understand and make meaning of the experiences of teachers in a public-school setting that implemented CKH for the last two years through surveying, interviewing, and observing teachers implementing CKH.

Participants

This study consisted of eight participants: all certified elementary teachers trained in Capturing Kids' Hearts who have implemented CKH as the character education model for their social-emotional learning needs in their schools for the last two years.

Setting of the study. Two school districts with student enrollment ranging from eleven hundred to over three thousand located in rural central Arkansas participated in this research study. There are eight school districts in White County with a few districts using Capturing Kids' Hearts. Participants were recruited primarily from the two elementary schools in these districts. The purpose of choosing these two elementary schools was that the participants would have similar resources and training within the CKH EXCEL model.

Sampling method. Convenience sampling was utilized for participants who were recruited for this study. According to Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2016), convenience sampling is a nonrandom sampling technique where the target population has people who meet desired criteria with easy access and willingness to participate in the purpose of the study. To qualify to participate in this study, certified teachers in elementary grade level classrooms must have been employed in 1) a public school or district that implements Capturing Kids' Hearts or 2) a public elementary school that has implemented CKH for

two years. Convenience sampling is appropriate and logical when the purpose of the study is to gather narrative data from participants.

Before recruiting participants for this study, an email was sent to the superintendent of the school district requesting permission to pursue this study with the elementary classroom teachers in the two school districts. A description of the purpose of the study was provided along with interview questions that were presented to 8-10 teachers who have implemented CKH for the last two years in their classrooms. This email requested the names and email addresses of classroom teachers from their schools. Upon approval to perform this study within the school district, an email was sent to building principals soliciting qualifying teachers' names and contact information. Once contact information was received from building principals, an email was sent out to recruit willing participants who fit the criteria for interviews. This recruitment email was sent out on three separate occasions spanning a two-week period until enough participants responded and data saturation was reached.

Eight participants were selected from the 60 possible teachers who qualify for the study using purposeful random sampling to avoid selection bias (Patton, 2015). This process allowed the researcher to identify a population of interest and then randomly select participants within the identified population (Patton, 2015). The application of purposeful random sampling provides credibility by reducing selection bias (Patton, 2015). Therefore, this random sampling allowed for an equal chance of selection for all certified elementary teachers who are qualified and willing to participate in this qualitative study. Access to certified elementary teachers spanning two elementary schools implementing CKH was intended to allow for equal chance of selection for

everyone qualified and choosing to participate (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). When 15

participants volunteered, their names were written onto slips of paper and placed in one

of two hats that represented their school. Names were drawn from each hat consecutively

until the first eight names were selected. The participants were contacted for a time to

conduct the interview, which consisted of the survey questions. A request for an artifact

that represents their experience with CKH was sent out to the participant prior to the

interview.

Data Collection

Data collected in this study was generated through interviews and artifacts. Since

concerns for the COVID-19 pandemic were still pending, interviews were conducted

through Cisco WebEx meetings. The participants and researcher were able to

communicate with one another through digital means.

Interviews. Interviews are meetings in which the researcher asks open-ended

questions to the participants with the goal of gaining information on a topic (Creswell &

Creswell, 2018). This allows the researcher who is asking open-ended questions during

the interviews to gather perspective, emotion, and experiences that are not typically

available during the review of documents and artifacts or via surveys (Patton, 2015).

When participants responded to volunteer for the study, a time was set up to conduct the

online interview. The interview questions and a request for an artifact that represents

their experience with CKH was sent out to the participant prior to the interview.

Interviews with participants were recorded and transcribed through Cisco WebEx online

system.

Interview questions and protocol. The interview questions were informed by a comprehensive literature review. Interview questions were aligned to the study's themes, patterns, and categories (Patton, 2015). Interview questions along with parallel research questions are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Interview Questions and Parallel Research Questions

	Interview Questions	Parallel Research Questions
1.	Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study. Tell me a little about yourself. How long have you been an educator at your school district?	Background information to begin the interview process.
2.	How long have you been implementing CKH strategies in your classroom setting?	RQ1: What are teacher experiences of implementing CKH in their classrooms?
3.	How much time do you spend initiating and carrying out CKH strategies daily in your classroom with your students?	RQ1: What are teacher experiences of implementing CKH in their classrooms?
4.	How have CKH strategies impacted your classroom management with your students?	RQ3: How does CKH influence classroom management?

5.	Do you have the necessary resources to fully implement CKH into your daily routines within your school?	RQ2: How do teachers perceive job satisfaction after implementing CKH in their classrooms?
6.	Do you feel that you have adequate time within your daily classroom schedule to fully implement CKH within your classroom routines?	RQ1: What are teacher experiences of implementing CKH in their classrooms?
7.	After implementing CKH strategies into your daily classroom routines, how has it impacted student behavior? How do students treat one another?	RQ3: How does CKH influence classroom management?
8.	What are the limitations with trying to implement CKH daily in your classroom?	RQ2: How do teachers perceive job satisfaction after implementing CKH in their classrooms?
9.	How do your administrators support CKH in your classrooms or schools?	RQ2: How do teachers perceive job satisfaction after implementing CKH in their classrooms?
10.	Do you feel that CKH has been effective in producing a sustainable, positive school or classroom environment?	RQ3: How does CKH influence classroom management?

11.	From your experiences with implementing CKH within your classroom, how has it affected your perspective of your school? How has it affected the level of job-related stress?	RQ1: What are teacher experiences of implementing CKH in their classrooms? RQ2: How do teachers perceive job satisfaction after implementing CKH in their classrooms?
12.	Do you feel CKH has affected your relationships with your students? How have these relationships affected your classroom management?	RQ3: How does CKH influence classroom management?
13.	How have you benefited from being a teacher that implements CKH?	RQ1: What are teacher experiences of implementing CKH in their classrooms?
14.	Let's talk about the components of CKH (greetings, launches, social contracts, 4 questions, etc.). What components do you find helpful?	RQ2: How do teachers perceive job satisfaction after implementing CKH in their classrooms?
15.	Do you believe that CKH will have a lasting effect on your students? What will that be?	RQ1: What are teacher experiences of implementing CKH in their classrooms?

16.	How has the CKH training helped you the most as a teacher?	RQ2: How do teachers perceive job satisfaction after implementing CKH in their classrooms?
17.	What part of CKH speaks to your heart? Which component of the process is most important to you?	RQ1: What are teacher experiences of implementing CKH in their classrooms?
18.	Tell me about your artifact you brought with you.	RQ1: What are teacher experiences of implementing CKH in their classrooms?
19.	Is there anything else you would like to share that we haven't already discussed?	RQ1: What are teacher experiences of implementing CKH in their classrooms?

Artifacts. In addition to the interviews, participants were asked to provide the researcher with an artifact that represented their experience implementing CKH within their classroom. Artifacts could be any item that is collected with fieldwork that informs research and gives the researcher information that cannot be observed (Patton, 2015). When the participant was asked to bring an artifact, no descriptive information was be provided since the goal was to allow for them to bring what is "representative" of their own personal experiences implementing CKH. Teachers were asked to bring a personal artifact with them to share out with others during small group meetings that symbolize something important to them. This provided a tie to their CKH training to request teachers to bring an artifact that is reflective of their experience implementing CKH in their classrooms.

Credibility

Qualitative research must be trustworthy, reliable, and objective (Patton, 2002). Credibility refers to the extent the reader of the research study will have confidence in the findings of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility of the data in this study was ensured in multiple ways: triangulation, peer review, thick description, and reflexivity.

Triangulation. Triangulation is described as multiple sources of data that can help ensure authentic information and enable the researcher to discover themes and patterns in order to share quality data and build credibility with researchers, participants, and readers of the research study (Patton, 2002). To build credibility, the triangulation of data required the researcher to review data collection for consistency during interviews and collection of artifacts (Patton, 2015). For this research study, data were collected from interviews and artifacts. The researcher coded and then cross-checked information that was obtained from participants for emerging themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018.)

Peer review. Peer review was another method for ensuring credibility in this descriptive study. The definition of peer review is the process of checking a researcher's work by another person in that field (Kelly, Sadeghieh, & Adeli, 2014). There are several ways peer review aids in the research: (a) only quality work is produced, (b) originality and integrity of the work is maintained, (c) it is a part of the process to validate a research study (Kelly et al., 2014). The peer reviews the data analysis to provide assessment and asks reflective questions to the researcher (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Patton, 2015). An Arkansas Tech University doctoral student, in addition to the researcher, conducted a peer review of the qualitative data collected in this study.

Rich, thick description. Rich, thick descriptions (along with direct quotations) help aid in credibility by allowing readers to understand the facts of the study along with the thoughts and emotions of the individuals involved in the qualitative study (Patton, 2015). The reader will have details of the interview and artifacts of the study that will allow immersion into the situation where the results are richer and more realistic (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Rich, thick descriptions help clarify the findings of the study to the reader. "The descriptions transport readers to the setting and give the discussion an element of shared experiences," (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 200). The rich, thick descriptions of this study allowed the researcher to provide realistic descriptive results. This process added to the validity of the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Reflexivity. Reflexivity is commonly viewed as the process of a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of a researcher's positionality, as well as active acknowledgement and explicit recognition that this position may affect the research process and outcome (Bradbury-Jones, 2007; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Stronach, Garratt, Pearce, & Piper, 2007). Reflexivity is an essential tool used in qualitative studies where researchers acknowledge and monitor their self-knowledge, bias, beliefs, and even their own past experiences during their research as they seek to maintain a fair balance between the data and the researcher (Berger, 2015).

After teaching for 13 years, I have spent the last 10 years as a building level administrator. It is my job to serve my teachers, students, and their families each day. This topic for my research study is very important to me as an educator. I have worked alongside devoted teachers and administrators that are committed to helping children succeed in school and life. I understand the importance of supporting teachers each day

in the classroom so they can do their jobs and retain good teachers. I have gained insights as an administrator that ensuring schoolwide success is investing in your people and providing them with the material, resources, or professional development needed to do their jobs. It was very important to me that my teachers felt heard and their feedback valued since I realized this would add to their level of job satisfaction at our school.

As the former principal at an elementary school that implemented CKH, I have seen evidence of the decline of discipline referrals in all four grade levels. However, I must not rely on this one piece of positive data to declare that the social-emotional learning initiative has successfully impacted my students. It is imperative that I do not allow my own positive experiences with CKH trainers, my former building students and teachers, and personal experiences to compel me to portray positive themes that do not exist.

There are three direct ways in which reflexivity can impact the ways in which data are collected. First, if a student feels the researcher is sympathetic, then they could feel more compelled to share more of their experience (Berger, 2015; De Tona, 2006). Being aware of this, as I interviewed participants, in the study, I kept my own experiences of CKH to myself as to not influence how the participants answered. My personal feelings toward CKH were not conveyed to avoid influencing elementary students to answer in a positive manner about it.

Second, the relationship between the researcher and the research could possibly impact what the individual is willing to share depending on variables built within it (Berger, 2015). It was imperative that I did not use my position as wife of the superintendent of the district where teachers were interviewed to draw out positive

responses instead of genuine answers from teachers of his school district that have utilized CKH for two school years. Therefore, it was important for me to interview teachers from another school in the same county in Arkansas to gather data that provided genuine feedback about the CKH initiative.

Third, the researcher's background and past experiences help facilitate a lens through which the researcher will view the research that could influence the study (Berger, 2015; Kacen & Chaitin, 2006). My 24 years in the field of education have provided vast experiences from all levels, K-12. The assumptions I brought to the study were as follows:

1. My own positive experiences with CKH trainers, my building students and teachers, and personal experiences that had the potential to compel me to portray positive themes that do not exist.

2. My own past experiences could have made me assume or create themes that the research data did not support or substantiate. My experiences with CKH are very personal and professional.

Data Analysis

The data for this research study were transcribed, coded, and sorted by themes using the constant-comparative method that allowed the researcher to carefully organize the data while searching for significant patterns and themes (Patton, 2002). In the constant-comparative analytic method, "there is a continual interplay between the researcher, the data, and the theory that is being developed" (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2019, p. 389). The researcher developed possible categories that represented groups of data which genuinely represent theory and data (Frankel et al., 2019). This method was

appropriate for this study as multiple types of data were collected from multiple participants. The interviews were transcribed verbatim with each line printed and coded. After analyzing statements by participants, codes were assigned to categories based on responses. These were grouped into themes for further narrative findings.

Summary

This chapter outlines the research study for this qualitative, descriptive study that examined the perspectives and experiences of Arkansas elementary classroom teachers in public schools that utilize CKH into their daily classroom routines in Grades K-3. This chapter described the methodology, including instruments that were used to conduct the research, the data collection process, and the qualitative investigational approach that the researcher utilized. In addition, the chapter also contained a reflexivity section, an explanation of the data analysis process, and a description of procedures to help ensure credibility.

IV: Results

This research study examined elementary teachers' experiences while implementing Capturing Kids' Hearts daily in their classroom. Capturing Kids' Hearts is described as a character education model that allows teacher to develop relational connections to students which will increase student performance based on a strong, positive school culture. The research questions that steered this qualitative study are the following:

1. What are teacher experiences of implementing Capturing Kids' Hearts in their classroom?

2. How do teachers perceive their own job satisfaction after implementing CKH in their classrooms?

3. According to teachers, how does CKH influence classroom management?

This chapter provides information about the participants in this study, how the research data was accumulated and analyzed, theme development, and an overall summary of the data collected.

Participants

The educators who participated in this study were selected using convenience sampling. Etikan et al. (2016) explain how individuals with the desired criteria that participate in a study are selected by a nonrandom sampling technique called convenience sampling. This method was utilized as the researcher gathered narrative data from participants who were employed in a public elementary school that has implemented CKH for at least two years.

The researcher had a goal to recruit 8-10 teachers who have implemented CKH for the last two years in their classrooms. Data saturation was reached with eight participating teachers, as responses to the researcher's questions had a similar recurrence and repetition and when new information was no longer attained, further coding was not feasible (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The participants were eight female elementary teachers from two public elementary schools within the same county in central Arkansas. The eight participants were teachers ranging from three years to 21 years of teaching experience. All of the teachers interviewed were forthcoming about their experiences with implementing CKH in their classrooms and its impact on their daily teaching experience. Additionally, several of the teachers shared the impact of CKH on their personal lives as its positive outlook helped them with their personal relationships. A description of the participants is detailed in Table 2.

Table 2

Description of Elementary Teacher Participants

Teacher Notation	Grade	CKH in Classrooms	Years of Teaching Experience
Teacher 1	Kindergarten	3	13
Teacher 2	3rd Grade	2	21
Teacher 3	1st Grade	2	2
Teacher 4	2nd Grade	2	6
Teacher 5	2nd Grade	3	3
Teacher 6	3rd Grade	2	11
Teacher 7	2nd Grade	2	16
Teacher 8	1st Grade	3	8

Data Analysis and Development of Themes

Due to COVID-19 protocols, the interviews were conducted and recorded via Cisco WebEx during November 2020. The Cisco WebEx software transcribed the interviews verbatim. Transcriptions were downloaded from Cisco WebEx after each interview and compared to audio recordings for verification and correction. The educators were asked to bring one artifact that was shared during discussions and their descriptions of that artifact were transcribed along with the interview questions. Interviews lasted about one hour each, totaling almost eight hours of discussions regarding teachers' experiences with Capturing Kids Hearts.

Participants' interview transcriptions were uploaded as the primary source documents for coding in the ATLAS.ti software (Scientific Software Development GmbH, 2021). The researcher utilized the constant comparative method to collect and analyze data through open-ended questions (QDA Training Admin, 2012). The participants' experiences or perceptions are freely shared and later, during analysis, categories emerged and were refined during the process (QDA Training Admin, 2012). Primary source documents were grouped by the order of interviews of the elementary teachers during the first round of coding. The educator's transcriptions were examined closely, and codes were assigned to lines of transcripts and quotes that were relevant to the research. The transcriptions that were relevant to the study were included while any of the educators' answers that were not related to the interview questions or the research study were determined to be inapplicable to the study. After the coding of all transcripts, codes were studied and sorted into groups that shared comparisons. Throughout the data review, modifications occurred to codes and groups of codes as needed, until three

categories emerged. Overall, the process ended with codes being blended into code groups that represented the guiding three research questions of this study: (a) What are teacher experiences of implementing Capturing Kids' Hearts in their classrooms? (b) How do teachers perceive their own job satisfaction after implementing CKH in their classrooms, and (c) According to teachers, how does CKH influence classroom management? Results from this data analysis are presented below.

Research Question 1: What are Teacher Experiences of Implementing CKH in Their Classrooms?

Nine interview questions were related to research question number one, requiring participants to answer about their experiences of implementing CKH during the interview process:

1. How long have you been implementing CKH strategies in your classroom setting?

2. How much time do you spend initiating and carrying out CKH strategies daily in your classroom with your students?

3. Do you feel that you have adequate time within your daily classroom schedule to fully implement CKH within your classroom routines?

4. From your experiences with implementing CKH within your classroom, how has it affected your perspective of your school?

5. How have you benefited from being a teacher that implements CKH?

6. Do you believe that CKH will have a lasting effect on your students? What will that be?

7. What part of CKH speaks to your heart? Which component of the process is most important to you?

8.   Tell me about your artifact you brought with you.

9.   Is there anything else you would like to share that we haven't already discussed?

After the conclusion of the interview process, data collection, and data analysis, four themes emerged for research question number one: reflections on implementation, daily time commitment, teacher benefits, and guiding components.

Reflections on implementation. One of the themes regarding teacher experiences with CKH centered around general reflections of the implementation process. These reflections centered around positive perceptions, negative/neutral perceptions, that CKH was worthwhile, because it facilitated lasting effects for students, and limitations. Each of these areas of reflection is described below.

Positive perceptions. Five out of the eight teachers interviewed shared a positive perception of their school utilization of CKH. When the elementary teachers were asked to share their perceptions of their school after the implementation of CKH, five shared how CKH impacted their classroom in a positive manner ranging from improved student behavior, students managing conflicts, and taking responsibility for their actions. Teacher 5 stated that since implementing the CKH process, her students are able to "self-reflect immediately on their behavior and reflect on what they should be doing to change that behavior." When Teacher 8 was asked about her perception of her school since CKH has been implemented she responded, "When everyone is on the same page with the same expectations, it is not only beneficial to students but to teachers. We know how everyone is handling situations in the building in a positive way."

Negative/neutral perceptions. Of the three teachers who did not share positive perceptions of their school utilization of CKH, most of their concerns were about

implementation of the process. For example, Teacher 2 had concerns with the fidelity of the implementation in her building. She said, "I hear from other teachers that they will not use the four questions. I just imagine what our school would be if everybody was implementing it with fidelity." During Teacher 3's interview, she expressed frustration with the impact of the Covid pandemic's effect on their school's second year of implementation. "Everything was going well last year, and I hate it is not going as well this year considering what is happening. We had good experiences last year, so I do think it affects positive change in our building." Only one teacher outright stated that CKH did not work for her. Teacher 7 shared her four questions sign that her principal had posted in each classroom in her building as her artifact. However, she responded that she used it sparingly because, "I cannot be confrontational and mean. I can't just keep saying the four questions over and over, so it hasn't worked for me." However, this same teacher also shared that she felt CKH could really affect the bigger picture if teachers in her school model CKH components effectively.

Worth it because of lasting effects. All eight of the elementary teachers noted that they felt that CKH would have a lasting effect on their students, resulting in agreement among participants that the implementation process had been worth investing in at the beginning of each school year. Half of the teachers in this study indicated during their interviews that their students learned how to "treat others the way you want to be treated." Teacher 2 commented that her students were learning "our actions have an impact on others in either a positive or negative way." Teacher 4 felt that CKH empowered her students to "Think through what they are doing, how can they change their behavior, and choose to do better." During her interview, Teacher 3 was impressed

that her students remembered CKH procedures on the first day of school even after being

out of school since last March due to the Covid pandemic. "They were lined up by the

door waiting to be greeted and during Good Things all their hands darted up to share.

They knew what we were going to do. I thought that spoke a lot about the impact of

CKH since I did not have to retrain them." These findings reveal that students developed

many SEL skills such as: treated others as they wanted to be treated, their actions have an

impact on others, and thinking about their actions before reacting. The second year of

CKH teachers did not have to reteach CKH components which made the previous year's

implementation of CKH worth it for the elementary teachers in this study.

  Limitations. The elementary teachers were asked to describe any limitations they

experienced resulting from utilizing CKH in their classrooms each day, including various

components of the CKH character model ranging from relationship building to helping

students resolve conflict with their peers. This commitment to embed these CKH

components with other curriculum, school safety, and other requirements have an impact

on how teachers perceive job satisfaction with the added task of daily usage of CKH.

The elementary teachers were asked if they had the resources needed to implement CKH

in their classrooms. All eight of the teachers answered yes, they did have the necessary

resources to implement CKH. Teacher 3 explained, "Yes, I do. There is really not that

much that is needed to implement CKH. We have the four questions poster hanging in

our rooms, and I have a greetings poster by my door so my kids can choose how they

want to be greeted. That is all you really need for CKH."

  Six out of eight teachers were able to identify varying limitations they have

experienced over the last two to three years of using CKH at their schools. The main

limitation identified was centered on student attention seeking misbehavior and resulting consequences. Three educators provided examples of this limitation that had resulted from implementing CKH in their room. Teacher 4 shared:

> We are limited on what to do after the four questions because we don't have a school-wide consequence that we used to have in previous years. We need consequences in place for kids that are attention-seeking no matter how many positive interactions we provide.

Teacher 5 explained her perspective on limitations of implementing CKH, "The only limitation is with the students that are constantly needing reinforcement of the four questions. It can interrupt the school day and be difficult, but other than that it is fine." Another limitation shared by two teachers was finding time to carry out all the components of CKH. Teacher 8 shared, "It is hard when you have so much going on that you might forget to do one of the components." Teacher 2 expressed that her time in her classroom is focused on the curriculum and safety requirements. "Right now, I account for every minute with the curriculum." Teacher 3 shared that the Covid 19 pandemic and the extra safety precautions have impacted the usage of CKH in her room. "I haven't been able to implement it as strongly. I just don't feel like it's as good as it was last year during a normal year."

Daily time commitment. Educators using SEL methods must teach social, emotional, and cognitive skills while adapting instructional time to fit all skills in the classroom daily schedule **(**Commission, 2018). Half of the elementary teachers interviewed shared that CKH strategies are utilized throughout the school day, while the other four teachers shared daily time consumption averaged between 15-30 minutes per

day. Teacher 1 shared how her students did not need any retraining for CKH components

when they returned to school in the fall: "They had all of it before in kindergarten so

when they moved up to the first grade, they already knew all that CKH stuff." She

reported that since the second year of implementation's daily time commitment was not

spent on training students, that allowed more time for students to participate in the actual

components each day. Teacher 5 explained that CKH is "Something that is embedded

throughout the instructional and curriculum parts of the day. So, it's not anything on top

of all of that." Teacher 6 echoed that point, emphasizing that, "Whatever the situation is,

it is utilized all day, throughout the day. You don't have to spend a long time, once you

have your routine down. It was easy to implement." Teacher 8 was split on answering

about the daily time commitment, reporting that, "I usually spend 10 minutes on Good

Things and Affirmations each morning, but the rest like reviewing the social contract and

the four Questions are used throughout the day."

The other elementary teachers shared similar results with their answers about time

spent implementing CKH daily in their classrooms. Each recorded that they typically

average between 10-30 minutes per day in their classrooms on CKH components.

Teacher 7 shared, "No, there is no way I can implement it all each day. I can do five to

ten minutes on Good Things." One obstacle identified by Teachers 2, 3, and 4 were the

current challenges due to classroom safety precautions in place due to Covid 19 causing

reduced focused time spent on CKH procedures.

> I felt that like last year I had a lot more time to devote and play into it to be
>
> honest," shared Teacher 3. "I haven't been able to implement it as strongly this
>
> year as good as last year when it was a normal year explained Teacher 4.

Teacher benefits. Interestingly, seven out of the eight elementary teachers identified benefits for themselves as teachers after implementing CKH in their classrooms for the past few years. Teacher 1 had a personal reflection on the impact of CKH on her teaching style, noting

> I think about how my classroom was before CKH and now. It makes me feel guilty. I would make the kids do the walk of shame to clip down on the behavior chart in front of their peers. So now that we use CKH, it had made me a different teacher. I don't do that anymore, instead I try to help them change their behavior.

Teacher 2 shared how it has made her more intentional with developing relationships with her students: "I feel like what we're doing in our classrooms and with other teachers is providing support for each other in a consistent manner." Another benefit from implementing CKH for Teacher 3 was it helped her to remember her "why" for teaching. She said, "it creates those "Why" moments that everyone needs to remember we are here to help each child. It has forced me to slow down and take time to enjoy moments with them." Teacher 4 echoed this, saying "by getting to hear about each other's lives allows my students to start the day in a positive way that I might not have even know about them." She noted that Good Things has helped her learn about her students in a way that she had not previously been able to prior to implementing CKH. Similarly, Teacher 6 also shared that Good Things allowed her to understand how sharing positive moments of each other's lives has allowed each day to start with more joy and warmth in her classroom that even stretched into her personal life. "It has helped me be more mindful, even in my own relationships outside of school. I have learned a lot personally." Teacher

8 also identified how CKH has helped her create more meaningful relationships with her students.

> At first, I was not receptive to using CKH, but now I have seen how it has affected my classroom. We actually build real relationships and that's my most important job is raising good people. It helps me do that.

Teacher 5 is a three-year veteran of teaching in a public-school system. Her experience with CKH as a young educator was,

> I got to experience CKH during my first year of teaching. It has been so beneficial and impacted my career by allowing students to set our social standards by designing our social contract together. It has built rapport and taught our kids to handle conflict.

> Teacher 7 was not able to identify how CKH would have benefited her as a teacher. "I don't know how I have personally benefited from it. As a school we have benefitted from it, but as a teacher, I don't know."

> **Guiding components.** Participants were asked to identify the most helpful component of CKH out of the following: greeting, good things, social contract, 4 questions, affirmations, and launches. These components are daily expectations of the CKH character model for the elementary schools.

> It was clear which component that was utilized each day into their classroom routines—the social contract. Each participant was asked to share an artifact that from their classroom that reflected CKH. Five of the eight said the social contract was the most helpful component of CKH and chose their classroom's social contract to share with the interviewer. Each revealed that this was a significant component used each school

day with their students. Three specifically said that the social contract was most the beneficial, important piece of CKH, and the centerpiece of CKH that all the other components revolve around throughout the day. For example, Teacher 5 described the social contract as, "The most helpful and taught her the most as an educator. It is the foundation of the character model intended to help students improve their behavior."

Teacher 2 shared, "We went through the process of creating the social contract, came to an agreement on what we wanted it to say, and they were insistent that they wanted to be kind and nice to each other." Her classroom focused on "treat each other how you want to be treated." Teacher 4 shared a similar focus of "how we want to be treated" in her classroom social contract as well. Teacher 3 explained that the social contract in her classroom was a tool for her students. "This is how they treat each other as far as they'll look back at it and say that was not respectful or that was not being caring." Teacher 5 utilized their classroom social contract in a different way by displaying it not only their wall but also posted it on each students' desk. "This allows them to point and touch the word on our social contract we are focusing on or discussing. I will ask them to point and touch it while they reflect on it." Teacher 1 shared, "I think the social contract makes a big difference because they know we have all signed it. They don't want to break it. We call it our promise to how we will treat each other."

The daily sharing of positive moments from students' lives is called good things. Two teachers selected good things as the most helpful component of CKH. Teacher 6 shared, "Personally for me, I really enjoy starting out with good things." One of the teachers found good things have a huge impact on her relationship with her students and each other. "Good Things is the time when we stop and think about each other.

These teachers were asked if any component of CKH has spoken to their own heart in a personal or professional manner. The participants had varying responses, but the component Good Things was the only CKH component to be cited more than once by four teachers. Teacher 8 shared that good things allowed her students to relate to one another and give information that was important to them. Teacher 6 saw the importance of starting the school day with positive sharing time between her students. "I feel like it is a great way to get our juices flowing and give our students a way to share what is on their hearts." One teacher pointed out that her students were developing the ability to recognize the positive aspects in their lives which would help them later as adults. The other teachers selected different components such as the four questions, social contract, giving affirmations, and the greeting as a CKH component that spoke to their hearts. Teacher 5 expressed how the social contract, "Creates a positive school culture and my kids feel safe and loved." The four questions impacted Teacher 4 as, "This provides social skills that they are lacking and gives them the ability to redirect their own behavior." Affirmations are shared between students and teachers which is encouraged in the CKH character model. Teacher 2 explained, "You are taking kids beyond 'I like your shirt' to teaching them to look within someone, recognize something that matters, and build them up." The greeting process encourages teachers to recognize and acknowledge all students each morning. Teacher 1 acknowledged the importance of saying 'Hello' or I love you' was worth the extra minutes needed each morning.

The last of the 19 questions presented to the participants was if they had anything else that they wanted to share with the researcher about CKH. Out of the eight teachers

interviewed, just three had additional information that they wanted to share. Teacher 4 stated that,

> CKH is not only what we need in our schools, but in society as to learn how to
> respect one another. We are on a team and I feel like that is what is Capturing
> Kids' Heart is all about.

Teacher 7 did not see any benefits of the character model but did note that the training was a great resource: "The training is great with resources to reach out and connect with people. The training and learning about yourself should be a part of every school's professional development." Teacher 8 admitted that she was not very receptive to using CKH components in her classroom:

> I might not have been very receptive to using it at first, but now I have seen how
> it has affected my classroom. Even if I ever work in a building that doesn't use
> CKH, I will keep implementing it into my classroom.

Summary of RQ1. The themes identified for research question one included reflections on implementation, daily time commitment, teacher benefits, and guiding components. The participating teachers shared they had both positive and negative/neutral experiences centering on improved student behavior and lack of building wide fidelity while the main limitation identified focused on how to handle repetitive attention seeking students. Time commitment was split with some teachers reporting that CKH is embedded throughout the day while others used it for 10-30 minutes total. Teachers saw benefits of utilizing CKH by its impact on their teaching style and strong connections with students by building relationships intentionally each day. Overall, the

guiding components of CKH was the usage of the social contract which states the social expectations of the classroom and the positive sharing time called good things.

Research Question 2: How Do Teachers Perceive Job Satisfaction After Implementing CKH in Their Classrooms?

Six interview questions were related to research question number two requiring participants to answer about how CKH has influenced their perception of job satisfaction after implementing CKH in their classrooms:

1.   Do you have the necessary resources to fully implement CKH into your daily routines within your school?

2.   What are the limitations with trying to implement CKH daily in your classroom?

3.   How do you administrators support CKH in your classrooms or school?

4.   How has CKH affected the level of job-related stress?

5.   Let's talk about the components of CKH. Which component is most helpful?

6.   How has CKH training help you the most as a teacher?

After the conclusion of the interview process, data collection, and data analysis, three themes arose for research question number two: administration support, job related stress, and the effects of CKH training.

Administration support. Participants of this study were asked how their school administrators supported CKH in their classrooms and building wide. SEL programs or character education models like CKH cannot be sustained if school administration does not provide support as teachers are implementing CKH, as it can affect their overall job satisfaction. All eight participants answered that their building administrators were providing some level of support for CKH daily usage in their buildings and classroom.

Teacher 1 shared, "It is funny when my kids go to see the principal that they know he will use the four questions and use the same language we're using." Teacher 3 appreciated that her principal would use components such as good things and the launch in their professional learning community meetings each week: "Every week during our PLC's we will have conversations about things that are happening related to CKH." Teacher 5 and Teacher 6 shared that their administrators model the components in their hallways and during interactions with teachers and students. Teacher 7 liked that her building administrator had their faculty create a social contract each school year. "We have social contracts that are used in our meetings with teachers rating how we are doing. We try to include good things at every meeting we have." Teacher 8 appreciated that her building administrator notices her using CKH in her classroom during visits: "When they do walk-throughs, they have pointed out or say they notice me using the four questions. It helps me know that they're seeing those things and it encourages me to utilize the more."

The level of support varied between the two schools, and only two teachers expressed that more support from their administrators was needed to ensure fidelity of the daily usage of CKH in all areas of their building. Two elementary teachers noted that CKH is not mentioned from the office during announcements or heard in their hallways from other teachers. Building administrators who display minimal support for CKH affects teacher job satisfaction. Teachers that using CKH with fidelity become frustrated with peers that are not adhering to fully implementing CKH. Teacher 2, "I am not saying others are not using CKH, I just haven't seen it down my hall as much as I'd want."

Teacher 3, "We have conversations in our weekly meetings related to CKH, but just those discussions is the only thing I can say others are doing it."

Job related stress. Teacher job related stress has many effects on educators' health, job satisfaction, and student outcomes. The teachers participating in this study were asked how CKH affected their job-related stress levels; answers were mixed. Six out of the eight teachers shared that CKH did decrease their job-related stress while only two educators noted it did not have any effect on their job-related stress. In terms of CKH having an impact, Teacher 2 stated, "When I started putting an emphasis on relationships, getting to know my kids, and taking the emphasis off myself, my stress overall has been greatly reduced." One teacher remarked that, aside from the stress due to the Covid 19 pandemic, "I think CKH has lessened stress levels because we are all doing the same exact thing. Implementing anything new causes stress for teachers, but CKH has given all of us an even playing field." Teachers 5, 6, and 8 shared that CKH allowed them to focus on their students, improve communication with students and peers, and have fewer behavior issues, which has lightened their job-related stress levels. Teacher 5 explained, "It really reduces the amount of stress when you're focusing on the kids themselves." Teacher 6 commented, "Communication among our staff is better and it is a positive place to come to work and that helps with stressful situations." Teacher 8 shared, "When I leave at the end of the school day, I am less stressed since I have fewer behavior issues that happened throughout the day."

Capturing Kids' Hearts did not affect two teachers' level of job-related stress over the past few years of implementing it. Teacher 7 stated, "CKH has not affected my job level stress. It has nothing to do with it." Teacher 3 shared, "I don't feel less stressed

because I have implemented it, or I don't think I am less stressed at the end of the day because of it."

CKH training. When teachers receive effective and meaningful training, they feel equipped to respond to their students' social and emotional needs while creating a positive, social learning environment that alleviates teacher stress from having to handle challenging student misbehavior (Jackson, 2017). Thus, one of the questions in the interview process focused on how CKH training helped these educators the most as a teacher. The eight participants in this study have attended CKH training over the past three years, so they could implement the character model into their classrooms. Seven out of the eight participants in this study found the training provided by CKH to be beneficial. The one teacher that did not have similar results from her peers stated, "I thought the training was too long. There are good parts of it, but it was almost overboard for someone who has already had experience with classroom management."

Teachers 1, 2, and 3 all shared similar responses that the training provided them with valuable time to practice and learn how to implement all the components of CKH. Teacher 3 explained, "I don't think you can just pick up a book and read and try to implement this. You have to actually go through the training and practice with fidelity." Teacher 1 admitted she was afraid to give up her behavior clip chart. "Getting rid of that and using the four questions made me afraid, but it has helped. I like practicing the hand signals and how to use them in the training. My classroom is more positive." Teacher 2 stated, "I think the parts that helped me were when we acted out scenarios and saw how to exactly use it in our classrooms and the social contract."

Teachers 6 and 7 both shared that their building staff grew closer due to the training provided by CKH. Teacher 6 shared,

Honestly, thinking back when we went through the training, we as teachers experienced it ourselves and got to work on the communication skills together. It was a good experience with us all together. I felt it brought us closer together.

Teacher 7 felt the training was an amazing experience. "When you leave the training, you feel like a different person at your school. It felt like we were a family and could conquer the world. I have seen people in my building change because of it." Teachers 5 and 8 both shared that the training helped them grow as educators and recognize their strengths and weaknesses. Teacher 5 shared, "I got to see how I viewed myself and how others viewed me. It helped me learn to reflect especially as a first-year teacher." Teacher 8 felt that rapport and respect grew in her classroom; she shared, "It made me a stronger teacher and helped me with classroom management. I learned how to build a better classroom with respect and rapport in our environment."

Summary of RQ2. Research question two centered on how teachers perceive job satisfaction after the implementation of CKH in their classrooms. Teachers were asked six questions that were coded and three themes arose: administration support, job related stress, and the impact of CKH training. All the teachers shared that administration provided positive support for CKH with their students and expectations were in place for usage in their classrooms. The majority of teachers felt that CKH had decreased their level of job-related stress. Almost all of the teachers shared that the CKH training was beneficial since it allowed them time to understand and put into practice components of the character education model.

Research Question 3: How Does CKH Influence Classroom Management?

Four interview questions were related to research question number three, requiring participants to answer about how CKH has influenced classroom management within their classrooms.

1. How have CKH strategies impacted your classroom management with your students?

2. How has it impacted student behavior? How do students treat one another?

3. Do you feel that CKH has been effective in producing a sustainable, positive school or classroom environment?

4. Do you feel CKH has affected your relationships with your students? How have these relationships affected your classroom management?

After the conclusion of the interview process, data collection, and data analysis, three themes arose for research question number three: impact of CKH on classroom management, impact of CKH on student behavior, and relationships with students.

Impact of CKH on classroom management. The eight teachers were asked during the interview process how CKH had impacted their classroom management over the last two to three years of implementing it. Seven out of the eight teachers shared in their responses that CKH did make an impact on their classroom management. Teacher 7 revealed that CKH did not have any impact upon her classroom management. She said, "…I don't know, I don't have [a classroom management] problem." The other seven participants recognized that their classroom management benefited due to the fact that students already know strategies for the components as they move up each year;

therefore, they have the ability to self-manage behavior. Also, the CKH components have lessened the load on focusing on classroom management issues.

Teachers 1 and 2 each remarked how beneficial to classroom management CKH has been since the students cycling up to their grade level already know the components of CKH. This has saved the teachers time of having to train students when they already know expectations and what their teachers are talking about during the day. Teacher 1 shared:

They will tell each other you are breaking our social contract. I do not have to intervene. Also, I can ask them what are you doing? They look at the social contract and finish the four questions without me asking.

Teacher 2 said, "When I think of classroom management and how I used to be as a teacher who micromanaged certain things, I realize how much I have improved." She added, "I have the best class. They have the strategies that involve helping and regulating."

Three teachers also identified that self-regulating was a skill their students were using more that impacted classroom management in a positive way. Teacher 3 explained, "Students are managing each other more so it's the norm. We correct each other, but they are not defensive about it." She also noticed that her students came into her classroom on the first day remembering CKH procedures. "Our kids have been out of school since March 2020, so on the first day of school this year, they already knew what to do. They were lined up at the door wanting to be greeted." Teacher 4 noted that her students "are responsible for their own words and actions. They have that piece in place and it's really helped our classroom management." She found that CKH played well in

her classroom management style as an educator noting, "Our kindness and working together is the goal so we can learn and have fun at the same time." Teacher 6 found that the level of respectfulness has allowed her students to stop and think about their words and actions while self-regulating so they can calm down. "CKH has allowed them to learn ownership and be mindful of what they say and think through their actions throughout the day." Teacher 6 also noted that CKH has helped her personally as a teacher while dealing with classroom management issues. She explained, "It helps me de-escalate a little bit and keeps me mindful that I need to collect myself and calm down so I can use the four questions."

Teachers 5 and 8 found that each component of CKH with its strategies and procedures have improved their overall classroom management. Teacher 5 shared, "It has greatly improved my classroom management. I have used the social contract to guide our day." She was a first-year teacher when CKH was introduced to her building. "CKH teaches young educators how to build rapport by sitting down with your kids each day." Teacher 8 found that she saw a decrease in classroom management issues. She shared, "I get to spend more time teaching and less time handling classroom management things."

Impact of CKH on student behavior. All eight of the teachers interviewed shared how student behavior was impacted in a positive way after implementing CKH for the last few years in their school buildings. One of the teachers shared that the older students in junior high and high school were not as accepting of CKH as the elementary. She said, "They think it is pushed on them, and you can't make people feel empathy for someone else." The teacher did share that CKH was working within her elementary school. "I think it has worked, we have more of a family-oriented environment of

empathy and encouragement and helping," explained Teacher 7. Three of the teachers noted in their answers about how CKH impacted student behavior that how students treated each other was more positive. Teacher 1 stated, "They are more caring, help one another, and we're all a family. I see them going over to the friend bench at recess to make sure no one is left out and has someone to play with." Teacher 2 revealed that her students excel in the way they treat one another. "They're all really good about being respectful and more intentional about encouraging their classmates." She noted that her students are actively kind and more compassionate to their peers as well since implementing CKH. Teacher 3 saw a change in student behavior as her students have provided positive genuine feedback and affirming on each other. "In the past if someone lost a game, they would cry. Now they congratulate the winner without me telling them to do that." This teacher felt that CKH components of the character education model helped her students to learn how to affirm others naturally.

Teacher 4 described a change in her students in regard to how they treat each other. "They will tell someone if he/she is not respectful or uncaring. They use the social contract to model the way they treat and speak to each other." She explained that CKH allowed her students to be more reflective of their behavior. Teachers 5, 7, and 8 echoed the same observation of their students as Teacher 4 that their students were more reflective and self-monitoring of themselves and peers by utilizing the social contract. Teacher 5 shared, "They are helping each other stay on task. They are able to self-reflect immediately on their behavior. It has let me step back so they can learn to resolve their own issues, build their conflict tactics, and let them take responsibility." Teacher 6 has seen a noticeable difference in how students seem to de-escalate more rapidly after she

began implementing the four questions from CKH. "They are more mindful of what they are doing and helps diminish negative behavior." Teacher 8 noted as well that her students' behavior had improved in the area of self-monitoring and peer monitoring. "It has helped the kids to redirect themselves and take responsibly for their actions. They refer back to the social contract."

      Relationships with students. Two out of the eight teachers reported that CKH did not affect their relationships with their students. Teachers 3 and 7 each shared that they already experienced good relationships with their students prior to implementing CKH for the last two to three years. Teacher 7 replied to the question during the interview, "I don't know, I have a great rapport with my kids for a long time. That has always been a strong suit for me." Teacher 3 also had a similar response, "I don't feel like I have a closer relationship as a result of CKH." She did note that she is quicker to say to her students, "I am sorry," when needed and enjoys greeting them at the door. "That might have impacted me in that way that I might not be otherwise," she explained.

      Six of the eight teachers interviewed felt that CKH had an impact on their relationships with their students, as well as students' relationships with their peers. Teacher 1 shared,

> We are a class family. Just like in our training for Capturing Kids' Hearts, we have given each other little nicknames. They respect me and they don't want to break the social contract. CKH helps them get back on track so we can go on with our day.

Teacher 4 shared similar results that CKH had improved relationships in her room: "I think it's made relationships better. I think it has opened up more of a conversation

between students and teachers that may or may not have been there prior." She also expressed in the interview how CKH is teaching everyone to work together as a team.

Teacher 8 explained, "I definitely think it has affected my relationship with the students in a positive way. It helped me learn so much more about them that I wouldn't know if I didn't take the time to do good things or the greeting." Teacher 6 explained that she now when she is redirecting student's misbehavior, she is still able to sustain a positive relationship with the child: "It gives me a moment to collect and calm down by starting the four questions." Teacher 2 echoed how CKH allowed her time to assess the situation more intentionally: "I realize our relationships with those kids is going to take a hit if I don't handle the issue just the right way, and the four questions help me with that." Her focus in her classroom this year is building relationships with her students throughout the day using components of CKH. Teacher 5 described how the good things component of CKH allows her and her students to sit down every day and share about their lives. "If you weren't implementing CKH, you would not necessarily think to do that. It does help build relationships."

Summary of RQ3. Research question three centered on the influence CKH had on classroom management after its implementation. Four interview questions were coded, and three themes arose for this research question: impact of CKH on classroom management, impact of CKH on student behavior, and relationships with students. The majority of teachers saw evidence of CKH had improved their classroom management as their students practiced the components of CKH. Each teacher saw more positive student behavior within their classrooms with a rise in actions such as empathy, caring, encouragement by following the social contract. Students' relationships with their peers

as they learned how to listen and learn about each other lives. This opportunity allowed

the teachers and students to form a strong bond as a school family.

V: Conclusions

This qualitative study was developed to examine the impact of Capturing Kids'

Hearts on elementary teachers' daily experiences implementing the character education

model, along with its impact on their level of job satisfaction and classroom management.

The research findings of this study, its implications for practice and future research, and

conclusions are shared in this chapter.

Summary of Findings

The research findings of this study were centered on the research questions listed:

1.   What are teacher experiences of implementing CKH in their classrooms?

2.   How do teachers perceive job satisfaction after implementing CKH in their

classrooms?

3.   How does CKH influence classroom management?

Eight female elementary teachers participated in this phenomenological

qualitative research study. The years of teaching experience between the eight

participants ranged from three years to 21 years in service at a public elementary school

in Arkansas and Louisiana in grades kindergarten through third grade. They all have

taught in elementary schools in White County that have implemented Capturing Kids'

Hearts for two to three years.

Each elementary teacher volunteered to participate in an online interview that was

digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim via Cisco Webex system. These

transcriptions of the eight participants' interviews were coded and analyzed, and themes

that emerged related to the three research questions were conveyed in Chapter Four.

Artifacts were brought by the participants to the interview and its relevance to how they

implement CKH was shared. The themes were closely analyzed with the findings shared in the following section.

  Discussion. Six key findings emerged from the themes in this research study that will be shared below with details on how these key findings and research questions are related. Table 3 shares each key finding and its correlation to a research question for this study.

1. Daily time commitment ranges of implementing CKH ranged from 30 minutes daily to being utilized throughout the day.

2. No prescribed consequences in CKH for repetitive student misbehavior was a concern for participants.

3. Teacher job related stress was decreased due to improved student relationships with their teachers and peers.

4. The CKH EXCEL training was an essential factor prior to implementing CKH in classrooms with students.

5. Implementation of CKH components and classroom strategies improved teachers' classroom management skills.

6. Positive student behavior with their peers was evidenced by teachers after implementation of CKH.

Table 3

Key Findings Related to Research Questions

	Findings					
Research Questions	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1	X	X				
2			X	X		
3					X	X

Key finding 1: Daily time commitment range of implementing CKH ranged from 15-30 minutes daily to being utilized throughout the day by elementary teachers. In this study, the eight participants were split on how much time CKH was utilized within their average school day. Four of the participants shared that it was utilized throughout the day with their students. The other four teachers shared that estimated time ranged between 15 to 30 minutes each day. All of the participants were able to identify components of CKH that were in daily usage, which included the morning greeting, the sharing of good things, or the usage of the social contract. The other CKH components such as the usage of fouls, checks, and four questions were not identified by the four teachers who shared their daily time commitment ranging from 15-30 minutes each day.

When referring back to the data for this study, class time spent on SEL components compared to academic requirements was a concern for half of the participants. This finding contributes to the fact that teachers are frustrated with not having enough time in the school day to implement new SEL programming (Civic Enterprises et al., 2013). Educators must prioritize instructional time to deliver content

based on state required standards and implement SEL evidence-based approaches while experiencing pressure to raise student academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011).

Key finding 2: No prescribed consequences in CKH for repetitive student misbehavior was a concern for participants. A finding of this study identified by the elementary teachers were students that displayed repeated misbehavior with no resulting consequences suggested by CKH. Six out of the eight noted this limitation during the interview process. Participants shared that they were limited on what to do after the CKH four questions did not resolve or redirect the child's continued misbehavior interrupting instructional time. These findings suggest that classroom teachers implementing CKH need alternative strategies included in the CKH training for repeated incidents of individual student misbehavior with supports for consequences from their building administrator. There is a direct link between teacher perceptions of job satisfaction with classroom management and instructional strategies (Klassen & Chui, 2010). Participants in this study shared there is a need for a school-wide consequence that supports CKH and provides something to teachers to use when CKH strategies are not working.

Educators have long identified that classroom discipline is the most crucial problem area they experience in their classrooms (Sieberer-Nagler 2015). Harvey (2016) found that teachers improve their positive emotional interactions with students have more successful outcomes than those in less supported classroom. The participants in this study shared that their administrators were supportive of CKH components in their building and they were using positive SEL skills through CKH components; however, not all CKH strategies worked for all students. This indicates that even with positive teacher-

student relationships, not all students will cooperate and meet expectations of CKH. In the literature review, Durlak (2011) found that a child's emotion can hamper their academic work ethic, progression, and success in school. In this study, CKH was helpful in redirecting most students; however, the findings of this study also suggest that SEL programs or CKH may not be as effective for students displaying repetitive, disrupting misbehavior in class.

Key finding 3: Teacher job-related stress was decreased due to improved student relationships with their teachers and peers. Six out of the eight teachers in this study reported that CKH did help alleviate job stress in some capacity. The findings of this study suggest that CKH training provided to the participants not only focused on relationship building between teachers and students, but also teachers with their peers, which enabled them to experience less job stress based on fewer classroom management issues and increased positive relationships with students and peers. It is clear from the data in this study that the overwhelmingly positive responses to the interview questions from the teachers indicated CKH did have an impact on teacher job satisfaction. This finding is important because 46% percent of teachers report high daily stress during the school year (Gallup, 2014). Participants in this study recalled how placing an emphasis on relationships with their students reduced the amount of stress they felt during the school day. Participants also spoke about how CKH how lessened stress since school-wide implementation, improved communication between teachers with their peers, and lessened single incident misbehavior by students. This aligns with the findings of Ross, Romer, and Horner (2012), who noted that school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports have teachers report a drop-in levels of job stress.

Positive environments where children are at ease are less likely to display aggression (Merritt et al., 2012). The Flippen Group (2009) explained that implementation of the EXCEL Leadership Model results in a culture in which teachers and students model leadership qualities, show respect for one another, celebrate each other's successes, provide care and concern for their peers, show enhanced communication skills, achieve quick resolution of conflicts, and have a sense of being on a team. Participants in this study echoed these sentiments and seemed to agree that the positive school environment lessen stress as they left at the end of the school day.

Key finding 4: The CKH EXCEL training was essential factor prior to implementing CKH in classrooms with students. Seven out of the eight participants in this study found the training provided by CKH to be beneficial since it was meaningful to how they should respond to their students' social and emotional needs, create a positive, social learning environment, and practice the components with their peers prior to implementation. This is supported in the literature review, including a quantitative and qualitative survey analysis by the Flippen Group (2004) with 100 participants in three schools to understand the impact of CKH in Nacogdoches ISD in Texas. The following results were found: (a) 100% of the participants shared that the skills learned from the CKH training was valuable, (b) over 85% of the participants felt that CKH training had provided them with effective discipline strategies, (c) over 95% of the participants shared that would recommend CKH to other schools. Similarly, seven participants in this study found the training by CKH to be beneficial because it provided opportunity to practice implementing CKH components, increase in staff rapport, and grew to be aware of their strengths and weaknesses as teachers. Therefore, the findings in this study support the

idea that teachers implementing CKH are best prepared by attending professional development training to utilize SEL practices that will support teacher and students throughout the school day.

Civic Enterprises et al. (2013) reported similar findings—it was easier to implement SEL in classrooms after receiving professional development to improve their own social and emotional competencies. The elementary teachers in this study shared experiences of how the CKH training increased the bond between their staff and their ability to understand their strengths and weaknesses in the area of classroom management. This led to teachers having a feeling of ownership of the process along with a personal goal to ensure SEL success as they became better at being positive models of SEL, which supports Civic Enterprises et al.'s (2013) work. Further, other research asserts that teachers who have participated in professional development or coaching with a focus on building positive student relationships saw an increase in academic student achievement which suggests the need for a form of sustained SEL training for teachers (Allen et al., 2011).

Key finding 5: Implementation of CKH components and classroom strategies improved teachers' classroom management skills and relationships with students. Every teacher that participated in this research study shared in their interviews that their overall students' behavior was impacted in a positive way after implementing CKH for the last two or three years in their school buildings. These findings suggest SEL programs or character models like CKH implemented with teacher fidelity benefit students from all backgrounds and support student achievement. This is important because it reiterates Civic Enterprises et al.'s (2013) point that if teachers will integrate

SEL skills into all content areas, it will thereby allow students time to practice and strengthen relationships with not just their peers, but with their teachers and families. This finding is also supported by the work of Harvey et al. (2016), who found that when teachers demonstrate emotional support in their classrooms on a daily basis, their students perceive them as more caring and supportive. Student motivation, classroom management, and effective teaching practices are very closely related to an environment of good will, respect, and cooperation, which helps produce a productive learning climate (Sieberer-Nagler, 2015).

Key finding 6: Positive student behavior with their peers was evidenced by teachers after implementation of CKH. All eight of the participating teachers in this study indicated that student behavior was impacted in a positive way after implementing CKH daily in their classrooms for the last two to three years. The descriptions of the children's changed behavior included the following: helpful with peers, ability to reflect on behaviors, caring, affirming, and higher expectations of respect. Participants noted these behaviors while students practiced these traits during the daily implementation of CKH components: greeting, good things, social contract, four questions, fouls, and affirmations. The participants' experiences aligned with research that found while the environment in which children grow, play, and learn changes, so will the demands for their social, emotional, and cognitive growth; therefore, it is imperative their SEL skills be cultivated within each grade level instruction (Conley, 2015). Bear and Watkins (2006) described how students who master their SEL competencies will result in a developmental succession from being controlled by external factors to functioning in success with internalized beliefs and values. They will display care and concern for

peers, make positive choices, and take responsibility for their actions and behaviors. Students spend countless hours with their teachers in which opportunities arise for implicit learning during teacher-student interactions that can lead to positive student social-emotional outcomes (Harvey et al., 2016) which echoed participants' experiences in this study that students excel in the way they treat one another by being more caring, respectful, affirming, and holding each other accountable to the social contract.

Implications for Practice

There is a growing trend in education to support the whole learner by improving students' social and emotional skills while increasing the opportunity for academic performance across the nation (Commission, 2018). Schools have the opportunity to invest in and implement SEL programs or character education models, such as Capturing Kids' Hearts, with a reasonable cost that could result in far-reaching social benefits for the school and community (Commission, 2018). The implications of this research study provide insight for the state of Arkansas, school districts, and educators, as the national trend is to provide instruction, modeling, and practice for students to develop their SEL skills in our schools.

For the state of Arkansas. Capturing Kids' Hearts is one of nine SEL programs or character program models recognized by the Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) in November 2020 (See Appendix E). In December 2020, DESE sent out a commissioner's memo to all school districts regarding a coordinated school health social-emotional learning mini-grant opportunity (DESE, 2020a) that provides monetary support for supplemental services to schools from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to improve student health and academic achievement

through mental health awareness, implementing youth led advocacy groups, implementation of SEL curriculum programs that will align with Arkansas G.U.I.D.E for Life principles. The research and literature presented in Chapter Two provided information about SEL in Arkansas, including current statistics from Mental Health America (2020) that illustrates the need for SEL programs to support students and teachers. DESE (2020b) has recognized and raised the awareness that educators in Arkansas should implement a SEL program or character model that will relate to Arkansas G.U.I.D.E for Life so the nurturing of social-emotional skills begin early and will continue throughout students' academic school careers in Arkansas. Results of this study suggest that CKH is a character education model that nurtures the social-emotional skills of students in our schools. By allowing teachers to be trained to model and teach relational skills, communicative competencies, problem-solving skills, citizenship, and consequential thinking they can construct a positive learning environment for students (Holtzapple et al, 2011). CKH is recognized by DESE as a SEL program and its results of implementation provide students a social-emotional pathway to success at school as CKH engages students, supports classroom expectations, effective SEL feedback to students, and ways to resolve conflicts with peers and adults. CKH should remain on DESE list of SEL programs for achieving and working in tandem with the goals of Guide for Life principles.

For school districts. This research study's implications for school districts in Arkansas center on the need for implementation of a SEL character model or program to provide opportunities for students to learn, develop, and practice social and emotional skills in a safe, learning environment with support from their peers and teachers. The

data from this study show that CKH serves as a sound SEL character education model that school districts can invest in. This investment in CKH teacher training will underscore the need to support the growth of students' social and emotional skills, help students build social and emotional skills that are age appropriate, connect SEL skills with academic achievement, and allow teachers to understand and gain awareness of their own personal level of social and emotional skills so they can better support students via role modeling.

Currently, school districts in Arkansas that are reviewing SEL programs must strategically plan on not only providing initial introductory training for a SEL program of their choosing, but also support training for new staff and novice teachers each year whether it is provided face to face or virtually. CKH training already has a review process to check in with teachers and building administrators each semester to review CKH components are being implemented after summer training and provide feedback. To promote CKH for struggling educators, school districts should consider providing guidance to help classroom teachers blend SEL support skills with grade-level content standards and class schedules by providing areas of focus, usability, and strategies based on research-based curriculum and instruction that will be relevant and promote overall success of students both socially and academically.

For educators. This study found that the participants witnessed positive changes within their classrooms and the CKH training improved communication with their peers and students. Yes, there is a struggle to implement and embed new components of CKH initially, but the teachers in this study said it was worth it. If teachers new to the CKH process will adhere to the training, use the character education model with fidelity, and

purposely intertwine the CKH components to support their school community then
everyone can reap the benefits of a supportive learning environment that promotes SEL
with academic student achievement.

Implications for Future Research

Future studies centering on CKH can be replicated in other educational settings in
Arkansas. Currently, there are not any research study examining CKH effects on teacher
job satisfaction in our state. Therefore, it is vital that more research would benefit
educators if similar key findings should be found in other educational settings in a larger
pool of participants. Additionally, future studies could compare CKH to other SEL
programs being used in Arkansas to determine if similar outcomes would occur or not.
This would provide educators with greater understanding and knowledge about how
school districts can communicate with their school board and stakeholders the need for
SEL learning, implementation, expectations, budget planning to support resources, and
supportive practices for SEL programs or character education models such as CKH in
their policies and handbooks.

Comparable future studies that focus on CKH and its effect on teacher job
satisfaction will also need to be expanded into other areas of the state of Arkansas. This
research study centered around two elementary schools in White County that have
implemented CKH for two to three years. There are 13 Arkansas public school districts
that have implemented CKH in their district as of the 2019-2020 school year that could
be utilized for future research studies. There is a growing trend in Arkansas public
schools to implement a SEL program or character education model supported by DESE.
Additionally, this research study only collected data from eight participants through

virtual interviews due to the Covid-19 pandemic safety precautions. Future research studies would need to focus on data collection that involved a wider range of participants and differing school demographics.

Finally, researchers in future studies will need to adjust protocol of the study so their data collection will gain a deeper insight into teachers' experiences utilizing CKH and its impact on their job satisfaction via interviews and surveys. The teacher participants in this study all taught in an elementary school setting. Therefore, future studies can expand on teachers from middle school, junior high, or even high school educational settings to provide a greater sample size.

Future studies should include how school districts review their current student behavior policies and procedures and embrace schoolwide SEL program implementation and management expectations that will truly foster in students the knowledge, social and emotional skills, and character that will later enable them to be successful citizens and community partners. An additional change in protocol would be to supplement in future studies by enhancing interview questions to include:

1. In your opinion, how do all the patrons of the school district and community partners work with the school district to create a joint vision for the development of their children's social, emotional, and academic skills?

2. Do your current district policies and building student handbooks support CKH components while providing information and expectations for school families?

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the impact of CKH on elementary teachers' daily experiences implementing the character education model, its

impact on teacher job satisfaction, and classroom management. Eight voluntary participants of this study have job experience ranging from three to twenty-one years in an elementary setting. This chapter's findings were identified how CKH works for student and teachers in the following: daily time commitment of implementing CKH ranged from 30 minutes daily to being utilized throughout the day, no prescribed consequences in CKH for repetitive student misbehavior, teachers reported job related stress was decreased due to improved student relationships with their teachers and peers, the CKH EXCEL teacher training was an essential factor prior to implementing CKH in classrooms with students, CKH components and classroom strategies improved teachers' classroom management skills, and positive student behavior with their peers was evidenced by teachers after implementation of CKH. These findings were examined closely in Chapter Five, and implications for practice once schools have moved on from the Covid-19 pandemic were expounded on while focusing on (a) implementation of CKH to nurture the SEL skills of students, (b) investment of CKH training to expose the need for student growth in SEL skills, identify age-appropriate social-emotional skills, grow teacher awareness for their own SEL skill set, (c) help teachers embed CKH components successfully into their school day. The implications for future research were shared with three areas in need of further research: (a) the replication of this study in other educational setting in Arkansas with a larger pool of participants; (b) the expansion of the scope of future research studies in other parts of the state where schools are utilizing CKH while comparing to other SEL programs in use to determine if comparable results would be found or not; (c) adjusting the protocol of future studies to include how districts review their current student behavior policies and procedures and embrace

schoolwide SEL program implementation with all members of the school district and its

community as CKH becomes embedded in school policies and handbooks.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Preliminary Email Correspondence to Superintendent

Hello: (Name)

My name is Caroline Nail and I am currently a doctoral student at Arkansas Tech University. I am contacting you as the superintendent because I would greatly appreciate if you would consider allowing 4 or 5 of your elementary teachers to participate in an interview for my research study.

The purpose of the interview is to understand the overall experiences and effects of implementing Capturing Kids' Hearts on teachers in Arkansas. I would only need 4 or 5 teachers to volunteer to participate as invitations would be emailed to the elementary staff seeking participation. Those that respond would have their names placed in a hat with 4-5 names drawn out to be interviewed. I will meet with the elementary teachers via Cisco Webex, Zoom, Google Hangout, or phone call to discuss the interview questions. Both the school district and elementary teachers will be given pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality for all parties involved.

If you would be so kind to allow the elementary teachers to participate in the interview, I would then need your consent to email your elementary staff with an invitation to participate in my research study.

You may contact me by either responding to this e-mail or give me a phone call at 501-680-7941. It is my hope to send out emails inviting the teachers to participate later this week if at all possible. I could then conduct the interviews before Thanksgiving so I can begin going over the data with the chair of my dissertation committee. CN

Appendix B: Preliminary Email Correspondence to Teachers

Hello (Name),

My name is Caroline Nail and I am currently a doctoral student at Arkansas Tech University. I am contacting you to ask if you would be willing to participate in an interview for my dissertation study. The purpose of the interview is to understand the overall experiences and effects of implementing Capturing Kids' Hearts on teachers in Arkansas. I will meet with you to ask questions via Cisco Webex, Zoom, Google Hangout, or by phone. If you would be so kind to participate in the interview it would be greatly appreciated.

Steps to being in this research study:

1) I am sharing the Informed Consent form that must be signed to provide documentation of your agreement to be a participant in my research study. Once you have signed the form, you can scan it and email it back to me at cnail@mhbombers.com.

2) Once I receive the signed Informed Consent form, I will contact you to set up the interview.

You may contact me by either responding to this e-mail or giving me a phone call at 501-680-7941.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to talking with you. CN

Appendix C: Interview Questions for Teachers

1. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study. Tell me a little about yourself. How long have you been an educator at your school district? How do you feel about your job in your elementary school?	RQ2: How do teachers perceive job satisfaction after implementing CKH in their classrooms?
2. How long have you been implementing CKH strategies in your classroom setting?	RQ1: What are teacher experiences of implementing CKH in their classrooms?
3. How much time do you spend initiating and carrying out CKH strategies daily in your classroom with your students?	RQ1: What are teacher experiences of implementing CKH in their classrooms?
4. How have CKH strategies impacted your classroom management with your students?	RQ3: How does CKH influence classroom management?
5. Do you have the necessary resources to fully implement CKH into your daily routines within your school?	RQ2: How do teachers perceive job satisfaction after implementing CKH in their classrooms?
6. Do you feel that you have adequate time within your daily classroom schedule to fully implement CKH within your classroom routines?	RQ1: What are teacher experiences of implementing CKH in their classrooms?
7. After implementing CKH strategies into your daily classroom routines, how has it impacted student behavior? How do students treat one another?	RQ3: How does CKH influence classroom management?

8. What are the limitations with trying to implement CKH daily in your classroom?	RQ3: How does CKH influence classroom management?
9. How does building administrators support CKH in your classrooms or schools?	RQ2: How do teachers perceive job satisfaction after implementing CKH in their classrooms?
10. Do you feel that CKH has been effective in producing a sustainable, positive school or classroom environment?	RQ2: How do teachers perceive job satisfaction after implementing CKH in their classrooms?
11. From your experiences with implementing CKH within your classroom, how has it affected your perspective of your school? How has it affected the level of job-related stress?	RQ1: What are teacher experiences of implementing CKH in their classrooms?
12. Do you feel CKH has affected your relationships with your students? How have these relationships affected your classroom management?	RQ3: How does CKH influence classroom management?
13. How have you benefited from being a teacher that implements CKH?	RQ1: What are teacher experiences of implementing CKH in their classrooms?
14. Let's talk about the components of CKH (greetings, launches, social contracts, 4 questions, etc.). What components do you find helpful? What, if anything, would you like to change about the program? Why?	RQ2: How do teachers perceive job satisfaction after implementing CKH in their classrooms?

15. Do you believe that CKH will have a lasting effect on your students? What will that be?	RQ1: What are teacher experiences of implementing CKH in their classrooms?
16. How has the CKH training helped you the most as a teacher?	RQ2: How do teachers perceive job satisfaction after implementing CKH in their classrooms?
17. What part of CKH speaks to your heart? Which component of the process is most important to you?	RQ1: What are teacher experiences of implementing CKH in their classrooms?
18. Tell me about your artifact you brought with you.	RQ1: What are teacher experiences of implementing CKH in their classrooms?
19. Is there anything else you would like to share that we haven't already discussed?	RQ1: What are teacher experiences of implementing CKH in their classrooms?

Appendix D: IRB Approval Letter

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Office of Sponsored Programs and University Initiatives
Administration Building, Room 207
1509 North Boulder Avenue
Russellville, Arkansas 72801

Office: 479-880-4327
www.atu.edu

October 14, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

The Arkansas Tech University Institutional Review Board Chair has deemed the application for Caroline Nail's proposed research, entitled "Capturing Kids' Hearts Daily Implementation Effects on Teacher Job Satisfaction and Experiences," to be exempt under Category 2. Research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the exempt categories defined by the federal regulations are given an exempt determination rather than IRB approval. Thus, no IRB approval number has been assigned to this study. The IRB approves for the researcher(s) to proceed with the class project.

Please note that, in the event that any of the parameters of the study change, the researcher may be required to submit an amended application.

Sincerely,

Melissa Darnell, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Member
Arkansas Tech University

Appendix E: DESE SEL Programs in Arkansas

Program	Description	Grade Levels	Training and Resources
Capturing Kids Hearts https://flippengroup.com/capturing-kids-hearts/ Capturing Kids Hearts 2 https://flippengroup.com/education/capturing-kidshearts-2/	"If you have a child's heart, you have their mind" - core belief from founder Flip Flippen. Teachers create relational connections to students and performance increases. Provides a valuable foundation for establishing a positive school culture	K-12	2-day training for all campus-level staff Includes tools for teaching 2-day training of subset of campus influencers to be Process Champions
Character Counts https://charactercounts.org/	CHARACTER COUNTS! utilizes its Six Pillars of Character: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship as a foundational strategy while incorporating other nation's best-practices and methodologies. Besides emphasizing and promoting a focus on positive school climate, other defining elements of CHARACTER COUNTS! are intensive decision-making strategies, mindfulness, growth mindset and behavioral change theories. CHARACTER	K-12	Lesson Plans

	COUNTS! practical strategies K-12 Lesson Plans produce exceptional results in the academic, social, emotional and character development domains.		
Character Strong https://characterstrong.com/	Holistic approach. Curriculum supplement that builds positive character habits through consistent, intentional practice.	PreK-12	Virtual 1 or 2 day SEL and Character Workshops
Choose Love https://chooselovemovement/	Learning to choose love even when life is difficult will change your life for the better and the lives of those around you. Social and emotional learning (SEL) is a way to teach children and adults how to understand and manage their emotions. It helps people make good decisions and work towards positive goals while caring for and nurturing the relationships around them. Choose Love Movement's nextgeneration SEL programming is built upon a simple formula: courage, plus gratitude, plus forgiveness, plus compassion in action equals Choosing Love. When learned and practiced daily, these character values transform you, your relationships with others, and create a ripple effect of		

	happiness, health and productivity.		
Guide For Life	The G.U.I.D.E. for Life personal competency standards are skills that all Arkansas students need to be successful. Standards can be addressed through regular classroom instruction and by creating safe, supportive learning environments and school cultures.	K-12	
Mawi Learning (ACT) https://mawilearning.com/	The Mawi Learning SEL framework builds upon (5) core evidence-based SEL competencies that drive gains in academic achievement and student well-being.	K-12	Blended Delivery, Fully online and Teacher Extension Resources Available. Powerful Educator PD can be structured PD or via self-guided instruction.
Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) An evidence-based threetiered framework to improve and integrate all of the data, systems, and practices affecting student outcomes every day. https://www.pbis.org/	PBIS improves social, emotional and academic outcomes for all students, including students with disabilities and students from underrepresented groups. PBIS is not a curriculum you purchase, or a one-day training, it is a commitment to addressing student behavior through systems change.	K-12	Tier 1 has 3 training days with follow up coaching support via Zoom. Tier 2 has 2 training days with follow up support via Zoom.
Purpose Prep https://purposeprep.com/	An evidence-based, media rich, and comprehensive PreK-12 solution designed to create whole humans and help students find their purpose.	PreK-12	On-site & Online delivery

Second Step https://www.secondstep.org/	Social-Emotional Learning Second Step SEL is research-based, teacher-informed, and classroom tested to promote the social-emotional development, safety, and well-being of children from Early Learning through Grade 8.	Pre-K - 8 High School program is in development.	Includes training toolkits including assessments Varies: Approx. 2-3 hours throughout the year

Note. Retrieved from http://adecm.arkansas.gov/Attachments/Social_and_Emotional_ Learning_Programs_153627.pdf. Copyright (2020) by Division of Elementary and Secondary Education - Arkansas Department of Education.