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GENDER AND PARTICIPATING IN CAPTURING KIDS' HEARTS ON SOCIAL

EMOTIONAL LEARNING OF NINTH-GRADE STUDENTS IN ARKANSAS

by

Angela S. Dischinger

Dissertation

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GENDER AND PARTICIPATING IN CAPTURING KIDS' HEARTS ON SOCIAL

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Dissertation

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Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. - Joshua 1:9

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ABSTRACT

by
Angela S. Dischinger
Harding University
December 2019

Title: Gender and Participating in Capturing Kids' Hearts on Social Emotional Learning of Ninth-Grade Students in Arkansas (Under the direction of Dr. Usen Akpanudo)

The purpose of this study was to understand gender differences in the Social Emotional Learning of students participating in the Capturing Kids' Hearts program at a high school in Central Arkansas. In this quantitative, causal-comparative strategy study, there were 271 ninth-grade students who participated in a presurvey of social emotional learning outcomes and 476 ninth-grade students who participated in a postsurvey of the same outcomes a year after implementation of the Capturing Kids' Hearts program. Both samples were drawn using a convenience sampling technique. The Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey instrument was used to obtain data on students' perception of their social emotional learning *before* participating in the Capturing Kids' Hearts program, and *after* participating in the Capturing Kids' Hearts program. The students' survey consisted of nine constructs developed around the five CASEL competencies: self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, self-management, and relationship skills. A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to explore differences by gender on the social emotional learning competencies among the students before and after participation in the Capturing Kids' Hearts program.

Additionally, descriptive analyses were conducted between the two data sets to compare the mean scores for males and females.

The findings in this study revealed meaningful differences between male and female ninth-grade students on specific CASEL competencies before they participated in the program as well as gender differences on certain competencies after one year of participating in the Capturing Kids' Hearts program. After a year of participating in the Capturing Kids' Hearts program, ninth-grade male students benefited more in responsible decision-making and self-management than females. However, females benefited more in self-awareness and social awareness than males. The implications for educators regarding social emotional learning for males and females based on the inferential and descriptive analysis may indicate that males and females need differentiated instruction for social emotional learning to maximize their skill development.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Many adolescents seek to form meaningful relationships with the people around them. Students and even adults crave to belong, to be accepted, and to be connected in productive ways with others. However, as students progress from elementary to middle school, and on to high school, some of the connections they had formed in their earlier years appear to weaken (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Klem & Connell, 2004). Coincidentally, values that will shape the lifelong character, social skills, and behavior patterns of most adolescents are formed during these transitional years (Payton et al., 2008). Also, during these years and often due to peer pressure, many school-age children will experience increased exposure to, and an inclination to participate in risky behaviors such as violence, drug use, bullying, and dropping out of school. Data from the 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System for the United States, indicated that 29.6% of high school students reported that they currently use alcohol, 19.8% used marijuana, and 14% used prescription medication, not as intended or without a prescription (Kann et al., 2018). Additionally, 19% of the students responding had experienced bullying, 7.4% had attempted suicide, and 39.5% had engaged in sexual intercourse (Kann et al., 2018). As concerning as these statistics appear on their own, the cumulative effect of having a large number of students at one school engaging in such risky behavior should be even more troubling. When these

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behavior patterns are common in any school setting, they inadvertently create additional problems that affect the academic performance, social emotional well-being, and the overall health of all students (Durlak et al., 2011).

Given this situation, what approaches are available to educational leaders at the middle, junior high, or high school level who seek to prepare stakeholders at their schools to help students navigate these challenges? How actively involved should school leaders and other educators be in shaping the social learning needs and character of school-aged children? Should the emotional intelligence of students also be of concern to educators and school administrators? Are different strategies required for male and female students? According to The Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes toward the Public Schools, most Americans are in support of schools teaching students social skills (Bushaw & Lopez, 2013). Furthermore, the doctrine of *in loco parentis*, a bedrock of the student-school relationship, is commonly interpreted as obligating educators to bear some fiduciary commitment to ensuring the functional development of their students (Rumel, 2013). However, what strategies are the most effective for accomplishing this? Should such strategies be embedded in curriculum or should they be stand-alone programs? Stiff-Williams (2010) for instance has suggested the integration of character education throughout the curriculum as a way of helping students develop *decision-filters*, that can help them build meaningful relationships. However, more contemporary work has honed in on the idea of competencies related to Social Emotional Learning (SEL) as a more holistic approach to promoting social relationship outcomes (Espelage, Low, Polanin, & Brown, 2013; Usakli & Ekici, 2018). In all, a wide range of SEL strategies is being implemented across schools in the United States. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of

empirical investigation into these strategies in the extant literature. A few examples include the Second Step-Student Success Through Prevention [SS-SSTP] (Espelage, Low, Polanin, & Brown, 2013; Espelage, Rose, & Polanin, 2016; Usakli & Ekici, 2018), and Capturing Kids' Hearts [CKH] (Holtzapple et al., 2011). Jones et al. (2017) also reported on 25 other SEL programs currently in use at elementary school across the United States. Their list included programs such as *4rs, Caring School Community*, *Character First*, *Competent Kids—Caring Communities*, and *I Can Problem Solve*, among others. Ultimately, the prevalence of these interventions/strategies at schools across the country seems to suggest one thing; educational researchers and educational leaders should be paying at least as much attention to students' social development outcomes as they currently pay to their academic performance outcomes.

In the remainder of this chapter, a formal statement of the problem, a brief background, and the hypotheses are presented. Next, the description of terms, the significance of this study, and the process used to accomplish this study are provided.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to understand gender differences in the SEL of students participating in CKH program at a high school in central Arkansas. Specifically, this study examined gender differences in self-awareness of ninth-grade students who participated in CKH program at a high school in Central Arkansas. Second, this study examined gender differences in social awareness of ninth-grade students who participated in CKH program at a high school in Central Arkansas. Third, this study examined the gender differences in responsible decision-making of ninth-grade students who participated in CKH program at a high school in Central Arkansas. Fourth, this study

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examined the gender differences in self-management of ninth-grade students who participated in CKH program at a high school in Central Arkansas. Fifth, this study examined the gender differences in relationship skills of ninth-grade students who participated in CKH program at a high school in Central Arkansas. Additionally, the purpose of this study was to determine if there were changes in the self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, self-management, and relationship skills (SEL) of these students over the period of one school year as a result of participating in CKH program.

Background

Social Cognitive Theory

Students learn by observing teachers and peers engaging in SEL skills. Through observational learning, students can reproduce and replicate the desired skills. SEL's underlying premise is based on the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). Social cognitive theory is a behavioral theory, and people use the theory to explain learned human behaviors in light of how behavioral, environmental, and cognitive and personal factors influence behavior and learning (Luszczynska & Schwarzer, 2005). In an earlier work, Bandura (1977) proposed that modeling was the most efficient method to obtain new behavioral skills. When students observe others demonstrate certain behaviors, the social cognitive theory holds that imitating the new behavior becomes easier because it has been observed. Therefore, if administrators, teachers, and their peers model appropriate behaviors for students, the students may steadily imitate and adopt these new behaviors.

Self-efficacy and outcome expectancies are the two main attributes of the social cognitive theory. Students who believe they can achieve a particular goal or learn a new skill display self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). Outcome expectancy is defined as people believing they can accomplish a specific goal or expecting a particular outcome based upon their input and effort. As these beliefs or expectations grow, people's perceptions for personal victory increase (Bandura, 1977). As their perception of potential victory increases, their self-confidence rises with their self-efficacy. The growth of their confidence allows them to identify their strengths and weaknesses, thus becoming more self-aware.

History of Social Emotional Learning

Numerous organizations have contributed to the research and development of SEL. The SEL processes and guidelines were developed as frameworks to assist and coordinate the variety of youth programs offered in schools (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2018b). Students needed specific skills to navigate the changing world around them successfully. One organization is the Committee for Children that was established in 1979 as a non-profit organization to help children be safe and thrive through a variety of initiatives (Committee of Children, 2019a). The Committee of Children has programs in all 50 states and has reached over 14 million students (Committee of Children, 2019a). Another organization, the Wallace Foundation, began in the 1980s, after the passing of DeWitt Wallace and Lila Wallace, the founders of Reader's Digest (The Wallace Foundation, 2016). The mission of the Wallace Foundation is to provide learning and enrichment opportunities for disadvantaged children and promote arts for everyone (The Wallace Foundation, 2016).

As a champion for education, the Wallace Foundation has commissioned research for numerous SEL studies and reports.

A third organization that promotes SEL competencies is CASEL (2018b), which was established by a collaborative group of educators, researchers, practitioners, and children advocates (CASEL, 2018c). One of the founders of CASEL, Roger Weissberg, contended that to achieve the most significant effect, teachers in the classroom must introduce and actively develop SEL. To accomplish access, CASEL's members noted that school systems' top leaders must view SEL as a critical need for their students and districts (CASEL, 2018c). Therefore, CASEL arranged a forum between school superintendents and practitioners across the nation to focus attention on SEL in the public schools (CASEL, 2018c). Each of these organizations contributes to the development and on-going research of SEL.

The CASEL competencies include self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, self-management, and relationship skills. SEL processes and skills are based on these competencies. Educators use SEL programs to teach and model the various skills that are aligned with the five competencies (Rennie Center, 2015). In business and workforce settings, these skills are referred to as soft skills or 21st Century skills. Businesses and government personnel managers seek individuals who exhibit competence in these areas (Hanover Research, 2017). Employers are seeking workers who adapt, collaborate, problem-solve, and communicate effectively (Rennie Center, 2015). Students need training and modeling of these skills to use them effectively in a workplace where relationships are essential. The Committee of Children, an organization that has advocated for the well-being of children since 1979, has identified specific SEL

skills that students need for career and workforce readiness. The identified SEL skills

include empathy, emotion management, emotion recognition, problem-solving, impulse

control, communication, and assertiveness (Committee for Children, 2019b). Employees

who exhibit these skills can develop trusting relationships with their colleagues,

supervisors, and the public they serve in their workplace (Mehta, 2018). Each of these

competencies and embedded skills demonstrate desired behaviors and actions to assist

students and adults for promoting SEL competence to encourage meaningful

relationships.

Social Emotional Learning Programs

Effective SEL programs have common strands regardless of which specific

programs are implemented. Some of the common elements in effective SEL programs

consist of positive climate and environments, professional development for adults, family

and community partnerships, a targeted set of SEL skills, and goals that are reasonable to

obtain (Jones et al., 2017). Educators use SEL programs to teach, model, and promote

skill attainment in targeted SEL skills (Weissberg et al., 2015). To master the

competencies, the incorporation of the SAFE approach is recommended. SAFE stands for

sequenced—connected activities to obtain SEL skills, *active*—active learning, *focused*—

emphasis on specific skill development, and *explicit*—identifying and targeting specific

SEL skills (Durlak et al., 2011; Weissberg et al., 2015).

CASEL recommends that SEL programs center on the following elements to

maximize effectiveness. As part of the SEL program, the first element consists of

teachers receiving initial and ongoing professional development and training. A second

element is that SEL program outcomes should be based on evidence of effectiveness

using a comparison group based on pre and post results on student behavior (CASEL, 2015). Another element is incorporating SEL into the classroom through the curriculum and instructional delivery. According to the American Institutes of Research, a teacher using these approaches can effectively implement SEL. By incorporating SEL skills in the curriculum, teachers create a positive learning environment, direct instruction of the SEL skills, and use teaching methods to support the application of SEL skills (Kendziora & Yoder, 2016). Districts and schools can choose or develop a SEL program that meets the needs of their students. Educators must be cognizant of the desired outcomes and develop their implementation plan with actions to meet these goals and establish measures to evaluate the success of their SEL program.

Students who participate in a SEL program have demonstrated an increase in school connectedness and the ability to regulate and manage their emotions (Durlak et al., 2011; Zimmerman, 2002). When students were explicitly taught SEL processes, they better dealt with negative behaviors and pressures of growing up. Therefore, undesired behaviors were often reduced or eliminated (CASEL, 2015). Due to the positive effects on students, SEL competencies have risen to the top of indicators for student success (Hanover Research, 2017). According to CASEL (2015), students need SEL skills to be great students, workers, and productive citizens. Parents desire that their children are happy and successful adults. SEL provides students with the necessary tools to assist with navigating adulthood.

Capturing Kids' Hearts

Teachers must be intentional about creating and sustaining relationships with students every day. Some teachers naturally develop positive relationships with their

students. Unfortunately, not every teacher innately has this skill set and ability, and for this reason, CKH explicitly provides a process and method to build teacher-to-student and student-to-student relationships in the classroom and school. CKH is rooted in the construct of the social cognitive theory (Flippen Group, 2016). CKH processes include creating a social contract for the classroom for all members, including the teacher (Flippen Group, 2018b). The social contract is an agreement of how adults and students will treat one another. The desired behaviors are modeled for the students in the classroom, directly linking to the social cognitive theory. Bandura (1977) claimed that observational learning and modeling are efficient strategies to obtain new skills. CKH uses the EXCEL model to cultivate and strengthen relationships between teacher and student, student and student, teacher and administrator, and administrator and student (Flippen Group, 2015). The first E in EXCEL is *Engage.* CKH focuses on intentionally engaging with others. The X stands for *X-plore* and is the action of meeting the needs of students and adults (Flippen Group, 2015). An example of an X-plore activity is *Good Things.* This activity provides an opportunity for students and adults to share positive news with one another. The C in EXCEL represents *Communication*. In the classroom, C can be observed through conversation, cooperative group activities, and body language (Flippen Group, 2015). The fourth letter in EXCEL signifies *Empower*. When students are able to role-play and apply their SEL skills to a variety of scenarios, this practice builds self-efficacy and empowers them to use their new skills to resolve conflicts and issues (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009). Finally, the L in EXCEL represents *Launch.* The launch is a meaningful close to a class, activity, or event. The teacher ends class by providing an inspirational quote, a call out, or a positive ending to

send the students to their next destination (Flippen Group, 2015). When the EXCEL elements are combined in the classroom and school, students benefit by observing how to engage with adults and peers in a safe, positive environment. Through observational learning and modeling, students are gaining new skills to assist them in navigating the pressures of adolescence (McLeod, 2016). The SEL skills taught through the CKH processes equip students to be successful at school and in their future endeavors.

Social Emotional Learning and Gender

As students progress in their academic careers from elementary to secondary schools, the need for SEL skills changes to provide individualized support to males and females. Secondary students experience a shift in their environment from one class in elementary to multiple classes at the secondary level. Due to this shift, students' exposures to negative influences and behaviors increase (Taylor, Liang, Tracy, Williams, & Seigle, 2002). According to Taylor et al. (2002), males are more likely to exhibit aggressive or violent behavior when angry compared to females. Therefore, the need for the SEL program for males and females has an increased urgency to deter negative, undesirable behaviors. Few studies focus on the effects of SEL programs for specific gender outcomes. Most of the studies conducted are based on elementary-age students. SEL interpersonal skills can reduce aggressive and violent behavior in elementary-age boys (Portnow, Downer, & Brown, 2018). By providing classroom support through teaching SEL skills and providing an emotionally supported environment, aggressive behavior can decrease for students (Portnow, Downer, & Brown, 2018). Male and female students possess different needs and require different support in the classroom to obtain

success. Providing the appropriate supports for a student's age and gender may increase the ability to perform in the classroom.

Social Emotional Learning and Student Outcomes

A critical element that influences student achievement and student behavior is the existence of positive relationships in the classrooms. SEL skills help to facilitate the development of positive relationships between teachers and students (Yang, Bear, & May, 2018). Additionally, SEL modeling and skill development strengthen the relationships among students. Teachers who intentionally build positive relationships with their students and promote a supportive classroom environment through modeling appropriate behavior responses experience a decrease in negative behavior from students (Hanover Research, 2018a; Yang et al., 2018). A positive classroom environment is achieved when clear expectations and appropriate behavior is modeled for students (Flippen Group, 2015; Sherwood, n.d). Modeling the desired behavior for students decreases the amount of time needed for skill acquisition based on the social cognitive theory (McLeod, 2016). When students have a clear understanding and an opportunity to practice positive behaviors, the outcome is a positive learning environment. The decrease of negative behavior allows for more time spent on teaching and learning within the classroom (Klem & Connell, 2004). When teachers incorporate a variety of engagement activities for students to access the curriculum, it proactively deters inappropriate student behaviors.

One effective engagement approach is using a whole-class response system. Teachers provide an opportunity for all students in the class to participate and engage in responding. Other effective engagement strategies include providing activities that

incorporate movement during the instruction, using visual aids, and allowing students to provide input or have a choice in their assignment (Blad, 2017; Hanover Research, 2018a). By using effective engagement strategies, teacher can embed SEL activities in the curriculum and deliver them to the students through the content. Instructional strategies that are focused on increasing peer interaction promote the development of positive student-to-student relationships through communication, social engagement, and teamwork, which encompasses skills of SEL (Blad, 2017; CASEL, 2017; Hanover Research, 2018a). The classroom is an excellent platform to help adolescents learn and develop SEL competencies.

According to Bandura (1977), children and adults mimic the behavior around them based on their environmental, personal, and behavioral factors. The social cognitive theory assumes that students will create new behavior patterns based on the observation and modeling of desired behavior. When learning a new skill, modeling is an efficient way for the learner to gain new knowledge. Bandura (1986) stated that specific skills are not attainable unless skills are modeled, such as linguistic skills. When students observe adults modeling appropriate behavior and resolving conflicts in the classroom, the observation establishes a guideline and decreases the time needed for skill acquisition (Bandura, 1986). By decreasing the amount of time required for students to learn new skills, whether behavioral or academic; modeling is a timesaver. Thus, teachers can move to the next skill or objective.

A successful SEL program must encompass multiple components to maximize positive student outcomes. Upon implementing an SEL program, schools and districts must determine their definition of SEL (Cohen, 2006; CASEL, 2015; Hanover Research,

2017; Rennie Center, 2015). A clear definition of SEL provides a concrete platform for all stakeholders. The next step for district stakeholders is to create a vision and a timeline of the process (Weissberg, Durlak, Domitrovich, & Gullotta, 2015). By creating a shared vision and establishing a common language, districts decrease confusion between stakeholders regarding the focus and goals (CASEL, 2015; Cohen, 2006; Rennie Center, 2015). Another necessary component of a SEL program is providing initial and on-going professional development for all staff members (CASEL, 2015; Hanover Research, 2017; Jones et al., 2017). The professional development plan should include dates for all training activities and include the objectives and skills to be obtained during the training. The last component of a SEL program is to determine specific evidence to review as part of the evaluation process to measure the success of SEL (CASEL, 2015; Cohen, 2006; Hanover Research, 2017; Jones et al., 2017). Deploying these best practices for SEL implementation promotes an increased rate of success for students.

Hypotheses

1. No statistically significant difference will exist between males and females on self-awareness measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for ninth-grade students at a high school in Central Arkansas *before* participating in the CKH program.

2. No statistically significant difference will exist between males and females on self-awareness measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for ninth-grade students at a high school in Central Arkansas *after* participating in the CKH program.

3. No statistically significant difference will exist between males and females on social awareness measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for ninth-grade students at a high school in Central Arkansas *before* participating in the CKH program.

4. No statistically significant difference will exist between males and females on social awareness measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for ninth-grade students at a high school in Central Arkansas *after* participating in the CKH program.

5. No statistically significant difference will exist between males and females on decision-making measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for ninth-grade students at a high school in Central Arkansas *before* participating in the CKH program.

6. No statistically significant difference will exist between males and females on decision-making measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for ninth-grade students at a high school in Central Arkansas *after* participating in the CKH program.

7. No statistically significant difference will exist between males and females on self-management measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for ninth-grade students at a high school in Central Arkansas *before* participating in the CKH program.

8. No statistically significant difference will exist between males and females on decision-making measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student

Survey for ninth-grade students at a high school in Central Arkansas *after* participating in the CKH program.

9. No statistically significant difference will exist between males and females on relationship skills measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for ninth-grade students at a high school in Central Arkansas *before* participating in the CKH program.

10. No statistically significant difference will exist between males and females on relationship skills measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for ninth-grade students at a high school in Central Arkansas *after* participating in the CKH program.

Description of Terms

Capturing Kids' Hearts (CKH). CKH is a systematic process using SEL skills to build relationships and increase student connection to school (Flippen Group, 2016). CKH is built on the premise of the social cognitive theory developed by Albert Bandura (1977). CKH professional development requires attendees to actively participate using the strategies they will implement in their classrooms with their students (Flippen Group, 2018a). In this study, CKH refers a SEL process that can be implemented at the K-12 level.

Outcome expectancies. Outcome expectancies is one of the main constructs of the social cognitive theory. Outcome expectancies is a person's estimate that a given behavior will lead to a certain outcome (Bandura, 1977). When expected outcomes are predicted and achieved, then a person's self-confidence increases.

Self-Efficacy. Self-efficacy is one of the main constructs of the social cognitive theory. Self-efficacy is the belief that oneself is capable of achieving or obtaining a specific goal or behavior successfully (Vinney, 2018). "I can" statements are a direct example of self-efficacy.

Social cognitive theory. Developed by Albert Bandura, the social cognitive theory is a behavioral theory about changing behaviors based on how people react to behavioral, personal, and environmental factors (Bandura, 1977; Vinney, 2018). Bandura (1986) argued that modeling a desired behavior was the most efficient method for fostering skill acquisition in this regard. The social cognitive theory is rooted in modeling specific behaviors and providing effective, timely feedback to reinforce positive behavior replication (Flippen Group, 2016). The CKH program is based on the foundation and constructs of the social cognitive theory (Flippen Group, 2016). CKH requires teachers to use modeling as a tool to teach students appropriate and desired behavior.

Social emotional learning (SEL). SEL is the process through which children 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, 2015). The development and mastery of SEL skills affect a student's ability to respond appropriately to a variety of situations and circumstances.

Self-Awareness. Self-awareness is defined as the ability of a person to assess and be cognizant of behaviors, emotions, internal thoughts, beliefs, and the effects they have on others (CASEL, 2017). For the purpose of this study, scores on the self-awareness

scale on the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey measured student self-awareness (Hanover Research, 2018b).

Social awareness. Social awareness is the skill to consider the viewpoints of others and empathize with them, regardless of their heritage or diversity (CASEL, 2017). For the purpose of this study, scores on the social-awareness scale on the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey measured student social awareness (Hanover Research, 2018b).

Responsible decision-making. Responsible decision-making is the ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms (CASEL, 2017). For the purpose of this study, scores on the responsible decision-making scale on the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey measured student responsible decision-making (Hanover Research, 2018b).

Self-Management. Self-management is the capability to successfully control one's emotions, thoughts, and actions in a variety of situations effectively coping with stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself (CASEL, 2017). For the purpose of this study, scores on the self-management scale on the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey measured student self-management (Hanover Research, 2018b).

Relationship skills. Relationship skills are those skills relating to the capacity to develop and sustain healthy and fulfilling relationships with a divergent population of individuals and groups (CASEL, 2017). For the purpose of this study, scores on the relationship skills scale on the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey measured student relationship skills (Hanover Research, 2018b).

Significance

Research Gaps

Teaching to the whole child is now the focus of education. Educators must consider a student's emotional well-being in the equation for student growth and achievement (Weissberg et al., 2015). For many years, researchers have studied the effects that relationships and connections have on a student's success (Durlak et al., 2011; Hanover Research, 2017; Payton et al., 2008, Sherwood, 2003). This study will build on the work of past researchers to determine how the SEL processes will affect the CASEL competencies by gender in students. Previous research focused on elementary and middle school students. This study helped expand the literature regarding the effects of the SEL processes for high school students. Due to the limited availability of research for SEL and high school level students, this study focused on ninth-grade high school students and the results from the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey based on the CASEL competencies that were implemented through the CKH program.

Possible Implications for Practice

Findings from this study may have several important implications for the practice of educational leadership. First, this study would add to the literature and research on SEL and high school students. Educators would be able to determine if SEL processes have a positive effect on high school students SEL skill development. Researchers and educators would be able to use the information from this study to provide guidance for developing SEL processes and targeted skills for high school students. Second, educators would be able to determine if the use of SEL benefits high school students. Third, this

study would provide information to determine if one year of CKH program is sufficient for SEL skill development for high school students.

Process to Accomplish

Design

A quantitative, causal-comparative strategy was used in this study. According to Mills and Gay (2016), causal-comparative studies attempt to determine the cause or effect of a pre-existing behavior in a group. This type of study is appropriate when the researcher cannot or should not manipulate the independent variable (Mills & Gay, 2016). The independent variable for all 10 hypotheses was gender (male versus female) for ninth-grade students before and after participation in Capturing Kids' Hearts program. The dependent variables for each pair of the 10 hypotheses included the five CASEL competencies: self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, self-management, and relationship skills, respectively. Self-reported pre- and postsurvey data were obtained from students at a high school in Central Arkansas.

Sample

The sample in this study were data obtained in the form of presurvey and postsurvey scores from the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for ninth-grade students in a Central Arkansas high school. A convenience sample of all survey respondents was drawn from the high school because the school implemented the SEL process using the CKH program for every student in the fall semester of 2018. The demographic characteristics of the high school are as follows: Caucasian (68%), African-American (17%), Asian (2%), and Hispanic (12%) students. Of the school's population, 30% qualified for free and reduced lunches. The school's grade configuration was 9th-

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12th with a total enrollment of 2,708 students. The average teacher tenure at the school was 11.68 years. The pupil-to-teacher ratio for the school averaged 14 to 1 (Arkansas Department of Education, 2018).

Instrumentation

The primary instrument used in this study was the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey. Methodologists and content experts at Hanover Research (2018b) developed the instrument based upon a comprehensive SEL literature review and the CASEL competencies. The students' survey is used with students in Grades 4–12 and consists of nine constructs developed around the five CASEL competencies. Each competency has a set of specific questions to measure the outcome of the indicator. Self-awareness, self-management, and responsible decision-making have six questions each; social awareness has five questions; and relationship skills has four questions. Additional survey questions are centered on growth mindset, civic mindset, emotional well-being, and social support. Depending on the type of question, the survey question responses are based on a frequency scale or an agreement scale; both scales rank items 1 to 5 (Hanover Research, 2018b). Each question provides a summary score for each indicator.

Data Analysis

To address the hypotheses in this study, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted using gender as the independent variable for each hypothesis. The dependent variables were students' self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, self-management, and relationship skills scores, respectively, on the presurvey as well as on the postsurvey. As is common in educational and sociological studies, an alpha level of .05 was set for the two-tailed test of each null hypothesis (Mills

& Gay, 2016). Finally, to examine differences on each of the five SEL competencies, a descriptive analysis was conducted by comparing the means and standard deviations for each pair of statistics for the presurvey and postsurvey scores. Ideally, such research questions are best addressed as part of a mixed factorial ANOVA analysis (Morgan, Leech, Gloeckner, & Barrett, 2013). Unfortunately, the data obtained for the purpose of this study did not include unique identifiers to enable the tracking of students from presurvey to postsurvey. Therefore, the presurvey and postsurvey data were analyzed separately for statistical significance differences between male and female students on the SEL competencies, and presurvey and postsurvey averages were compared descriptively for change over time.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Most adults and children seek to develop meaningful and functional relationships with the people around them. Being able to develop and maintain relationships are important skills for adolescents and adults to possess in order to connect to others. As students move through the education system, their connections tend to weaken (Durlak et al., 2011). At this critical time, students are defining their character and beliefs (CASEL, 2015; Payton et al., 2008). When adolescents are exposed to risky and negative behaviors due to their vulnerability to peer pressure, they may participate in harmful behaviors such as violence, bullying, sexual relationships, use of drugs, or withdrawing from school (Portnow, Downer, & Brown, 2018; Sherwood, 2003). The participation in these negative behaviors can have a lasting effect on a student's academic achievement and future success, which is troubling for educators (Durlak et al., 2011). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2009), school connectedness is the strongest factor to reduce engagement in substance abuse, violence, sexual activity, and unintentional injury.

How do educators tackle these issues? Should educators be responsible for developing a student's emotional intelligence? Social Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies and skills are vital for students to help deter the negative effects of harmful choices and the impact of those choices on a student's overall health, mental state, and

academic performance (CASEL, 2015). Jones et al. (2017) defined SEL as " the process through which individuals learn and apply a set of social, emotional, behavioral, and character skills required to succeed in schooling, the workplace, relationships, and citizenship" (p. 12). CASEL (2015) defined SEL as a process that adults and children use to manage and understand their emotions, make positive choices, initiate and obtain supportive relationships, and have the ability to achieve their goals. SEL also helps people demonstrate empathy and genuine concern for others and themselves and have the skills and tools needed to handle various situations and obstacles of life successfully, effectively, and confidently. However, SEL may have been referenced under several varying terms including emotional intelligence, emotional literacy, non-cognitive skills, soft skills, and social emotional skills (Humphrey, Kalambouka, Wigelsworth, Lendrum, Deighton, & Wolpert, 2011). Regardless of the previous names or vocabulary, students need to be taught SEL competencies to help them be successful in school and their future.

Currently, many avenues or types of delivery models exist for implementing and teaching students SEL. Some programs are embedded in the curriculum, and others are taught as a standalone program. There is limited research on SEL programs in general. However, a few SEL programs examined in the literature include the Second Step-Student Success Through Prevention or SS-SSTP (Espelage, Low, Polanin, & Brown, 2013; Espelage, Rose, & Polanin, 2016; Usakli & Ekici, 2018) and Capturing Kids' Hearts ([CKH]; Holtzapple et al., 2011). Additionally, some of the 25 elementary SEL programs evaluated by Jones et al. (2017) in their study include Competent Kids-Caring Communities, I can Problem Solve, 4rs, Caring School Community, and many more.

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Districts and schools have a variety of SEL programs available to them depending on the needs of their students.

This chapter provides a review of the related literature of SEL and the theoretical framework based on social cognitive theory including self-efficacy, and then followed by the history and development of SEL and the competencies. The next section details SEL programs, best practices, implementation, and professional development, using SEL in the classroom, SEL and gender, and relationships in the classroom. Finally, a review of studies associated with SEL programs, specifically CKH, and student success is presented.

Social Cognitive Theory

Positive reinforcements along with intrinsic and extrinsic rewards shape the behavior of people. One of the many theories that attempt to explain this phenomenon is the social cognitive theory developed in 1986 by a Stanford University professor Albert Bandura as an extension of his social learning theory (Bandura, 1986; Luszczynska & Schwarzer, 2005; Van Der Bijl & Shortridge-Baggett, 2001; Vinney, 2018). Social cognitive theory is a behavioral theory about observational learning (how people learn from others through observation) and the influence that behavioral, cognitive, personal, and environmental factors have on learning (Bandura, 1986; Van Der Bijl & Shortridge-Baggett, 2001; Vinney, 2018). The interplay between these factors is labeled reciprocal determination (Bandura, 1986; Stajkovic & Luthans, 2002; Vinney, 2018; Wood & Bandura, 1989) and is described as a bidirectional, nonsimultaneous, and unequal interaction between the factors over time (see Figure 1). They concluded that reciprocal determination situates individuals such that they are both producers and products of their

environment. Furthermore, the theory holds that people's thoughts regarding their

capacity to successfully complete the tasks required to change behavior (human

capabilities) also exert an important influence on their behavior.
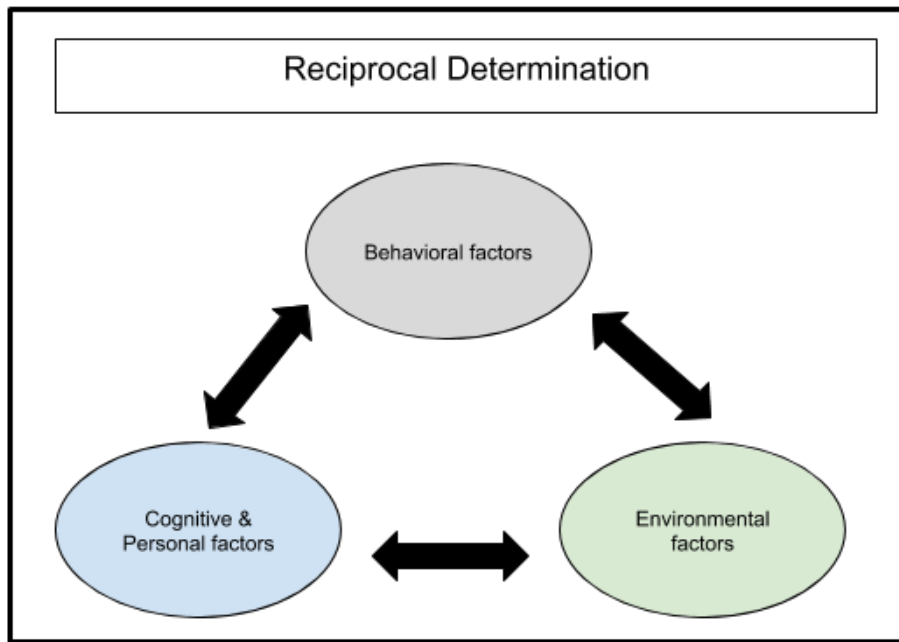
Figure 1. The process of reciprocal determination. Adapted from "Social foundations of

thought and action: A social cognitive theory" by A. Bandura. Published in 1986 by

Prentice-Hall.

Bandura's social cognitive theory identifies five human capabilities: Symbolizing,

Forethought, Vicarious, Self-Regulatory, and Self-Reflective (Bandura, 1986; Stajkovic

& Luthans, 2002). Symbolizing capability is the use of symbols to produce thoughts to

guide future actions (Stajkovic & Luthans, 2002). An example of symbolizing capability

is associating a flag with patriotic behavior (Stajkovic & Luthans, 2002). Forethought

capability is the ability to plan a course of action, set goals, and anticipate future

consequences (Stajkovic & Luthans, 2002). An example of forethought capability is setting a fitness goal and designing a workout plan to achieve the fitness goal. The third human capability related to social cognitive theory is vicarious capability. According to Bandura (1986), vicarious capability is the capacity to learn by observing others and through action learning. An example of vicarious capability is teaching a child to shake hands by demonstrating a handshake. For Bandura, self-regulatory capability is the ability to have control over one's thoughts and actions. An example would be for a person to demonstrate restraint from eating a piece of apple pie when on a restricted diet.

Further, the final human capability associated with social cognitive theory is self-reflective. This human capability allows people to contemplate and analyze their own experiences and process internal thoughts (Bandura, 1986). According to Bandura, "Among the mechanisms of personal agency, none is more central or pervasive than people's beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs function as an important set of proximal determinants of human motivation" (1989, p. 1175). Self-efficacy is the belief that one is capable of successfully achieving or obtaining a specific goal (Vinney, 2018). According to Lunenburg (2011), self-efficacy is a type of self-confidence. People with high self-efficacy tend to attract support from others around them to assist with coping with stress and challenging tasks (Bandura, 1997). The *I can* statements that are associated with SEL programs are rooted in this idea of self-efficacy. When a person has high self-efficacy, they demonstrate an increased level of competence that may lead to success in a variety of settings (Luszczynska & Schwarzer, 2005). A person experiencing success when demonstrating particular behaviors can increase self-efficacy. On the other hand, a person

with low self-efficacy may suffer from depression and feelings of hopelessness (Luszczynska & Schwarzer, 2005). According to Bandura, people with low self-efficacy tend to avoid difficult tasks or challenges (1997). They stew on the obstacles, focus on the outcomes of failure, and allow self-doubt to control their motivation and ability to be successful (Bandura, 1997). A person with a low self-efficacy may not reach their potential due to their lack of belief in themselves.

Bandura (1977) defined *outcome expectancy* "as a person's estimate that a given behavior will lead to a certain outcome" (p. 193). A simple example of outcome expectancy would be the belief that if a student studies the class material and is well prepared for a class, he or she will earn a higher grade for his or her work. The power behind outcome expectancy is the belief that the outcome is achievable, which connects back to the first construct of self-efficacy. When a person is able to persist and endure through a difficult situation or struggle, this is considered evidence of high self-efficacy. As an individual resolves a challenging condition, his efficacy level increases. On the other hand, those who are not able to withstand the stress and feel crushed by the situation will experience a negative and lasting influence on their self-efficacy for future obstacles (Bandura, 1977). A person's ability to persevere through the taxing situation highly affects their continued success for future endeavors.

Efficacy Expectations

Challenging periods of life test individuals' endurance. Bandura (1977) defined *efficacy expectations* as the length of time a person will endure a challenging situation and the effort he or she will put forth to withstand a difficult situation. Every person assesses an activity or obstacle using three scales: magnitude, strength, and generality.

The magnitude of efficacy is the level of difficulty of the task that one feels will be required (Bandura, 1977). The self-efficacy of strength is the belief that the person has about his or her ability to complete various levels of tasks and challenges confidently (Van Der Bijl & Shortridge-Baggett, 2001). The generality of efficacy is the degree or amount of knowledge that will be applied to all areas of responsibilities or expected activities (Lunenburg, 2011). Based on these three scales, a person determines if he or she should attempt a challenge. In the classroom, a teacher's awareness of these scales and the students' internal ratings of themselves are vital due to the effect they can have on their perceived ability to navigate challenging curriculum.

Efficacy expectations can be attributed to four sources of information: performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasions, and emotional arousal (Bandura, 1977). The source of efficacy for performance accomplishments is based on a person's mastery of experiences and personal success (Bandura, 1977). This piece of efficacy is considered the most influential because it is based on past performances (Lunenburg, 2011). When a person experiences success, one connects a positive emotion and that increases his or her self-efficacy. Vicarious experiences occur when observing other people navigate dangerous or challenging obstacles without enduring adverse consequences (Bandura, 1977).

When a student observes a peer engaged in a presumed dangerous or threatening activity, and the peer completes the task unharmed, the confidence of the observer is elevated. Modeling appropriate behavior is a powerful teaching tool for children. Verbal persuasion influences behavior through the power of suggestion. An abundance of verbal persuasion surrounds everyone. The weakest source of efficacy expectations is verbal

persuasion according to Bandura (1977). A supervisor who provides his or her employees with encouraging feedback is an example of positive verbal persuasion. Lastly, emotional arousal is the body's physical response to stressful circumstances (Bandura, 1977). A heightened physical response can impede a person's performance if he or she is tense, stressed, or agitated, which can negatively impact efficacy (Bandura, 1977). A few examples of physical responses would include having a shaky voice or sweaty palms during an interview and experiencing rapid heart rate in a near-miss car accident. According to Bandura (1977), emotional arousal can be controlled and minimized by employing coping skills to manage the threatening circumstance. These four sources of information contribute to each person's self-efficacy.

History of Social Emotional Learning

The Golden Rule was created as a simple guideline of how to treat others: treat others as you would like to be treated. By focusing on the needs of others and treating them with kindness and respect, these themes were woven into the structure of schools, formally and informally, as character education. According to Watz (2011), most character education programs in the United States can be traced to Europe's character education that was shaped by philosophers such as Kant, Renouvier, and Comte. Some of the early influencers for America included Benjamin Franklin and Horace Mann (Watz, 2011). Benjamin Franklin championed for a universal education system and for morality to be taught in school (Watz, 2011). According to Watz (2011), Horace Mann believed that education should include the development of the student's body, mind, and spirit. Their contributions allowed for the development of formal character education programs in schools, which transitioned to SEL. SEL has evolved from a loose "be nice to each

other" guideline to a comprehensive multi-faceted system of principles and frameworks to help educators prepare and equip their students to be productive, thriving members of society (Edutopia, 2011). The guidelines and frameworks of SEL were created to assist with coordinating youth service programs that were being offered in schools (CASEL, 2018b). Several organizations have contributed to the development of SEL processes. For instance, the Committee of Children organization was established in 1979 to help children who were victims of sexual abuse (Committee of Children, 2019a). In the 1980s, the Committee of Children organization expanded to assist with abuse prevention and created the curriculum Second Step, which teaches prosocial skills to students (Committee of Children, 2019a). The Wallace Foundation was founded in the 1980s in memory of DeWitt and Lila Wallace. Their mission was to provide learning opportunities for disadvantaged youth (The Wallace Foundation, 2016). The Wallace Foundation has contributed to the growth of SEL by funding various research studies (The Wallace Foundation, 2016). Another organization involved in the development of SEL guidelines and frameworks is CASEL. The organization was founded in 1994 after the collaborative work of numerous professionals including educators, researchers, practitioners, and advocates for children (CASEL, 2018b). The purpose of CASEL is to coordinate the various school programs that are implemented in schools. CASEL aligns these resources to provide a comprehensive, coordinated approach to educate and meet the social needs and development of students from preschool to high school (CASEL, 2018b). By providing an aligned approach, resources can be used more effectively and have a substantial effect on students and their behaviors. In 1997, CASEL and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development collaborated to produce a guide on

strategies and guidelines for coordinated programming for SEL (CASEL, 2018c). This SEL guide provided educators with a tool to address the social and emotional issues within their classrooms and in their schools.

In 2001, CASEL conducted a national meeting with school district superintendents to engage schools' top leadership in the conversation to promote the need for SEL in the school system (CASEL, 2018c; Kendziora & Yoder, 2016). Superintendents and practitioners from across the country were able to discuss and problem solve student issues and concerns in regards to SEL. According to CASEL (2018c) and Edutopia (2011), Roger Weissberg, co-founder of CASEL, believed that obtaining support from top leadership was critical to gain access to the teachers and classrooms to effectively drive the movement of SEL to benefit students. Practitioners must partner with leaders in education to influence, create, and modify school policy and to allow an avenue to implement SEL best practices in the classroom.

As SEL evolved and the awareness of SEL's potential influence on academic achievement became apparent, the leaders of CASEL determined that a name change was necessary for the organization. The original name of CASEL stood for Collaborative to Advance Social and Emotional Learning but changed to Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning in 2001 (CASEL, 2018c). The name change reflected the emphasis on academics. In the 2000s, CASEL published their SEL guide for educators, which reviewed SEL programs based upon evidence. Illinois was the first state, in 2004, to adopt SEL standards for students from preschool to Grade 12. Additionally, CASEL produced SEL implementation guides and toolkits, compiled research on social and emotional learning, and hosted their first CASEL forum to bring together leading

philanthropists, scientists, policy-makers, and educators (CASEL, 2018c). In 2011, a meta-analysis on SEL programs linked SEL to academic achievement (Durlak et al., 2011). According to Durlak et al. (2011), SEL programs contributed to an 11-percentile increase in academic performance. The achievement gains established credibility of the positive effect SEL may have on student achievement.

According to CASEL (2018b), a historical milestone for SEL was the first federal Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Act in 2009. Tim Ryan, Ohio Congressman, co-sponsored this Act, which allowed federal funding to be spent on training for administrators and teachers for SEL programming (CASEL, 2018c; Ryan, 2018). Congressman Ryan continued to support the effort of SEL by continuing to co-sponsor the Academic, Social, and Emotional Act of 2015. According to CASEL, this Act allowed states the ability to determine how they would use federal funding from Title I and IV to support their SEL programs (CASEL, 2018a). The allowance of federal funding provided states a funding stream to support SEL in the school systems. Often times, funding can be an obstacle for school leaders to provide programs and services that meet students' needs. Due to funding shortages, many entities have developed SEL supports, provided at low or no cost. The American Institutes for Research provides a *Social and Emotional Learning Coaching Toolkit* to provide educators with guidance for using coaching cycles to improve SEL processes in the classroom (Yoder & Gurke, 2017). Additionally, the American Institutes for Research provides SEL implementation recommendations from their evaluation of district-wide implementation of SEL based on the Collaborating Districts Initiative (Kendziora, & Yoder, 2016). The Rennie Center (2015) provided a review of SEL policies and practices from other states and districts and

lessons learned by SEL implementation in Massachusetts as a guide to other educators. The Wallace Foundation funded the review of 25 elementary school SEL programs to provide a practical resource for schools (Jones et al., 2017). CASEL (2018c) *Milestones* continue to provide extensive resources and guides to preschool, elementary, middle, and high schools to support SEL in districts and schools. In 2016, the Collaborating States Initiative was founded, and the National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development was created (CASEL, 2018c). Both of these continued to drive the importance of SEL and create synergy among various leaders from all sectors.

Social Emotional Learning Competencies

SEL is based on five competencies that integrate a variety of skills, behaviors, and attitudes to help students effectively navigate their day-to-day duties and obstacles. According to CASEL (2015), the competencies of SEL are self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, self-management, and relationship skills. Self-awareness encompasses many skills within its scope including the identification of one's emotions; the self-assessment of limitations and strengths; and how thoughts, emotions, and values influence personal behavior. Self-awareness is often termed growth mindset. Social awareness is the ability to have empathy for others, to respect others, to appreciate diversity, and to take the perspective of others. The third competency of SEL is responsible decision-making, which is the ability to make positive choices when faced with a challenging situation that may test one's ethical standards with the ability to solve a problem, evaluate, and reflect. The ability to control one's emotions successfully in a difficult situation is self-management. The last competency is the development of relationship skills, which is the ability to establish and develop healthy relationships with

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others. Relationship skills include listening, navigating conflict, seeking cooperation and help when needed, and deflecting negative social pressures (CASEL, 2015). SEL equips students with the competencies so that they can manage difficult and challenging situations. CASEL emphasizes that SEL is not a program but a series of processes and practices based on developing a student's skills based on the five competencies (Hanover Research, 2017). These five competencies prepare students to learn and be successful in their future.

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is the ability to know oneself. CASEL (2015) defined self-awareness as the ability for a person to assess and be cognizant of behaviors, emotions, internal thoughts, beliefs, and the effects they have on others. According to Zimmerman (2002), self-awareness is the capacity to determine one's strengths and weaknesses, and maintain a mindset for continued growth and efficacy. Self-awareness is a critical attribute for personal success. A person who lacks awareness of how he or she affects others can damage relationships and not realize it until too late. The potential loss could have substantial implications for work and home relationships and future endeavors. An important aspect of self-awareness is the ability to identify one's emotions (Yoder, 2014). Students and adults who can articulate their feelings healthily to those around them help build and maintain healthy relationships. The use of reflection activities assists students with developing self-awareness attributes. Students need to be able to understand their effects on their surroundings and people. CASEL (2017) included accurate self-perception and the ability to recognize one's strengths and weaknesses as additional facets of self-awareness. An individual who can identify personal strengths has an

advantage in the job market to be able to effectively promote these attributes to potential employers (Committee for Children, 2019b). Finally, self-awareness encompasses the traits of self-confidence and self-efficacy (Yoder, 2014). Self-efficacy is the belief that one can accomplish a task or a goal (Bandura, 1986). The belief that *I can* is the first step to accomplish a task or a project or take a risk to learn something new. Self-efficacy plays a major role in initiating that first step. Possessing self-awareness is vital but having an awareness of the world around oneself feeds into one's success and happiness.

Social Awareness

Walk a mile in another person's shoes has been a phrase to help individuals grasp the idea of empathy and awareness for others. *Social awareness* is the skill to consider the viewpoints of others and empathize with them, regardless of their heritage or diversity (Education Week Research Center, 2015). The ability to apply social and ethical unwritten rules for behavior and to discern resources and supports from the community, school, and family is social awareness as defined by CASEL (2017). Being able to demonstrate empathy or understanding of another person's feelings is one of the attributes of social awareness. Students can develop social awareness through peer mediation and role-playing (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009). Teachers can role-play scenarios with students to demonstrate the expected and desired behaviors in the classroom. Having respect for others, appreciating diversity, and perspective taking are some of the other tenants under social awareness. A person that uses the skill of perspective taking understands another person's state of mind, thoughts, and feelings (Borba, 2016). These skills can be taught through literature, open-ended questions, and

debate (Borba, 2016). When students learn how to view situations through the lens of another person, they are able to demonstrate empathy for each other.

Responsible Decision-Making

Being skilled at choosing wisely and reflecting when a mistake is made encompasses responsible decision-making. Responsible decision-making is the ability to make productive choices regarding personal conduct and social experiences based on social norms, safety, and ethics (Weissberg et al., 2015). The pragmatic assessment of the potential outcomes of various behaviors and a consideration of the wellness of others and oneself is responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2017). Being able to identify problems, analyze a situation, and solve a problem are all pieces of responsible decision-making and critical thinking. Employers seek employees who can do all three of these skills with ease and fluidity (Rennie Center, 2015). Additional components of responsible decision-making include evaluating, reflecting, and accepting ethical responsibility. An important life skill is being able to evaluate a situation and determine the consequences, positive or negative, of one's actions. All of these components woven together lend to the necessary tools for students to be equipped to make sound decisions, as long as the students have the discipline to implement these skills and tools.

Self-Management

The benefit of the self-management competency is obvious but often ignored or sabotaged by individuals. According to the Committee for Children (2015), the capability to successfully control one's emotions, thoughts, and actions in a variety of situations is self-management. Self-management is the skill to determine and make progress toward personal and academic goals as defined by CASEL (2017). One that can effectively cope

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with stress and impulse control and then motivate oneself has additional skills and behaviors of self-management (Rennie Center, 2015). The reward of maintaining self-control and self-discipline is vast and is difficult for young people to comprehend. Often, students are not explicitly taught skills to help regulate their emotions to maintain self-control or to manage their stress (Zimmerman, 2002). Students and adults need a variety of tools and skills to help with personal motivation and impulse control (Cohen, 2006). When a person has multiple strategies to deal with a variety of challenging situations, he or she is more likely not to resort to caving to stress or losing self-control with negative behaviors. When a person manages his or her emotions effectively, this positively affects his or her relationships with the people in his or her life.

Relationship Skills

Connection and meaningful relationships with others help people to identify their purpose for themselves. "Relationship skills are the capacity to develop and sustain healthy and fulfilling relationships with a divergent population of individuals and groups" (CASEL, 2015, p. 6). The skills to clearly and concisely communicate, listen, cooperate, deflect inappropriate social pressure, navigate and process conflict constructively, and seek and offer assistance when needed are relationship skills defined by CASEL (2017). The four components of relationship skills include communication, social engagement, relationship building, and teamwork. A person needs effective communication for work, family, friendships, church, and more. In the classroom, students work together on projects to develop and refine their relationship skills (Usakli & Ekici, 2018). Businesses desire a workforce that can work effectively on a team, engage with the public, and develop positive relationships with the public they serve (Schonert-Reichl, Kitil, &

Hanson-Peterson, 2017). To have those meaningful connections at work and home,
people have to develop their relationship skills.

How Social Emotional Learning Works

Best Practices

Upon establishing a new program or developing a new initiative, individuals
involved desire the new program or initiative to be successful and often lean upon known
best practices to aid their journeys. According to Jones et al. (2017), effective SEL
programs have several common components that include positive environment and
climate, professional development for faculty and parents, attainable goals, and a set of
targeted SEL skills. Weissberg (2015) claimed that the set of targeted skills must be
linked directly to the CASEL five competencies. Additionally, CASEL (2015)
recommended that SEL programs must have evidence of effectiveness. According to
Hanover Research (2017), districts and schools need to provide their stakeholders with a
clear definition of SEL and the competencies that are associated with SEL. A clear
definition supplies the various stakeholders with a grounding point and a common
platform for all other necessary processes for SEL to be successful in a school setting.

District leaders should develop a vision statement of SEL that represents multiple
roles and perspectives in the district (Cohen, 2006; Hanover Research, 2017). CASEL
(2015) recommended that district personnel create a committee of all associates who
interact with students to ensure all facets are included in the process. This committee
should participate in the development process of the vision to create a comprehensive
statement to ensure various members in different roles throughout the district embrace
ownership.

In addition to the vision statement, district leaders need to develop a districtwide SEL implementation plan with assistance from the committee. This plan would establish a common language and goals for a systemic implementation to maximize student benefits (Cohen, 2006). District leaders who create this common structure allow for everyone to be engaged in the SEL processes and to use and embed them into everyday practices.

In order for SEL to be embedded in the school and district culture, personnel will need specific training to hone their SEL competencies and skills (Hanover Research, 2017). Targeted training enables members of the organization to be intentional with the delivery and use of SEL in the day-to-day operations in the district. As a district's leadership determines the mandatory components of the SEL plan, a policy review is necessary (CASEL, 2015; Hanover Research, 2017; Kendziora & Yoder, 2016). Districts may need to amend or add a policy to ensure consistency and continuity across the district and from school to school. Schools should incorporate parents into the SEL practices by offering activities and events for parents to engage in SEL learning opportunities with their students (Hanover Research, 2017; Kendziora & Yoder, 2016). A few examples to engage parents and the community are college and career fairs, community service-learning projects, newsletters to parents with a focus on SEL with tips for how to help at home, conferences with teachers and parents, and other school events that engage parents in their students' learning. Including all stakeholders in the creation of the district SEL implementation plan creates a connection and support from the various stakeholders. This support is important when the changes need to occur to policies and day-to-day processes to ensure the success of the SEL plan.

Classroom teachers are able to quickly identify and state the skills that their students are lacking. School leaders that are successful with their SEL processes pre-determine skills that will be taught to their students (CASEL, 2015; Shafer, 2016). The classroom provides the main platform for the delivery and instruction of SEL processes. Teachers are the primary source of SEL delivery to students and are the lifeline of successful SEL programs for schools and districts (Cohen, 2006; Hanover Research, 2017; Martinez, 2016; Shafer, 2016). By embedding SEL skills into the curriculum or teaching stand-alone SEL lessons, teachers are the main conduit for SEL for students.

CASEL (2015), Durlak et al. (2011), Payton et al. (2008), and Weissberg et al. (2015) all recommend that districts and schools follow the SAFE model to teach skills and practices of SEL. The *S* in SAFE represents *sequenced* because the SEL program has activities to intentionally and sequentially teach the skills step-by-step. The *A* in SAFE represents *active.* The SEL program includes role-playing, modeling, and active learning to provide students with feedback and structure to use the skills. The *F* in SAFE represents *focused.* The SEL program allows an appropriate amount of time to teach the necessary skills to students. Finally, the *E* in SAFE represents *explicit* because the SEL program targets specific SEL skills. These four are the recommended practices to follow when teaching social and emotional skills to students to provide the most benefit (Durlak et al., 2011; Payton et al., 2008; Weissberg et al., 2015). By investing in the SAFE structure when teaching SEL skills, teachers can ensure that students experience a well-rounded mode of delivery for SEL.

When school leaders are preparing to launch their SEL processes, they must remember the essential elements of a strong SEL program. A critical piece is that schools

gather strong evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of their SEL program (CASEL, 2015). Programs with compelling outcomes have supportive evidence to provide credence to the claims. These best practices of SEL encompass shared vision, common language, common SEL skills to be taught, a variety of identified strategies, an implementation plan, including professional development and support for teachers and staff, and finally gathering of evidence to demonstrate programmatic successes and areas of growth.

Implementation

The success of any new program or initiative is dependent on the implementation process. The implementation must be carefully planned and must consider all stakeholders involved (Durlak, 2015). CASEL provides some strategic insights into how to implement an SEL program successfully. First, a belief exists that SEL can be implemented with small budgets and through leadership changes (CASEL, 2017). Funding for SEL initiatives and programs is not readily available for schools and districts; therefore, a creative approach is critical. Another potential challenge is that district superintendents may change during the implementation of a new program or practice. CASEL, Committee of Children, and the Wallace Foundation are a few of the organizations that provide resources online to assist districts and schools with current research and guidelines to assist during the implementation process. Second, SEL should be integrated throughout all operations of work (CASEL, 2017). The daily operation includes budgets, curriculum, discipline, policies, data collection, and strategic planning. By embedding the SEL components throughout the district's system and processes, this integration projects the importance and value placed on all of the components of SEL,

which will assist in shaping the culture of the district. The third insight is embedding SEL into every aspect of school at the school level (CASEL, 2017; Smith & Low, 2013). This infusion includes every aspect of the school building, including the classroom, hallways, playground, as well as the climate and culture, and in partnerships with the community. According to Astor, Meyer, and Pitnor (2001), including zones of the school that have less structure or direct monitoring in the SEL processes provides students with comfort who may have previously felt unsafe in these areas. Becker and Domitrovich (2011) support an integrated approach to provide efficiency and stronger coordination of youth services to benefit students. When the youth services and resources are connected and applied universally to all students and in all areas of the school, the SEL efforts are maximized. According to Durlak et al. (2011), Payton et al. (2008), and Weissberg et al. (2015), most effective SEL programs use the SAFE model in their SEL lessons to teach the students SEL skills. Schools that embed the SEL processes throughout the school from general spaces such as the cafeteria, hallways, bathrooms to the classroom in the day to day structure of the school demonstrate the elements for effective implementation. The school's SEL program should be apparent to all stakeholders because the school system is entrenched in the SEL processes. The school personnel models the SEL processes and healthy behaviors, uses the processes to handle social and emotional issues, embeds SEL in the curriculum, teaches SEL concepts explicitly in the classroom, and coordinates school support services using SEL.

Successful implementation may take a different path depending on the district or school, according to CASEL's (2017) fourth insight. District and school leaders should conduct a needs assessment to determine the areas of strengths and greatest needs. A

needs assessment will provide insight into areas to focus on to provide the appropriate support for students and faculty. Determining the specific concerns and issues allows for the implementation planning to address specific student needs and provide targeted support. Even though there are many ways to implement SEL programs and processes in a district or school, the implementation must reach the student level and be focused on building relationships with students. Districts and school leaders reach the specific goals of implementation at the student level by building student relationships in a variety of ways (CASEL, 2017). When students experience common expectations and interactions throughout the school from class to class, these experiences promote their understanding and use of desired behavior (Jones, Bailey, & Jacob, 2014; Klem & Connell, 2004). When a common language and processes are used consistently with students, they are able to predict expected reactions and are more successful in controlling their impulses and reactions. A district or school may select a variety of implementation styles to meet the needs of their district and school.

Some district leaders choose to pilot a SEL program and select only the schools in a particular feeder pattern to participate; another option would be to select a particular grade level(s) to implement in all schools and add additional grade levels in subsequent years. Some school leaders create SEL teams that include administrators, lead teachers, and counselors to support and guide the implementation process of the building by receiving additional professional development and training. The district or school can provide support by creating an SEL specialist to assist with the SEL implementation process. CASEL (2017) cautioned district leaders to ensure that the principal receives proper training and support to lead the SEL program. According to Kam, Greenberg, and

Walls (2003), successful SEL program implementation must have explicit support from the building principal. The level of successful implementation of an SEL program or skills by the teacher in the classroom depends on the degree of support by the principal (Holtzapple et al., 2011; Martinez, 2016). When the building principal models the SEL skills, there is a high level of modeling of SEL skills by the teacher in the classroom. The building principal must champion the importance of the SEL program to all of the school's stakeholders.

CASEL's fifth insight focuses on the adults and their own social emotional competency (2017). A critical element to obtain success is for the adults to demonstrate and model appropriate behaviors during moments of anger, assigning consequences, resolving conflicts, showing empathy, developing relationships and rapport with their students, respecting their students' boundaries, and resisting the use of sarcasm (CASEL, 2017). For teachers to successfully model those desired behaviors, they must have social emotional competence. A teacher's level of SEL competency has a direct influence on the quality of the SEL support in the classroom (Hanson-Peterson, Schonert-Reichl, & Smith, 2016; Shafer, 2016). Additionally, teachers with strong SEL competence create classroom environments that decrease negative student behavior and conflicts (Esen-Aygun & Sahin-Taskin, 2017; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Students are always watching how the adults handle a situation, and they model their behaviors based on the behaviors they observe. As part of the implementation, schools need to provide support to teachers to build their social emotional competence (Kendziora & Yoder, 2016). The social emotional competence of the teachers and school leaders is an important component to be addressed during the implementation of an SEL program.

During the implementation planning, goals and measurements must be clearly established. By establishing goals and measurements, evidence can be collected throughout the process to conduct a thorough evaluation. The sixth insight is collecting data and evaluating progress (CASEL, 2017). During the implementation process, monitoring and adjusting are essential to resolve the issues and concerns. According to Cohen (2006), evidence should be collected and monitored continuously to determine effectiveness. Hanover Research (2017) suggested the use of student observations and surveys as assessment measures. Becker and Domitrovich (2011) suggested that progress monitoring should be used during the implementation to make necessary adjustments to promote effectiveness. Adjustments will need to be made, and the data may indicate what adjustments are needed, allowing for informed decisions to continued progress toward the original goals that were set. Goals are critical to establish and direct metrics to measure the progress.

The power of collaboration and team is sometimes underestimated. The last insight from CASEL, a considerable benefit for districts and schools, is to collaborate with other district and school leaders (CASEL, 2017). CASEL (2017) started the Collaborating Districts Initiative to provide support to districts through online resources, webinars, one-to-one phone calls, and face-to-face meetings. CASEL desired to provide educators an opportunity to learn from their peers in work sessions at the Cross-Districts Learning Events, which brings Collaborating Districts Initiative districts together. According to Kendziora and Yoder (2016), districts that participated in Collaborating Districts Initiative have successfully implemented and sustained SEL processes. District leaders collaborate with each other and CASEL staff to develop and deepen their capacity

to broaden their SEL processes (Kendziora & Yoder, 2016). Additionally, the

Collaborating Districts Initiative districts visit each other through cross-district site visits.

These visits provide the SEL teams opportunities to observe other SEL programs in

action, gain valuable first-hand knowledge, and observe them in practice. All of the key

insights provide district and school leaders a road map for successful implementation of

SEL.

Professional Development

Before launching a new initiative or program successfully, a critical ingredient is

appropriate and meaningful training to staff. Effective professional development requires

prior planning, desired training outcomes, and activities to support the end goal.

Professional development opportunities for teachers and staff need to provide a direct

link to the social skills and SEL competencies that will be taught to students (CASEL,

2015; Elias, 2006; Jones et al., 2017; Kendziora & Yoder, 2016; Yoder, 2014). After the

initial training, on-going professional development is necessary to ensure that the SEL

processes and skills become embedded in the daily operations of the school. Some of the

training can focus on increasing the SEL personal capacity of the faculty to increase their

competence (Hanson-Peterson et al., 2016; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Jones et al.,

2017; Shafer, 2016). By connecting SEL personally to teachers, they may realize the

benefits of using SEL processes with their students and colleagues.

Targeted professional development will build a teacher's competence and

confidence in SEL processes. Increasing the skills of the educators allows for easier

integration of SEL skills into their pedagogies (Martinez, 2016). Most SEL programs

include a professional development component for teachers to provide initial training

(Jones et al., 2017; Kendziora & Yoder, 2016). In the design process of the district

implementation plan, district leaders should include opportunities for ongoing, targeted

training for teachers to support the implementation of SEL in the classroom.

Reflection is a main component in SEL processes to gain and develop the skill of

responsible decision-making. According to Martinez (2016), schools should engage

teachers in reflective practices about SEL practices in their classrooms. Educators can

engage in these types of activities in their professional learning committee teams to

reflect and debrief together to provide another layer of support (Hanover Research, 2017;

Kendziora & Yoder, 2016; Rennie Center, 2015; Sherwood, 2003). This practice of

reflection deepens the trust among colleagues and allows a safe time for educators to seek

advice and support on how to refine their delivery skills. Some programs embed coaching

cycles with SEL program consultants or coaches as a part of the professional

development and training plan. These experiences are valuable during the

implementation to assist with necessary corrections and feedback before they become

embedded, incorrect practices (CASEL, 2017; Hanover Research, 2017; Yoder, 2014;

Yoder & Gurke, 2017). By correcting an inappropriate approach, valuable time is saved,

and this method preserves teacher efficacy for implementing future strategies. Using a

coaching model with embedded personal reflection can best assist teachers in increasing

their self-efficacy of SEL processes.

Another source of continued training is the use of an instructional coach or

administrator. Coaches and administrators can provide teachers with valuable feedback

on the delivery of SEL practices within the classroom (Yoder & Gurke, 2017). A district

or school-site instructional coach can help marry the pedagogy and the SEL competencies

into the core curriculum. Additionally, administrators can provide support to teachers during the SEL implementation by providing encouragement and direction. Professional development is a critical ingredient for teachers to ensure the success of SEL implementation in the classroom to benefit the students.

Social Emotional Learning in the Classroom

A smooth, transitioning classroom has built-in processes and supports, academically and socially, for students that aid in creating a positive learning environment for students to thrive. A balanced instructional approach for SEL in the classroom is preferred (Yoder & Gurke, 2017). Teachers should incorporate a variety of instructional strategies to reach all types of learners in their classrooms. SEL skills can be taught in isolation or embedded into the course curriculum (Cohen, 2006; Hanover Research, 2017). Kendziora and Yoder (2016) suggested how teachers could incorporate SEL into the classroom. Teachers can explicitly teach SEL competencies, embed SEL competencies in their curriculum lessons, or conduct a mini-lesson on a new SEL skill and apply that skill during a content lesson (Kendziora & Yoder, 2016). Some of the typical instructional practices to teach and develop SEL skills are, but not limited to, the following:

- Class discussion and reflective conversations (Blad, 2017),
- Songs and games (Jones et al., 2017; McTigue & Rimm-Kaufman, 2010),
- Books, stories, role-playing (Daunic et al., 2013; Jones et al., 2017),
- Writing and reflecting (Blad, 2017; Jones et al., 2017),
- Vocabulary development (Daunic et al., 2013; Jones et al., 2017; McTigue & Rimm-Kaufman, 2010),

- Videos, direct instruction, and skills practice (Jones et al., 2017).

Teachers can identify which strategy to teach the SEL skill best based on their trainings and expertise. Students will need time to practice the skills and receive feedback on their development (Hanover Research, 2017; Kendziora & Yoder, 2016; Yoder, 2014). A warm, welcoming environment fosters a positive learning platform for students to engage in SEL skill development.

Relationships in the Classroom

Building a student's competency through the instruction of a SEL program may help the student to create and maintain healthy relationships. Teachers can provide students with explicit opportunities to gain these valuable skills. Based on the social cognitive theory, the relationship between a student and teacher affects the student's motivation and interest in school (Klem & Connell, 2004; Yang, Bear, & May, 2018). When teachers effectively build positive rapport and relationships with their students, students work harder, feel connected, and have a sense of belonging in that teacher's classroom (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009; Elias, 2006; Esen-Aygun & Sahin-Taskin, 2017; Martinez, 2016). Students' perceptions of their relationships at school have a direct effect on their academic performances (CASEL, 2015, Usakli & Ekici, 2018). Teachers create this welcoming environment by greeting students at the door, making eye contact with them, and engaging students in conversation about themselves. CASEL (2015) and McTigue and Rimm-Kaufman (2010) recommended that teachers provide their students with coordinated and connected activities to teach SEL skills. Building healthy relationships is a life skill for students that can be taught through instructional delivery in the classroom.

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Additionally, teachers can model SEL skills for their students to help them develop. Teachers can embed SEL skills in their daily instruction through various activities such as think-pair-share, cooperative learning, classroom discussions, reflection exercises, and providing student choice (Hanover Research, 2017; Jones et al., 2014; Martinez, 2016). These instructional strategies promote interaction and relationship-building activities with the teacher and their peers. Schools can incorporate service learning and peer-tutoring activities for the students to promote the development of SEL skills (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009; Kendziora & Yoder, 2016). Students need opportunities to practice their SEL skills in a variety of settings throughout the school.

Peer-to-peer relationships are an influential force in middle school and high school. Student-to-student positive relationships are vital in how students perceive their school (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009). According to Elias (2010), students need social support from their peers to be successful at school. Students who are surrounded by a positive peer group at school are protected from becoming a victim of bullying or engaging in negative behaviors (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009). When students are able to apply SEL skills such as self-talk to control their emotions and heighten their self-awareness, they are able to avoid being a target of bullying (Smith & Low, 2013). The key is a positive peer group versus the influence of a negative peer group that would reveal negative, undesired behaviors. Schools can combat the negative influence by correcting the perception and glamour of destructive behavior by providing accurate information and potential outcomes. By using a coordinated SEL program, schools can teach prosocial skills to help reduce aggressive or problem

behaviors (Flay & Allred, 2003; Greenberg et al., 2003; Martinez, 2016). When teachers educate their students on how to refuse invitations to engage in undesirable behaviors, they are promoting positive peer and school connectedness (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009). In the classroom, teachers can prepare students by teaching them concepts such as fairness and kindness and how to use them to empathize with others. Based on the social cognitive theory, when adults use teachable moments to train students how to interact with one another positively, demonstrate self-control, apologize, and resolve conflict with their peers, students will imitate that behavior in future situations (Bandura, 1977; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009). Schools and communities have a responsibility to guide, correct, and provide a positive learning environment for students to thrive, make mistakes, learn, and grow.

Social Emotional Learning and Gender

Adolescents transition from elementary to middle school and high school annually and experience new stressors as they progress to higher-grade levels in the educational system. Students may experience additional pressures and stress due to the change in their environment. As students progress through their K-12 education, they become more disengaged in school (Payton et al., 2008). Students shift from learning in one or two classrooms to switching classes six to seven times a day in a secondary school (Taylor, Liang, Tracy, Williams, & Seigle, 2002). The constant movement of secondary schools increases a student's exposure to undesirable behaviors and influences (Taylor et al., 2002). To assist with this adjustment, SEL skills and processes implemented in the classroom increase the student's capacity to focus on academics and reduce negative behaviors (Daunic et al., 2013; Durlak et al., 2011; Kendziora & Yoder, 2016; Portnow et

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al., 2018; Smith & Low, 2013; Taylor et al., 2002; Yoder, 2014). According to Taylor et al. (2002), males are more likely to demonstrate physical, violent, and aggressive behavior when upset or angry versus females. According to Rowe and Trickett (2018), SEL program participation assisted males with behavior and decreased aggressive and physical violence. According to Coelho and Sousa (2016), students who participate in SEL programs increase social awareness, especially males. Female students increased their assertiveness (Taylor et al., 2002) and interpersonal interactions (Rowe & Trickett, 2018) because of their participation in SEL program instruction. Due to the differing needs of males and female students, SEL programs must provide an umbrella of various, SEL skills.

The current body of research is lacking for SEL and gender differences for high school students. The majority of studies are elementary based for Grades K-5. According to Portnow et al. (2018), SEL interpersonal skills can reduce violent and aggressive behavior in males in elementary school. By explicitly teaching SEL skills and ensuring a supportive, positive environment, the aggressive conduct declined for male, elementary students (Portnow et al., 2018). For students to obtain success in the classroom, the varying needs of male and female students must be met through a supportive classroom environment.

Social Emotional Learning Programs

Even though SEL programs are gaining popularity in the United States, there still exists a lack of literature and research on SEL programs at the secondary school level. One of the programs found in the literature is the Committee of Children's Second Step-Student Success Through Prevention or SS-SSTP. This program is for students in

preschool through eighth grade. The program has one to five 20- to 45-minute lessons per week for 22 to 25 weeks. The program focuses on developing skills for learning, empathy, emotion management, and problem-solving (Edwards, Hunt, Meyers, Grogg, and Jarrett, 2005; Espelage, Rose, & Polanin, 2016; Jones et al., 2017). According to Low, Cook, Smolkowski, and Buntain-Ricklefs (2015), the long-term effects of the SS-SSTP program for students are an increase in school connectedness and belonging, improved peer-to-peer relationships, increased school success, and a reduction in behavior. This program uses a variety of instructional strategies, songs, games, writing activities, and videos to deliver the content. A focus of the program is on conflict resolution and regulation (Jones et al., 2017), bullying prevention, friendship skills, and harassment (Espelage, Rose, & Polanin, 2016). The student outcomes as a result of the program based on research studies include gains in empathy, controlling impulses, cooperative behavior, anger management (Edwards et al., 2005), social awareness, self-control, and social competence (Jones et al., 2017). Based on the literature, the SS-SSTP program may assist elementary- and middle-school aged students with gaining valuable social and emotional skills.

The 4Rs (Reading, Writing, Respect, and Resolution) program is a preschool through fifth grade elementary program that focuses on building community, active listening, problem-solving, understanding and managing feelings, bullying prevention, and cooperation (Hanover Research, 2017; Jones et al., 2017). The 4Rs program is embedded in the Language Arts curriculum and delivers SEL skill development through literature (Hanover Research, 2017; Jones et al., 2017; Portnow et al., 2018). According to Hanover Research (2017), 4Rs has 35 weekly lessons that range from 20 to 60 minutes

per lesson. The SEL skills are focused on regulation, emotional processes, interpersonal skills, character, and mindset (Jones et al., 2017). According to Portnow et al., (2018), the 4Rs program reduces aggressive behavior in the classroom; CASEL (2013) reported a reduction of negative behaviors and improved academic performance. The student outcomes based on one large randomized control trial included positive gains in social competence, increased in reading and mathematics scores, reduction in aggressive behavior, reduction in aggressive interpersonal negotiation strategies, and improved classroom quality and instructional support (Jones et al., 2017). For elementary students, a 4Rs program is a viable option for schools wanting to embed SEL into their existing curriculum for Language Arts.

The Conscious Discipline program is a non-curricular program that infuses social emotional learning and classroom management (Jones et al., 2017). The program is designed for students ages 0-12. The program design focuses on assisting adults with self-regulation and emotion management of themselves to be prepared to respond to student's emotions and behavior (Darling et al., 2019). Conscious Discipline (2019) has seven key skills, which include encouragement, assertiveness, empathy, consequences, positive intent, choices, and composure. The program teaches one key skill a month. The curriculum was developed to emphasize positive relationships between adults and children (Darling et al., 2019). The skills are taught through classroom routines and structure based on behavioral expectations (Jones et al., 2017). The teachers model the desired behavior for their students and receive extensive professional development (Jones et al., 2017). Based on several studies, the student outcomes include reductions in discipline, hyperactivity, and conduct problems (Jones et al., 2017). Conscious Discipline

focuses on training the teachers and faculty to control their reactions and behaviors to positively affect student behaviors.

Capturing Kids' Hearts

Adults and children crave connection and relationships with those who surround them. According to Flip Flippen, the founder and chairman of the Flippen Group and the creator of the Capturing Kids' Hearts or CKH program, when educators capture students' hearts, they are able to teach and mold their minds (Flippen Group, 2015). Building relationships are fundamental to an SEL program such as CKH (Flippen Group, 2018a.). Some teachers naturally develop positive relationships with ease with their students. Unfortunately, not every teacher innately has this skill set and ability, and for this reason, educators receive two days of professional development on the CKH processes for the classroom.

The CKH training provides teachers and administrators time to learn the processes of CKH by actively participating with the CKH trainers, who model the processes. CKH is based on systematic processes that are constructed on Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory (Flippen Group, 2016). These processes demonstrate the power of modeling desired behaviors to achieve positive outcomes and to better each individual. According to Bandura (1977), the use of observational learning is the most efficient and effective method to obtain a new skill. CKH focuses on connecting students to school by creating an environment of trust and agreed-upon behaviors between peers and teachers (Flippen Group, 2016; Holtzapple et al., 2011). CKH's systematic processes provide teachers with guidelines on how to create a safe, trusted environment.

The CKH processes include the social contract, establishing the agreed-upon expected behaviors in the classroom for adults and students. The social contract is constructed around the following questions (Flippen Group, 2018b):

- How do you want me to treat you?

- How do you want to treat each other?

- How do you think I want to be treated?

- How should we treat each other when there is a conflict?

These questions help students develop social awareness and self-management from the CASEL competencies (CASEL, 2017). At the training, teachers learn how to conduct the activity of building a social contract with their classes. The CKH trainers model how to build a social contract by using the teachers and building one with them as training participants.

Teachers and administrators must be purposeful and intentional in developing and maintaining positive relationships with students. As a tool to assist and guide educators on developing relationships with students, CKH uses the EXCEL model. The EXCEL model focuses on using processes to build relationships between teacher and student, student and student, teacher and administrator, and administrator and student (Flippen Group, 2015; Holtzapple et al., 2011). Being able to confidently build relationships skills is under the fifth competency for CASEL (2017). The first *E* in EXCEL represents *engage,* which is a continuous process woven through all of CKH. Attendees are taught how to explicitly engage those around them through greetings at the door, shaking hands, making eye contact, leaning in to listen, and many other similar strategies (Flippen Group, 2015). *X-plore* represents the *X* in the EXCEL model. X-plore is the action of

how educators meet the needs of their students by listening, asking open-ended questions, showing empathy, and being present in conversations (Flippen Group, 2015; Holtzapple et al., 2011). Teachers must intentionally build a safe and secure environment for these relationships to develop. One of the activities to promote X-plore is using *Good Things*. This activity takes place during the first few minutes of class by asking students to share something good in their lives (Flippen Group, 2015; Holtzapple et al., 2011). Good Things can be personal, related to class, or related to school. CKH provides educators with a framework of how to use this tool in class to build and deepen relationships. The next letter in EXCEL is *C* for *Communication.* Communication is about the content of the class, having conversations and discussions, teaching how to be flexible, and functioning successfully in the real world (Flippen Group, 2015; Holtzapple et al., 2011). Students must learn that communication is more than the words escaping their mouths. Communication includes body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice. According to the Flippen Group (2015), "55% of every message is communicated through the use of body language, 38% of every message is communicated through the tone of voice, and 7% of every message is communicated by words." (p. 25). The last *E* in EXCEL stands for *Empower.* CKH describes *empower* as the ability to apply the tools one has been taught (Flippen Group, 2015; Holtzapple et al., 2011). Students will learn various skills by practicing and applying the skills to a variety of situations. As a part of one of the CASEL competencies, responsible decision-making skills are apparent in the empower section of the EXCEL model (CASEL, 2017). Educators are viewing their students through the lens of their potential, not their current status (Flippen Group, 2015). This element depends on an environment of trust built from the initial processes of the

successful implementation of the social contract and the use of Good Things on a routine basis. Empower is the product of an encouraging and supportive environment. Lastly, the *L* in EXCEL represents *Launch. Launch* is the closure of a classroom and the sending of students to their next learning environments. A successful launch must be meaningful and end on a robust, impactful note (Flippen Group, 2015; Holtzapple et al., 2011). Teachers can use stories, quotes, videos, and their own experiences as a launch. A launch helps to provide students with the confidence and the belief in themselves, which directly connects to self-awareness, the first CASEL competency (CASEL, 2017). When educators combine all of the elements of the EXCEL model, students benefit by observing and participating in the modeling, listening, role-playing, and interaction between their peers and teachers.

Conclusion

Through SEL, educators are able to help students gain and develop the necessary skills to grow into successful men and women. When students are able to demonstrate the CASEL five competencies in the classroom, home, and in the community, relationships are strengthened, stress is managed, diversity is appreciated, confidence is increased, and problems can be solved (CASEL, 2017). By possessing and using these skills, students are able to stand against negative peer pressure (Payton et al., 2008) and avoid engaging in dangerous behaviors (Durlak et al., 2011). CKH teaches students how to have a stronger connection to their teachers and classmates (Flippen Group, 2015; Holtzapple et al., 2011; Sherwood, 2003). When students have school connectedness, participation in risky behaviors is reduced (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009). The effects of these negative behaviors can intrude on a student's health, well-being, and

academic achievement (Durlak, et al., 2011). Therefore, SEL skill development is vital

for students to be ready and prepared for their future.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Over the past decade, educators and researchers have studied social emotional learning (SEL) and its effects on students. Numerous studies on SEL indicated its positive effects on students that include students' well-being, the decline of aggressive behavior, and an increase in academic achievement for younger students (Durlak et al., 2011). As students age and move from grade-level to grade-level, their attachment to school decreases (Durlak et al., 2011). This lack of connectedness with secondary students is troubling for educational leaders because during this time, students may face challenges that can negatively affect their future (Payton et al., 2008). Schools that provide students with SEL instruction on how to develop meaningful relationships, be self-aware, make responsible decisions, self-manage, and be socially aware with adults and other students prepares students to be ready for the workforce (Committee for Children, 2019b; Jones et al., 2017; Mehta, 2018; Rennie Center, 2015; Schonert-Reichl, Kitil, & Hanson-Peterson, 2017). However, limited research is available for the effects of SEL training for secondary students, specifically high school students. By responding to the limited literature available, this study examined the effects of Capturing Kids Hearts or CKH participation and gender on SEL competencies for ninth-grade students.

To address these purposes, the following null hypotheses were developed:

1. No statistically significant difference will exist between males and females on self-awareness measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for ninth-grade students at a high school in Central Arkansas *before* participating in the CKH program.

2. No statistically significant difference will exist between males and females on self-awareness measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for ninth-grade students at a high school in Central Arkansas *after* participating in the CKH program.

3. No statistically significant difference will exist between males and females on social awareness measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for ninth-grade students at a high school in Central Arkansas *before* participating in the CKH program.

4. No statistically significant difference will exist between males and females on social awareness measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for ninth-grade students at a high school in Central Arkansas *after* participating in the CKH program.

5. No statistically significant difference will exist between males and females on decision-making measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for ninth-grade students at a high school in Central Arkansas *before* participating in the CKH program.

6. No statistically significant difference will exist between males and females on decision-making measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student

Survey for ninth-grade students at a high school in Central Arkansas *after* participating in the CKH program.

7. No statistically significant difference will exist between males and females on self-management measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for ninth-grade students at a high school in Central Arkansas *before* participating in the CKH program.

8. No statistically significant difference will exist between males and females on decision-making measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for ninth-grade students at a high school in Central Arkansas *after* participating in the CKH program.

9. No statistically significant difference will exist between males and females on relationship skills measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for ninth-grade students at a high school in Central Arkansas *before* participating in the CKH program.

10. No statistically significant difference will exist between males and females on relationship skills measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for ninth-grade students at a high school in Central Arkansas *after* participating in the CKH program.

Research Design

This study used a quantitative, causal-comparative strategy. According to Mills and Gay (2016), causal-comparative studies seek to determine the cause or effect of a pre-existing behavior in a group. Because the researcher could not manipulate the independent variable, this type of study was appropriate (Mills & Gay, 2016). The

independent variable for all 10 hypotheses was gender (male versus female) for ninth-grade students before and after participation in the CKH program. The dependent variables for Hypotheses 1-10 included the five CASEL competencies: self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, self-management, and relationship skills, respectively. Self-reported pre- and postsurvey data were obtained from students at a high school in Central Arkansas.

Sample

Data for this study were obtained in the form of scores from the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for ninth-grade students in a Central Arkansas high school. Scores were drawn from this high school because the school implemented the SEL process using the CKH program for every student in the fall semester 2018. The presurvey sample consisted of 271 students' scores, and the postsurvey sample was comprised of 476 students' scores. Both samples were drawn using a convenience sampling technique. The high school population from which the samples were drawn consisted of Caucasian (68%), African-American (17%), Asian (2%), and Hispanic (12%) students. Of the school's population, 30% qualified for free and reduced lunches (Arkansas Department of Education, 2018). The school's grade configuration was 9th-12th with a total enrollment of 2,708 students. The average teacher tenure at the school was 11.68 years. The pupil-to-teacher ratio for the school averaged 14 to 1 (Arkansas Department of Education, 2018). The district superintendent provided written permission for the data collection for this study. The demographic characteristics of the students from which sample data were obtained for this study are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Self-Reported Demographic Characteristics of Ninth-Grade Students Before and After Participating in CKH

	CKH Participation			
	Before		After	
Characteristic	*n*	%	*n* (%)	*n* (%)
Sex				
Males	66	37.5	225	54.0
Females	110	62.5	190	46.0
Total	176	100.0	415	100.0
Special populations				
Special Education	8	3.0	11	2.3
ELL	5	1.8	12	2.5
Gifted & talented	46	17.0	49	10.4
Ethnicity				
Caucasian	123	68.7	251	60.0
African American	15	8.4	51	12.2
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	3	1.7	3	0.7
Asian	4	2.2	9	2.2
American Indian/ Alaska Native	0	0	2	0.5
Two or more	7	3.9	61	14.6
Total	179	100.0	415	100.0
Hispanic				
Yes	24	13.1	65	15.0
No	149	81.4	348	80.4
Prefer not to report	10	5.5	20	4.6

Instrumentation

The primary instrument used in this study was the Hanover Social Emotional

Learning Student Survey developed by Hanover Research based on the CASEL

competencies (Hanover Research, 2018b). The version used for this study was developed

for students in Grades 4–12 and comprises both a presurvey and a postsurvey version.

The instrument consists of 52 items (53 on the postsurvey), which capture nine constructs

related to SEL, namely: social awareness (5 items), self-management (6 items), growth

mindset (8 items), self-awareness (6 items), social support (6 items), responsible

decision-making (6 items), relationship skills (4 items), civic mindset (4 items), and

emotional well-being (7 items). The postsurvey includes an open-ended item for

additional comments that is not included in the presurvey. Scores for each of the nine

constructs were measured using a 5-point Likert-scaled for agreement (1 = Strongly

Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree or Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree) or

frequency (1 = Never, 2 = 1 to 3 Times, 3 = 4 to 6 Times, 4 = 7 to 10 Times, 5 = More

than 10 Times) as applicable. A summary score for each of the nine constructs is

computed by determining the total score for each of the items related to the construct.

The range of scores for each of the nine constructs are provided in Table 2

Table 2

Range of Construct Scores on Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey

Construct	Number of items	Minimum Score	Maximum Score
Self-Awareness	6	6	30
Social Awareness	5	5	25
Self-Management	6	6	30
Responsible Decision-making	6	6	30
Relationship Skills	4	4	20
Growth Mindset	8	8	40
Social Support	6	6	30
Civic Mindset	4	4	20
Emotional Well-being	7	7	35

According to Hanover Research (2018b), a team of methodologists and content experts determined construct and face validity for this instrument. However, the reliability of this instrument is unknown. For the purpose of this study, only data from five of the nine items related to CASEL competencies were used. To compute the summary scores, one item on the relationship skills construct was reverse coded to switch from a negative valence to a positive valence in order to maintain congruence among the items related to this construct.

Data Collection Procedures

After receiving Institutional Review Board approval on March 27, 2019 (see Appendix), the researcher obtained permission from the district superintendent to acquire the data to conduct the study. The researcher requested the data from Hanover Research, the creator of the instrument. The district contracted with Hanover Research to develop a pre and post survey to assist with capturing data to determine the effectiveness of the CKH program throughout the district.

In the fall of 2018, the CKH program was implemented districtwide at all campuses, except one elementary school. This school was not included because they were previously using another character education program that focused on student leadership, and the addition of another program would have been confusing. Prior to the fall implementation, the teachers and administrators participated in the CKH 2-day training to learn the new SEL processes. After the initial training, each school site conducted two coaching cycles with a CKH coach, one in the late fall and one in the spring. Additionally, each campus identified teachers to assume the role of a CKH Process Champion. The Process Champions participated in additional training to be an on-site resource to their campus. In addition, central office administrators and building administrators participated in the extra professional development. Also, district meetings were held to provide support with CKH implementation and to promote collaboration between the school site teams. The level of implementation and fidelity of CKH varied per classroom and with each campus.

The district provided the school sites with a 2-week window to complete the pre and post survey with their students. The pre and post survey was administered

electronically to students through their advisory period at the high school. The pre-survey was conducted in late August and early September of 2018 and the postsurvey was administered in late April and early May of 2019. The results of both surveys were shared with the researcher via district email in an excel format from Hanover Research. The surveys were completed voluntarily.

Analytical Methods

To address each of the hypotheses in this study, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted using the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24.0. For Hypotheses 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9, gender for the ninth-grade students was the independent variable before participation in the CKH program. The dependent variables were self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, self-management, and relationship skills, respectively. The Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Pre-Survey measured these variables. For Hypotheses 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10, gender for the ninth-grade students was the independent variable after participation in the CKH program. Again, the dependent variables were self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, self-management, and relationship skills, respectively. These variables were measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student PostSurvey.

An ANOVA test is used when comparing the means of two or more groups to determine population means (Morgan et al., 2013). A one-way ANOVA is used when there is only one independent variable and has nominal levels (Morgan et al., 2013). This study had only one independent variable for all 10 hypotheses. As is common in educational and sociological studies, an alpha level of .05 was set for the two-tailed test

of each null hypothesis (Mills & Gay, 2016). The effect size for each analysis was determined using Eta squared and r squared as appropriate (Morgan et al., 2013). A descriptive analysis was also conducted to determine the differences for each of the five SEL competencies. The presurvey and postsurvey mean scores and standard deviations for each pair of statistics were compared. Ideally, a mixed factorial ANOVA analysis would have been preferred if the datasets used in this study specified unique identifiers to enable the matching of students' presurvey and postsurvey scores (Morgan et al., 2013). Unfortunately, this was not the case. As a result, scores from the presurvey and postsurvey data were analyzed separately for statistical significance differences between male and female students on the SEL competencies, and subsequently, the presurvey and postsurvey average scores on each construct were compared descriptively to draw conclusions about their change over time.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. First, this being a quantitative, causal-comparative study, no manipulation of the independent variables was possible. According to Mills and Gay (2016), a causal-comparative study examines the cause and effect of previous behavior of a group. When the researcher cannot control or adjust the independent variables, a casual-comparative is an appropriate type of study (Mills & Gay, 2016). The independent variable of gender was established before the study. The next limitation was the size of the sample. The participants had completed the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey in the early Fall of the 2018-2019 school year. Also, the presurvey and postsurvey students' scores did not contain an exclusive identifier to allow the researcher to match student scores. Additionally, 2018-2019 was the first year

of implementation for the CKH program for the school district. This is a limitation because of the learning curve of the faculty and district leadership for the CKH program. Another limitation was the implementation and execution of the CKH program with fidelity within each classroom and throughout the high school. Another limitation of the study was the instrument chosen to measure the outcomes of the study. The Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey was a new instrument, had been newly administered, and had not had statistical analyses conducted for validity. According to Hanover Research (2018b), "Hanover's team of survey methodologists and content experts have tested the survey for face validity and construct validity in order to reduce measurement error" (p. 3). All research studies have limitations. Even with the limitations of this study, the reader can glean information and research to inform future decisions regarding the effects of SEL and ninth-grade students.

CHAPTER IV

INTRODUCTION

A quantitative data analysis strategy was used to examine the effects of gender students' SEL through participation in the CKH program before implementation and after one year of implementation. Ninth-grade students from one high school in Central Arkansas participated in a presurvey and postsurvey to examine if the CKH program increased their SEL competencies for self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, self-management, and relationship skills. For this study, gender was the independent variable and the five SEL competencies were the dependent variables. In this study, data analysis focused on the difference between male and female student outcomes before and after participation in CKH, as well as on the overall mean differences between presurvey and postsurvey outcomes.

Hypothesis 1

To address Hypothesis 1, a one-way ANOVA was conducted comparing presurvey self-awareness scores of male and female ninth-grade students who participated in a CKH program at a high school in Central Arkansas. Before conducting the ANOVA, the data were examined to ensure that the assumptions of the ANOVA test were met. First, the assumption of normal distribution across the groups was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test. The results of this test revealed significant variations from the normal distribution for the male group, $W(58) = 0.95$, $p = .015$, as well as for the female

group, $W(97) = 0.91$, $p = .000$, suggesting a violation of this assumption. An examination

of the histograms for each group further confirmed a significant negative skew in the self-

awareness presurvey scores for the female group, and a slight negative skew for the male

group of ninth-grade students. However, according to Morgan et al. (2013), ANOVA is

robust to violations of this assumption. Additionally, an examination of Levene's test also

revealed a violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variances, $F(1, 153) = 4.21$, $p =$

.042. To adjust for this violation, the Brown-Forsythe corrected F statistic was interpreted

for this analysis (Field, 2018). Table 3 shows the ANOVA results.

Table 3

One-Way ANOVA Results of Gender on Presurvey Self-Awareness Scores (Brown-

Forsythe)

Self-Awareness	df	SS	MS	F	p	η^2
Between groups	1	81.34	81.34	4.21 (4.12)	.042 (.044)	0.220
Within groups	153(148)	3562.17	22.88			
Total	154(149)	3643.51				

The ANOVA results revealed a statistically significant difference between male

and female students on their presurvey self-awareness scores, $F(1, 148) = 4.12$, $p = .044$,

$\eta^2 = 0.220$, with a large effect size (Cohen, 1988). Figure 2 provides a visual display of
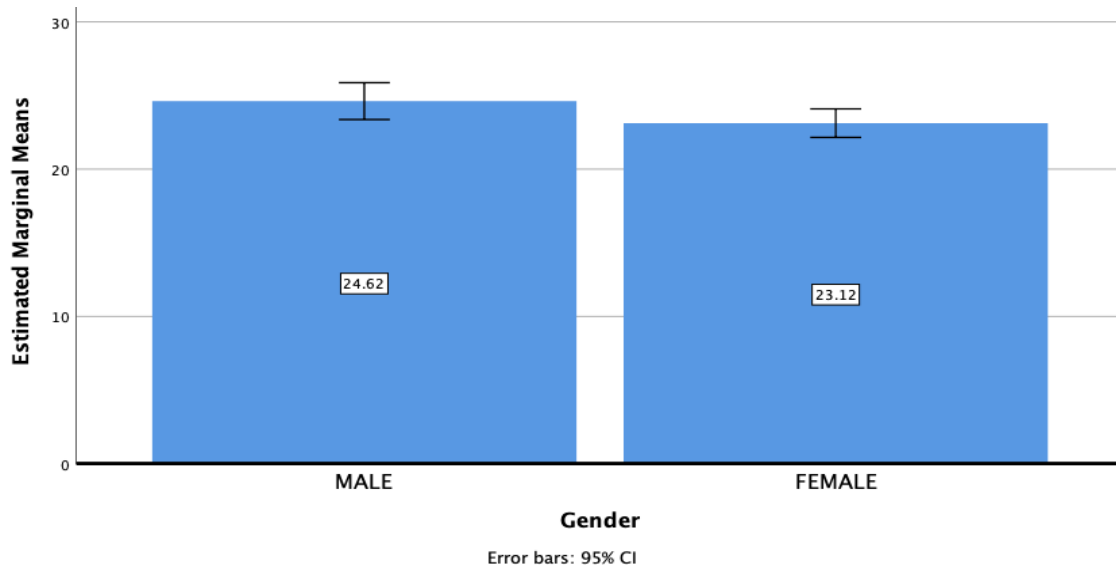
these mean differences.

Figure 2. Presurvey self-awareness mean scores of male and female ninth-grade students.

The mean for the presurvey self-awareness scores for male students ($M = 24.62$, $SD = 3.81$) was significantly higher than the mean for the female students ($M = 23.12$, $SD = 5.34$). In other words, before the implementation of the CKH program, male students, in general, scored significantly higher in self-awareness compared to female students. In addition, the practical significance, noted by the effect size, of the difference between the means was interpreted as a large effect.

Hypothesis 2

To address Hypothesis 2, a one-way ANOVA was computed comparing postsurvey self-awareness scores of male and female ninth-grade students who participated in a CKH program at a high school in Central Arkansas. Before conducting the ANOVA, the data were examined to ensure that the assumptions of the ANOVA test were met. First, the assumption of normal distribution across the groups was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test. The results of this test revealed significant variations from the

normal distribution for the male group, $W(193) = 0.94$, $p = .000$, as well as for the female group, $W(155) = 0.94$, $p = .000$, suggesting a violation of this assumption. An examination of the histograms for each group further confirmed a slight negative skew in the self-awareness postsurvey scores for both groups of ninth-grade students. However, according to Morgan et al. (2013), ANOVA is robust to violations of this assumption. Additionally, Levene's test of homogeneity of variances revealed no violation of the assumption, $F(1, 346) = 0.83$, $p = .363$. Table 4 shows the ANOVA results.

Table 4

One-Way ANOVA Results of Gender on Postsurvey Self-Awareness Scores

Self-Awareness	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	η^2
Between groups	1	10.80	10.80	0.64	.423	0.002
Within groups	346	5804.10	16.78			
Total	347	5814.91				

The ANOVA results indicated no statistically significant difference between male and female students on their postsurvey self-awareness scores, $F(1, 346) = 0.64$, $p = .423$, $\eta^2 = 0.002$, with a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Figure 3 provides a visual display of these mean differences.

Figure 3. Postsurvey self-awareness mean scores of male and female ninth-grade students.

The mean for the postsurvey self-awareness scores for male students ($M = 23.58$, $SD = 3.95$) was only slightly higher than the mean for the female students ($M = 23.23$, $SD = 4.26$). In other words, after the implementation of the CKH program, male students, in general, did not score significantly different in self-awareness compared to female students. In addition, the practical significance, noted by the effect size, of the difference between the means was interpreted as a small effect.

Hypothesis 3

To address Hypothesis 3, a one-way ANOVA was computed comparing presurvey social-awareness scores of male and female ninth-grade students who participated in a CKH program at a high school in Central Arkansas. Before conducting the ANOVA, the data were examined to ensure that the assumptions of the ANOVA test were met. First, the assumption of normal distribution across the groups was tested using

the Shapiro-Wilk test. The results of this test revealed significant variations from the normal distribution for the male group, $W(62) = 0.93$, $p = .001$, as well as for the female group, $W(106) = 0.67$, $p = .000$, suggesting a violation of this assumption. An examination of the histograms for each group further confirmed a slight negative skew in the social awareness presurvey scores for the male group of ninth-grade students. The female ninth-grade group showed a significant skew for their presurvey scores for social awareness. However, according to Morgan et al. (2013), ANOVA is robust to violations of this assumption. As for kurtosis, the review of the histogram presurvey for social awareness for female students showed a significant positive kurtosis. To test the assumption of homogeneity of variance, Levene's test was reviewed, $F(1, 166) = 0.30$, $p = .585$, and revealed no violation of the assumption. Table 5 shows the ANOVA results.

Table 5

One-Way ANOVA Results of Gender on Presurvey Social-Awareness Scores

Social Awareness	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	η^2
Between groups	1	14.70	14.70	1.77	.186	0.110
Within groups	166	1380.71	8.32			
Total	167	1395.41				

The ANOVA results revealed there was not a statistically significant difference between male and female students on their presurvey social-awareness scores, $F(1, 166) = 1.77$, $p = .186$, $\eta^2 = 0.110$, with a medium effect size (Cohen, 1988). Figure 4 provides a visual display of these mean differences.
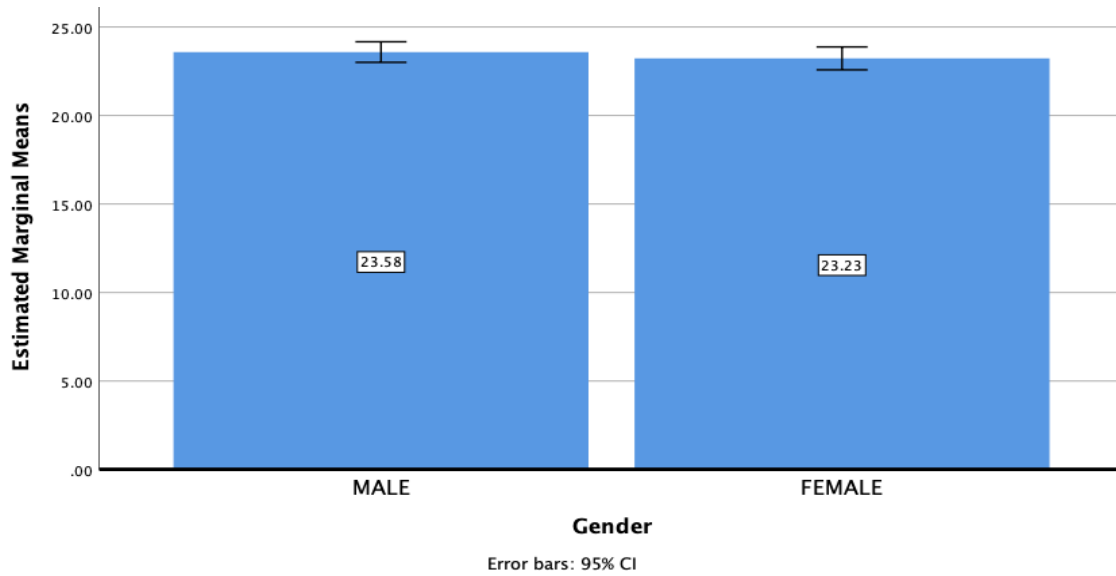
Figure 4. Presurvey social-awareness mean scores of male and female ninth-grade students.

The mean of the presurvey social-awareness scores for male students ($M = 21.89$, $SD = 2.35$) was slightly lower than the mean for the female students ($M = 22.50$, $SD = 3.15$). In other words, before after the implementation of the CKH program, male students, in general, did not score significantly different in social awareness compared to female students. However, the practical significance, noted by the effect size, of the difference between the means was interpreted as a medium effect.

Hypothesis 4

To address Hypothesis 4, a one-way ANOVA was computed comparing postsurvey social-awareness scores of male and female ninth-grade students who participated in a CKH program at a high school in Central Arkansas. Before conducting ANOVA, the data were examined to ensure that the assumptions of the ANOVA test were met. First, the assumption of normal distribution across the groups was tested using

the Shapiro-Wilk test. The results of this test revealed significant variations from the normal distribution for the male group, $W(213) = 0.93$, $p = .000$, as well as for the female group, $W(184) = 0.79$, $p = .000$, suggesting a violation of this assumption. An examination of the histograms for each group further confirmed a slight negative skew in the social awareness postsurvey scores for male groups of ninth-grade students and a significant negative skew for the female group. However, according to Morgan et al. (2013), ANOVA is robust to violations of this assumption. Additionally, an examination of Levene's test revealed no violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variances, $F(1, 395) = 0.74$, $p = .390$. Table 6 shows the ANOVA results.

Table 6

One-Way ANOVA Results of Gender on Postsurvey Social-Awareness Scores

Social Awareness	df	SS	MS	F	p	η^2
Between groups	1	178.00	178.00	27.99	.000	0.070
Within groups	395	2511.63	6.36			
Total	396	2689.64				

The ANOVA results revealed a statistically significant difference between male and female students on their postsurvey social-awareness scores, $F(1, 395) = 27.99$, $p = .000$, $\eta^2 = 0.070$, with a medium effect size (Cohen, 1988). Figure 5 provides a visual display of these mean differences.
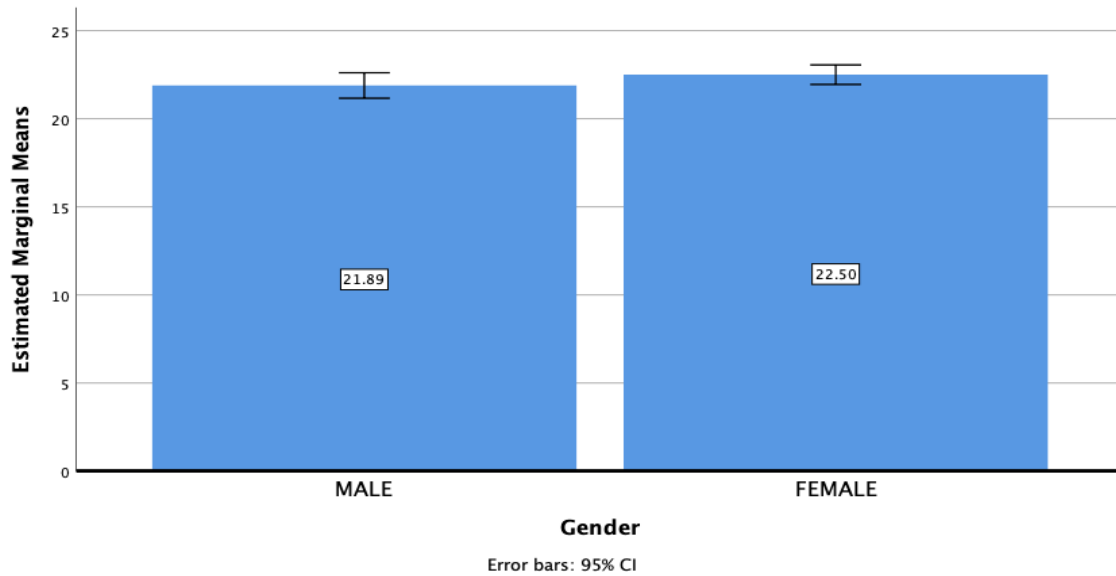
Figure 5. Postsurvey social-awareness mean scores of male and female ninth-grade students.

The mean of the postsurvey social-awareness scores for male students ($M = 21.35$, $SD = 2.53$) was significantly lower than the mean for the female students ($M = 22.69$, $SD = 2.51$). In other words, after the implementation of the CKH program, male students, in general, scored significantly lower in social awareness compared to female students. In addition, the practical significance, noted by the effect size, of the difference between the means was interpreted as a medium effect.

Hypothesis 5

To address Hypothesis 5, a one-way ANOVA was computed comparing presurvey responsible decision-making scores of male and female ninth-grade students who participated in a CKH program at a high school in Central Arkansas. Before conducting ANOVA, the data were examined to ensure that the assumptions of the ANOVA test were met. First, the assumption of normal distribution across the groups

was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test. The results of this test revealed significant variations from the normal distribution for the female group, $W(93) = 0.91$, $p = .000$, suggesting a violation of this assumption. The male group did meet the assumption of normality, $W(53) = 0.96$, $p = .065$. An examination of the histograms for each group further confirmed a significant negative skew in the responsible decision-making presurvey scores for both groups of ninth-grade students. However, according to Morgan et al. (2013), ANOVA is robust to violations of this assumption. To test the assumption of homogeneity of variances, Levene's test was conducted and revealed no violation, $F(1, 144) = 0.06$, $p = .939$. Table 7 shows the ANOVA results.

Table 7

One-Way ANOVA Results of Gender on Presurvey Responsible Decision-Making Scores

Responsible Decision-making	df	SS	MS	F	p	η^2
Between groups	1	60.40	60.40	2.73	.101	0.020
Within groups	144	3184.18	22.11			
Total	145	3244.58				

The ANOVA results revealed no statistically significant difference between male and female students on their presurvey responsible decision-making scores, $F(1, 144) = 2.73$, $p = .101$, $\eta^2 = 0.020$, with a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Figure 6 provides a visual display of these mean differences.
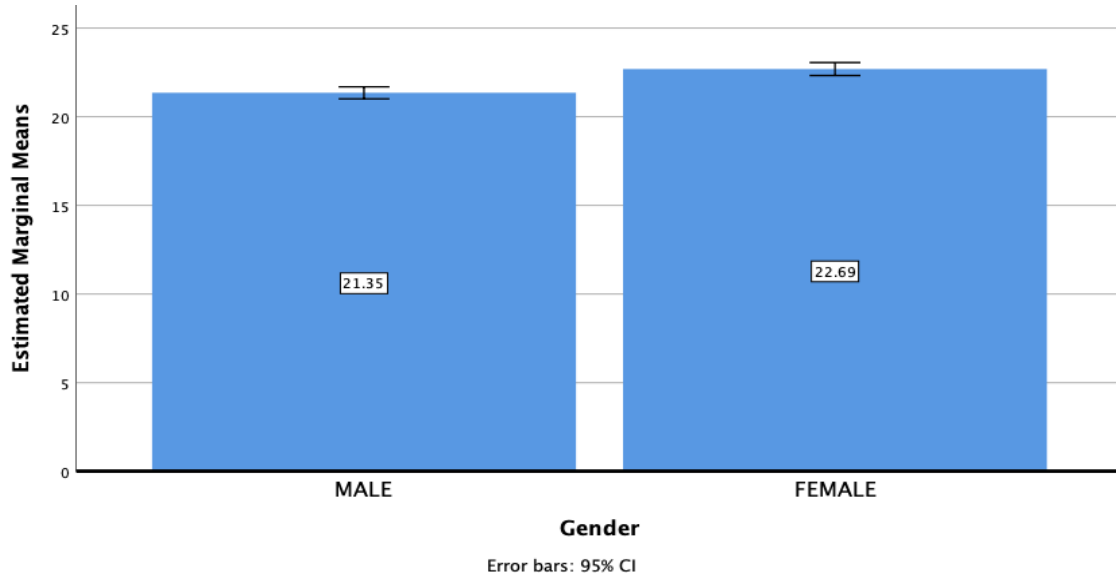
Figure 6. Presurvey responsible decision-making mean scores of male and female ninth-grade students.

The mean of the presurvey responsible decision-making scores for male students (*M*=22.42, *SD* = 4.51) was not significantly lower than the mean for the female students (*M*=23.75, *SD* = 4.81). In other words, before the implementation of the CKH program, male students, in general, did not score significantly different in responsible decision-making compared to female students. In addition, the practical significance, noted by the effect size, of the difference between the means was interpreted as a small effect.

Hypothesis 6

To address Hypothesis 6, a one-way ANOVA was computed comparing presurvey responsible decision-making scores of male and female ninth-grade students who participated in a CKH program at a high school in Central Arkansas. Before conducting ANOVA, the data were examined to ensure that the assumptions of the ANOVA test were met. First, the assumption of normal distribution across the groups

was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test. The results of this test revealed significant variations from the normal distribution for the male group, $W(187) = 0.97$, $p = .001$, as well as for the female group, $W(154) = 0.96$, $p = .000$, suggesting a violation of this assumption. An examination of the histograms for each group further confirmed a slight negative skew in the self-awareness presurvey scores for the male group of ninth-grade students, and a significant skew for females. However, according to Morgan et al. (2013), ANOVA is robust to violations of this assumption. To test the assumption of homogeneity of variance, Levene's test was reviewed, $F(1, 339) = 0.01$, $p = .942$, and revealed no violation of the assumption. Table 8 shows the ANOVA results.

Table 8

One-Way ANOVA Results of Gender on Postsurvey Responsible Decision-Making Scores

Responsible Decision-making	df	SS	MS	F	p	η^2
Between groups	1	69.68	69.68	3.58	.059	0.010
Within groups	339	6599.31	6599.31			
Total	340	6668.99				

The ANOVA results revealed no statistically significant difference between male and female students on their postsurvey of responsible decision-making scores, $F(1, 339) = 3.58$, $p = .059$, $\eta^2 = 0.010$, with a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Figure 7 provides a visual display of these mean differences.
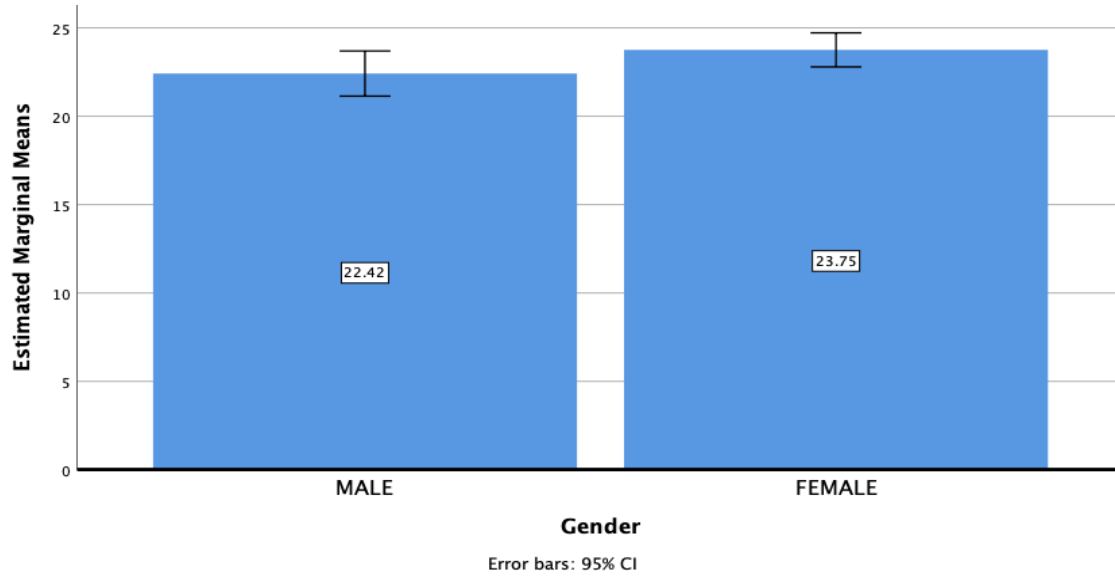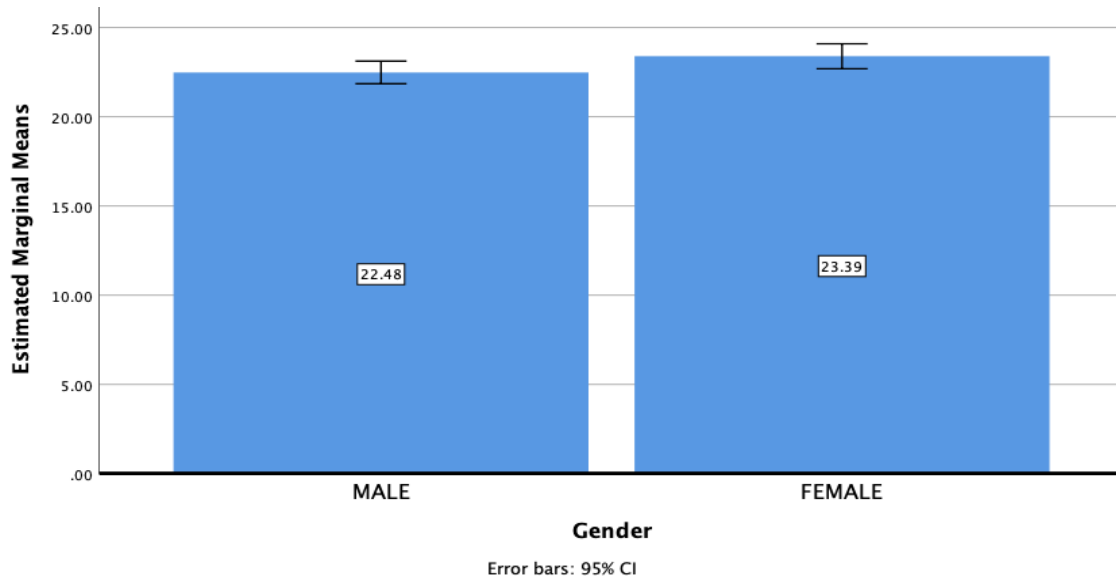
Figure 7. Postsurvey responsible decision-making mean scores of male and female ninth-grade students.

The mean of the postsurvey responsible decision-making scores for male students ($M = 22.48$, $SD = 4.37$) was lower than the mean for the female students ($M = 23.39$, $SD = 4.46$). In other words, after the implementation of the CKH program, male students, in general, did not score significantly different in responsible decision-making compared to female students. In addition, the practical significance, noted by the effect size, of the difference between the means was interpreted as a small effect.

Hypothesis 7

To address Hypothesis 7, a one-way ANOVA was computed comparing presurvey self-management scores of male and female ninth-grade students who participated in a CKH program at a high school in Central Arkansas. Before conducting ANOVA, the data were examined to ensure that the assumptions of the ANOVA test were met. First, the assumption of normal distribution across the groups was tested using

the Shapiro-Wilk test. The results of this test revealed significant variations from the normal distribution for the male group, $W(62) = 0.96$, $p = .031$, as well as for the female group, $W(105) = 0.90$, $p = .000$, suggesting a violation of this assumption. An examination of the histograms for each group further confirmed a significant negative skew in the self-management presurvey scores for the female group but only a very slight skew for the male group of ninth-grade students. However, according to Morgan et al. (2013), ANOVA is robust to violations of this assumption. Additionally, an examination of Levene's test revealed no violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variances, $F(1, 165) = 2.47$, $p = .118$. Table 9 shows the ANOVA results.

Table 9

One-Way ANOVA Results of Gender on Presurvey Self-Management Scores

Self-Management	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	η^2
Between groups	1	1.56	1.56	0.11	.746	0.010
Within groups	165	2437.67	14.77			
Total	166	2439.22				

The ANOVA results revealed a there is not a statistically significant difference between male and female students on their presurvey self-management scores, $F(1, 165) = 0.11$, $p = .746$, $\eta^2 = 0.010$, with a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Figure 8 provides a visual display of these mean differences.

Figure 8. Presurvey self-management mean scores of male and female ninth-grade students.

The mean of the presurvey self-management scores for male students ($M = 24.21$, $SD = 3.27$) was slightly lower than those for female students ($M = 24.41$, $SD = 4.14$). In other words, before the implementation of the CKH program, male students, in general, did not score significantly different in self-management compared to female students. In addition, the practical significance, noted by the effect size, of the difference between the means was interpreted as a small effect.

Hypothesis 8

To address Hypothesis 8, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare postsurvey self-management scores of male and female ninth-grade students who participated in a CKH program at a high school in Central Arkansas. Before conducting ANOVA, the data were examined to ensure that the assumptions of the ANOVA test were met. First, the assumption of normal distribution across the groups was tested using

the Shapiro-Wilk test. The results of this test revealed significant variations from the normal distribution for the male group, $W(206) = 0.98$, $p = .001$, as well as for the female group, $W(175) = 0.97$, $p = .000$, suggesting a violation of this assumption. An examination of the histograms for each group further confirmed a negative skew in the self-management postsurvey scores for the male group of ninth-grade students and a slight skew for the female group of ninth-grade students. However, according to Morgan et al. (2013), ANOVA is robust to violations of this assumption. To test the assumption of homogeneity of variance, Levene's test was reviewed, $F(1, 379) = 2.05$, $p = .153$, and revealed no violation of the assumption. Table 10 shows the ANOVA results.

Table 10

One-Way ANOVA Results of Gender on Postsurvey Self-Management Scores

Self-Management	df	SS	MS	F	p	η^2
Between groups	1	0.01	0.01	0.00	.975	0.000
Within groups	379	4224.78	11.15			
Total	380	4224.79				

The ANOVA results revealed no statistically significant difference between male and female students on their postsurvey self-management scores, $F(1, 379) = 0.00$, $p = .975$, $\eta^2 = 0.000$, with a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Figure 9 provides a visual display of these mean differences.
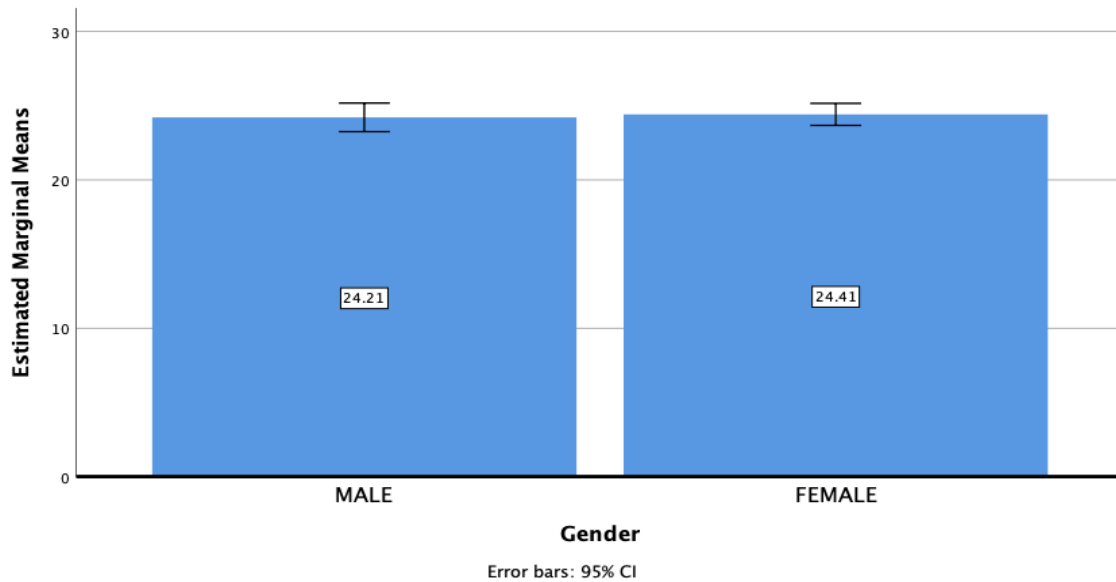
Figure 9. Postsurvey self-management mean scores of male and female ninth-grade students.

The mean postsurvey self-management scores for male students ($M = 24.26$, $SD = 3.17$) was almost the same for female students ($M = 24.25$, $SD = 3.52$). In other words, after the implementation of the CKH program, male students, in general, did not score significantly different in self-management compared to female students. In addition, the practical significance, noted by the effect size, of the difference between the means was interpreted as a small effect.

Hypothesis 9

To address Hypothesis 9, a one-way ANOVA was computed comparing presurvey relationship skills' scores of male and female ninth-grade students who participated in a CKH program at a high school in Central Arkansas. Before conducting ANOVA, the data were examined to ensure that the assumptions of the ANOVA test were met. First, the assumption of normal distribution across the groups was tested using

the Shapiro-Wilk test. The results of this test revealed significant variations from the normal distribution for the male group, $W(62) = 0.94$, $p = .005$, as well as for the female group, $W(108) = 0.95$, $p = .000$, suggesting a violation of this assumption. An examination of the histograms for each group further confirmed a significant negative skew in the self-awareness presurvey scores for both groups of ninth-grade students. However, according to Morgan et al. (2013), ANOVA is robust to violations of this assumption. Additionally, an examination of Levene's test also revealed a violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variances, $F(1, 168) = 4.39$, $p = .038$. To adjust for this violation, the Brown-Forsythe corrected F statistic was interpreted for this analysis (Field, 2018). Table 11 shows the ANOVA results.

Table 11

One-Way ANOVA Results of Gender on Presurvey Relationship Skills Scores (Brown-Forsythe)

Relationship Skills	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	η^2
Between groups	1	78.35	78.35	7.41(8.47)	.007 (.004)	0.420
Within groups	168(153)	1775.86	10.57			
Total	169(154)	1854.21				

The ANOVA results revealed a statistically significant difference between male and female students on their presurvey relationship skills' scores, $F(1, 153) = 8.47$, $p = .004$, $\eta^2 = 0.420$, with a large effect size (Cohen, 1988). Figure 10 provides a visual display of these mean differences.
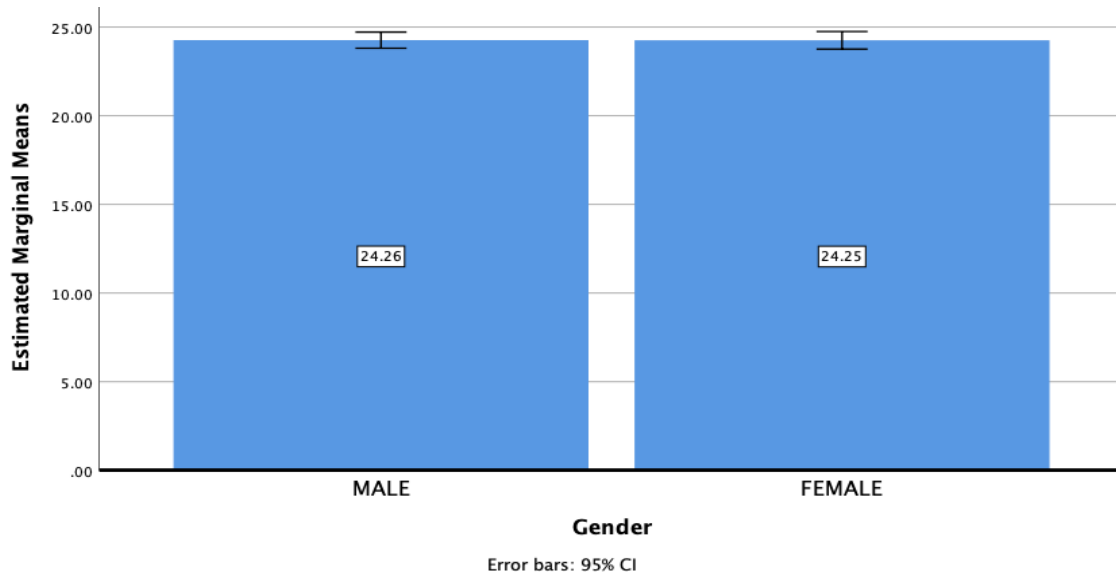
Figure 10. Presurvey relationship skills mean scores of male and female ninth-grade students.

The mean of the presurvey relationship skills' scores for male students (M =16.35, SD = 2.74) was significantly higher than the mean for the female students (M =14.94, SD = 3.51). In other words, before the implementation of the CKH program, male students, in general, scored significantly higher in relationship skills compared to female students. In addition, the practical significance, noted by the effect size, of the difference between the means was interpreted as a large effect.

Hypothesis 10

To address Hypothesis 10, a one-way ANOVA was computed comparing postsurvey relationship skills scores of male and female ninth-grade students who participated in a CKH program at a high school in Central Arkansas. Before conducting ANOVA, the data were examined to ensure that the assumptions of the ANOVA test were met. First, the assumption of normal distribution across the groups was tested using

the Shapiro-Wilk test. The results of this test revealed significant variations from the normal distribution for the male group, $W(220) = 0.96$, $p = .000$, as well as for the female group, $W(183) = 0.98$, $p = .003$, suggesting a violation of this assumption. An examination of the histograms for each group further confirmed a significant negative skew in the relationship skills' postsurvey scores for the male group of ninth-grade students and a slight negative skew in relationship skills for postsurvey scores for the female group of ninth-grade students. However, according to Morgan et al. (2013), ANOVA is robust to violations of this assumption. Additionally, an examination of Levene's test also revealed no violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variances, $F(1, 401) = 0.16$, $p = .687$. Table 12 shows the ANOVA results.

Table 12

One-Way ANOVA Results of Gender on Postsurvey Relationship Skills Scores

Relationship Skills	df	SS	MS	F	p	η^2
Between groups	1	58.02	58.02	6.54	.011	0.020
Within groups	401	3556.10	8.87			
Total	402	3614.12				

The ANOVA results revealed a statistically significant difference between male and female students on their postsurvey relationship skills scores, $F(1, 401) = 6.54$, $p = .011$, $\eta^2 = 0.020$, with a small effect size (Cohen, 1988). Figure 11 provides a visual display of these mean differences.
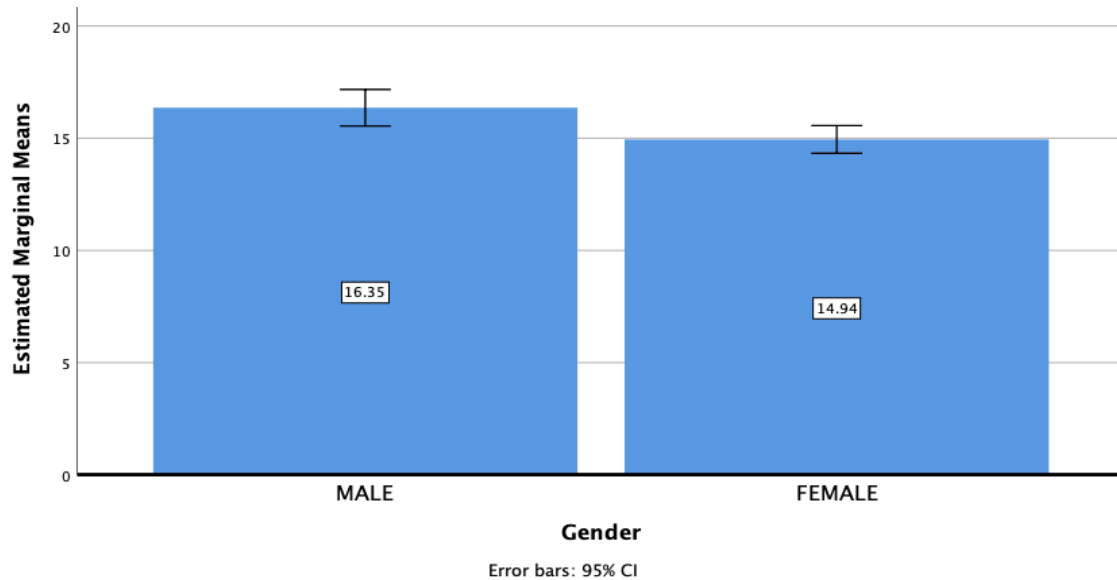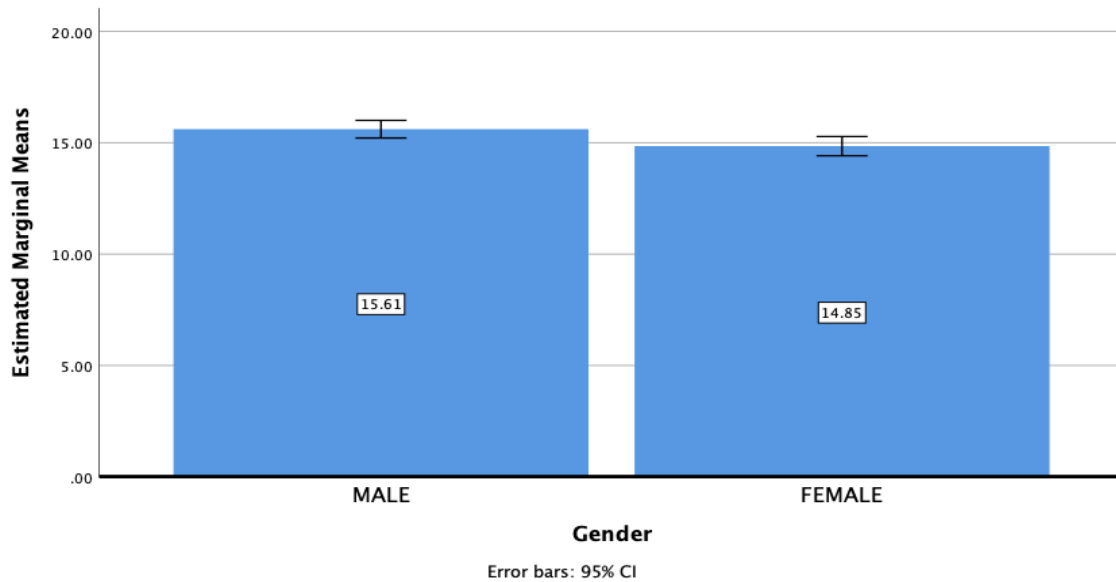
Figure 11. Postsurvey relationship skills mean scores of male and female ninth-grade students.

The mean of the postsurvey relationship skills scores for male students (*M* =15.61, *SD* = 2.96) was significantly higher than the mean for the female students (*M* =14.85, *SD* = 3.00). In other words, after the implementation of the CKH program, male students, in general, scored significantly higher in relationship skills compared to female students. However, the practical significance, noted by the effect size, of the difference between the means was interpreted as a small effect.

Descriptive Analysis

To further understand the nature of ninth-grade students' responses to participating in a CKH program, a descriptive analysis was also conducted for each of the five SEL competencies: self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, self-management, and relationship skills. Each analysis was to identify patterns of increase or decrease in the competencies before implementing the CKH program and

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after implementation of the program. A descriptive analysis was necessary due to the

inability to match the two datasets from the presurvey and postsurvey because the

instrument did not capture a unique identifier to match students from the two datasets.

Side-by-side comparisons of the sample size, means, and standard deviations on the

presurvey and postsurvey for each competency are provided in Table 13.

Table 13

Summary of Sample Sizes, Means, and Standard Deviations on the Presurvey and

Postsurvey for Each Competency

SEL Competency	Presurvey			Postsurvey		
	n	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Self-Awareness						
Female	97	23.12	5.34	155	23.23	4.26
Male	58	24.62	3.81	193	23.58	3.95
Total	155	23.68	4.86	348	23.42	4.09
Social Awareness						
Female	106	22.50	3.15	184	22.69	2.51
Male	62	21.89	2.35	213	21.35	2.53
Total	168	22.27	2.89	397	21.97	2.61
Responsible Decision-Making						
Female	93	23.75	4.81	154	23.39	4.46
Male	53	22.42	4.51	187	22.48	4.37
Total	146	23.27	4.73	341	22.89	4.43
Self-Management						
Female	105	24.41	4.14	175	24.25	3.53
Male	62	24.21	3.27	206	24.26	3.17
Total	167	24.34	3.83	381	24.26	3.33
Relationship Skills						
Female	108	14.94	3.51	183	14.85	3.00
Male	62	16.35	2.74	220	15.61	2.96
Total	170	15.46	3.31	403	15.26	3.00

Self-Awareness

A descriptive comparison of the mean difference in self-awareness scores (presurvey versus postsurvey) between male and female ninth-grade students revealed that male students' presurvey mean score ($N = 58$, $M = 24.62$, $SD = 3.81$) was slightly higher than their postsurvey mean score ($N = 193$, $M = 23.58$, $SD = 3.95$). Although possible to interpret this difference as an indication that the CKH program had an undesired effect on the self-awareness of male students, the mean difference was relatively small (-1.04) and within the standard deviation range of both the presurvey and the postsurvey means. This result, therefore, did not provide evidence of a meaningful negative effect of CKH on the self-awareness of male students. On the other hand, the female student presurvey mean self-awareness score ($N = 97$, $M = 23.12$, $SD = 5.34$) was slightly lower than their postsurvey mean score ($N = 155$, $M = 23.22$, $SD = 4.26$), representing an increase of 0.10 unit on the self-awareness skills scale. This result suggested that on average, self-awareness for female students remained virtually unchanged after participating in CKH. Overall, a slight decrease (-0.26) existed in the mean presurvey self-awareness score ($N = 155$, $M = 23.68$, $SD = 4.86$) and mean postsurvey self-awareness score ($N = 348$, $M = 23.42$, $SD = 4.09$) for male and female students combined. As with the case of the male student mean, this decrease was too small to be seen as an indication of an undesired effect of the CKH program on self-awareness skills of ninth-grade students. On the contrary, this descriptive analysis suggested that participating in CKH did not appear to have an influence on the self-awareness as measured by Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for male and female ninth-grade students.

Social Awareness

A descriptive comparison of the mean differences in social-awareness scores (presurvey versus postsurvey) between male and female ninth-grade students revealed that the male students' presurvey mean social-awareness score ($N = 62$, $M = 21.89$, $SD = 2.35$) was slightly higher than the postsurvey mean score ($N = 213$, $M = 21.35$, $SD = 2.53$). The results could be interpreted that the CKH program had an opposite than expected effect on male students for social awareness, but the mean difference was slight (-0.54) and within the standard deviation range for the presurvey and postsurvey means. Therefore, this result did not confirm a negative effect of CKH on the social awareness of male students. On the other hand, the female student presurvey mean social-awareness score ($N = 106$, $M = 22.50$, $SD = 3.15$) was slightly lower than the postsurvey mean score ($N = 184$, $M = 22.69$, $SD = 2.51$) by 0.19 of a unit on the social-awareness skills scale. This outcome indicated that the female student group was unchanged after participation in the CKH program for social awareness. Overall, a slight decline (-0.30) existed in the mean presurvey social-awareness score ($N = 168$, $M = 22.27$, $SD = 2.89$) and the postsurvey social-awareness mean score ($N = 397$, $M = 21.97$, $SD = 2.61$) for both student groups combined. The descriptive analysis suggested that participating in a CKH program did not have a noticeable effect, whether positive or negative, on social awareness as measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for male and female ninth-grade students.

Responsible Decision-Making

A descriptive comparison of the mean differences in responsible decision-making scores (presurvey versus postsurvey) between male and female ninth-grade students

revealed that the male students' presurvey mean responsible decision-making score (N = 53, M = 22.42, SD = 4.51) was slightly lower than the postsurvey mean score (N = 187, M = 22.48, SD = 4.37). The difference resulted in a slight increase (0.06) in mean scores on responsible decision-making. The means for the male students on responsible decision-making remained essentially unchanged after participating in CKH. On the other hand, the female student presurvey mean responsible decision-making score (N = 93, M = 23.75, SD = 4.81) was slightly higher than the postsurvey mean score (N = 154, M = 23.39, SD = 4.46), which represented a decrease of 0.36 on the responsible decision-making skills scale. The mean difference was very small and within the standard deviation range for the presurvey and postsurvey means. This result did not confirm a negative effect of CKH on the responsible decision-making of female students. Overall, a small decrease (-0.38) existed in the mean presurvey responsible decision-making score (N = 146, M = 23.27, SD = 4.73) and the postsurvey responsible decision-making mean score (N = 341, M = 22.89, SD = 4.43) for male and female students combined. Therefore, the results indicated that participation in the CKH program for both student groups did not appear to have an effect either way on responsible decision-making as measured by Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for male and female ninth-grade students.

Self-Management

A descriptive comparison of the mean differences in self-management scores (presurvey versus postsurvey) between male and female ninth-grade students revealed that the male students' presurvey mean self-management score (N = 62, M = 24.21, SD = 3.27) was slightly lower than the postsurvey mean score (N = 206, M = 24.26, SD =

3.17), representing an increase of 0.05 unit on the self-management skills scale. On average, self-management for male students remained unchanged after participating in CKH. The female student presurvey mean self-management score ($N = 105$, $M = 24.41$, $SD = 4.14$) was slightly higher when compared to the postsurvey mean score ($N = 175$, $M = 24.25$, $SD = 3.53$). The results could be interpreted that the CKH program had an opposite than expected effect on male students for self-management, but the mean difference was small (-0.16) and within the standard deviation range for the presurvey and postsurvey means. Therefore, this result did not confirm a negative effect of CKH on the self-management of female students. Overall, there was a very small decrease (-0.08) from the mean presurvey self-management score ($N = 167$, $M = 24.34$, $SD = 3.83$) and the postsurvey mean self-management score ($N = 381$, $M = 24.26$, $SD = 3.33$) for both student groups combined. The overall slight decrease of self-management scores indicated that participating in a CKH program did not have a noticeable effect on self-management as measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for male and female ninth-grade students.

Relationship Skills

A descriptive comparison of the mean differences in relationship skills scores (presurvey versus postsurvey) between male and female ninth-grade students revealed that the male students' presurvey mean relationship skills score ($N = 62$, $M = 16.35$, $SD = 2.74$) was higher compared to the postsurvey mean score ($N = 220$, $M = 15.61$, $SD = 2.96$). This result constituted a -0.74 unit decrease between the mean scores of the presurvey and postsurvey on relationship skills for the male students. The results could be interpreted that the CKH program had an opposite than expected effect on male students

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for relationship skills, but the mean difference between the presurvey and postsurvey means was relatively small and within the standard deviation of both means. In addition, the female student presurvey mean relationship skills score ($N = 108$, $M = 14.94$, $SD = 3.51$) and the postsurvey mean score ($N = 183$, $M = 14.85$, $SD = 3.00$) revealed a slight decrease (-0.09) for the relationship skills scale. This difference indicated that on average, the relationship scores for female students remained unchanged after participating in the CKH program. Finally, the overall student (males and females combined) presurvey mean relationship skills score ($N = 170$, $M = 15.46$, $SD = 3.31$) was slightly higher compared to the postsurvey mean score ($N = 403$, $M = 15.26$, $SD = 3.00$) by 0.20 unit on the relationship skills scale. This descriptive analysis suggested that participating in CKH did not appear to have an effect on the relationship skills as measured by Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey for male and female ninth-grade students.

Summary of Results

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of Capturing Kids' Hearts participation on SEL of male and female ninth-grade students in Central Arkansas measured by Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey. The five CASEL competencies (self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, self-management, and relationship skills) were measured based on a self-reported survey (presurvey versus postsurvey) responses from ninth-grade students from one high school. All students in the ninth grade participated in the CKH program but not all of the ninth-grade students participated in the presurvey and postsurvey. Table 14 provides a

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summary of the results for inferential analyses on the presurvey and postsurvey scores for each competency and hypothesis.

Table 14

Summary Results for Inferential Analyses on the Presurvey and Postsurvey Scores for Each Competency and Hypothesis

SEL Competency	Presurvey		Postsurvey	
	p	η^2	p	η^2
H1 & H2: Self-Awareness	.042 (.044)	0.220	.423	0.002
H3 & H4: Social Awareness	.186	0.110	.000	0.070
H5 & H6: Responsible Decision-Making	.101	0.020	.059	0.010
H7 & H8: Self-Management	.746	0.010	.975	0.000
H9 & H10: Relationship Skills	.007 (.004)	0.420	.011	0.020

In regards to the inferential analysis, 4 of the 10 hypotheses were statistically significant. From the presurvey results, Hypotheses 1 and 9 were significant with males scoring significantly higher in both cases compared to females on self-awareness and relationship skills, respectively. For the postsurvey, Hypotheses 4 and 10 indicated a statistical significance between the genders after participating in the CKH program. In Hypothesis 4, females scored significantly higher compared to males, and in Hypothesis 10, the results were reversed with males outscoring females. From the presurvey results, Hypotheses 1 and 9 revealed much larger than typical effect sizes, Hypothesis 3 revealed a medium effect size, and Hypotheses 5 and 7 effect sizes were small. From the

postsurvey results, Hypothesis 4 displayed a medium effect size and the remaining

Hypotheses 2, 6, 8, and 10 revealed a small effect size.

Additionally, descriptive analyses were conducted to compare the means of the

presurvey and postsurvey data to examine the differences for each of the CASEL

competencies. Patterns of increase or decrease were identified in the competencies before

implementing the CKH program and after implementation of the program. A summary of

these findings is presented in Table 15.

Table 15

Summary Patterns of Increase or Decrease for Competencies Before and After

Implementing the CKH Program

	Pre to Post Change		
SEL Competency	Female	Male	Total
H1 & H2: Self-Awareness	+0.10	-1.04	-0.26
H3 & H4: Social Awareness	+0.19	-0.54	-0.30
H5 & H6: Responsible Decision-Making	-0.36	+0.06	-0.38
H7 & H8: Self-Management	-0.16	+0.05	-0.08
H9 & H10: Relationship Skills	-0.09	-0.74	-0.20

The descriptive analyses conducted in this study revealed increases for male and female students on certain CASEL competencies but not for others. Specifically, the descriptive analyses of presurvey to postsurvey difference on each of the competencies revealed slight growth for females on self-awareness and social awareness. Similarly, slight increases were observed for male students on responsible decision-making and self-management skills. On the other hand, males had a decrease in social awareness and relationship skills, and females decreased in responsible decision-making and self-management. Interestingly, male and female students did not experience any increases in any of the same CASEL competencies. These findings could suggest that the CKH program has a differing effect on students' SEL competencies depending on their gender, but even these differences were small. Worth noting was the slight decline in SEL competencies associated with relationship skills for both male and female students. Overall, the descriptive results indicated that participation in the CKH program made either small or marginal differences in the students' self-perceived SEL competencies.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Ensuring that students have the ability to develop and maintain healthy relationships with others is the foundation of the CKH program. Along with the ability to empathize and manage their emotions, exude self-confidence, believe in themselves, and identify and solve problems, all of these skills are under the umbrella of SEL and rooted in the social cognitive theory by Albert Bandura. This research study was conducted to determine the effects on male and female students' social emotional learning through participation in the CKH program. This chapter presents a summary of the 10 hypotheses and descriptive statistics regarding before and after CKH implementation findings. Also, the implications of SEL based on the results of this study and the review of literature are discussed. Finally, recommendations for educators to consider when implementing a SEL program for secondary students are provided.

Findings and Conclusions

The focus of this study was to determine the effects on male and female secondary students for SEL before and after participating in a CKH program. The following statistical analyses were used to address the 10 hypotheses. Five one-way ANOVAs were used to compute the presurvey data for Hypotheses 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9. Similarly, five one-way ANOVAs were used to compute the postsurvey data for Hypotheses 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10. The independent variable for all 10 hypotheses was gender

(male versus female) and the dependent variables included the five CASEL

competencies: self-awareness, social-awareness, responsible decision-making, self-

management, and relationship skills.

Self-Awareness

Descriptive analysis of ninth-grade students' self-awareness scores revealed that

the mean score for male students was higher than the mean of female students on both the

presurvey and postsurvey even though there was a slight decline in the male scores

between the presurvey and postsurvey. The skills that contribute to the self-awareness

competency include self-confidence, accurate self-perception, understanding personal

strengths, and self-efficacy (CASEL, 2017). The greater overall mean scores for males

indicated that they had stronger self-awareness skills than female students. These findings

are similar to those by Rowe and Trickett (2018) that indicated males have stronger

interpersonal skills. Furthermore, the inferential analysis revealed significant differences

in self-awareness scores between male and female students before participating in the

CKH program. Additionally, a much larger than typical effect size was revealed in the

self-awareness scores between male and female students before participating in the CKH

program. However, this gap was no longer observable after one year of implementing

CKH. These findings suggested that the gap between male and female students on self-

awareness might have been reduced because of implementing CKH. Similarly, while the

overall levels of self-awareness for male students appeared to decline after participating

in the program, the overall levels of self-awareness for female students were noticeably

higher after participation. Therefore, participating in the CKH program might have

influenced female students' overall self-awareness skills, the ability to recognize their

own thoughts and emotions, and their influence on their behavior (CASEL, 2015). This finding might account for the lack of significance between the genders on the postsurvey for self-awareness scores.

Social-awareness

Descriptive analysis revealed that the social-awareness mean score for female students was higher compared to the mean of their male counterparts on both the presurvey and postsurvey. Interestingly, the female students' mean score showed a small increase after participating in the CKH program for one school year. On the other hand, the male students' mean score dipped slightly after participating in the program. Social awareness focuses on skills that promote empathy, awareness of another person's feelings, appreciation of diversity (CASEL, 2017), and perspective taking (Borba, 2016). For male students, these findings were not congruent with the results of increased competency for social awareness from Coelho and Sousa (2016). Additionally, the inferential analysis did reveal a significant difference and a medium effect size in social awareness between male and female students after participating in the CKH program. Prior to implementing CKH, a gap did not exist between male and female students for social awareness. According to CASEL (2017), being able to view a situation from another person's perspective, have an appreciation for diversity, or be empathetic toward others are all skills under the social-awareness competency. This difference might indicate that the CKH program bolstered the female students' social-awareness skills that created a significant gap between the genders. The CKH program uses the social contract to strengthen students' social-awareness competency (Flippen Group, 2018b). As measured by Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey, the social-awareness

postsurvey scores revealed the highest mean scores in comparison to the other competencies, which might be the result of the social contract used in every classroom and each class period across the high school campus.

Responsible Decision-Making

Descriptive analysis of ninth-grade students' responsible decision-making scores revealed that the mean score for female students was higher than the mean of male students on both the presurvey and postsurvey, even though there was a modest increase in the male scores between the presurvey and postsurvey. According to Weissberg et al. (2015), responsible decision-making is having the ability to make positive choices for personal behavior based on social experiences on safety, norms, and ethics. Furthermore, the inferential analysis did not reveal any significant gaps between male and female students for responsible decision-making before or after participation in the CKH program. Additionally, the effect sizes for responsible decision-making before and after participation in the CKH program were small. The responsible decision-making competency was the only competency measured with a frequency scale. This might have affected the student responses as measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey due to the different type of measurement. This competency centers on a student being able to evaluate situations and solve problems or issues, be reflective, and make ethical choices (CASEL, 2017). In the CKH EXCEL model, the last E is for empower, which embeds responsible decision-making skills (Flippen Group, 2018b). The EXCEL model might not have been used daily in every classroom as some of the other components of the CKH program, which could have contributed to the findings.

Self-Management

Descriptive analysis revealed that the self-management mean score for female students was higher than the mean of male students on the presurvey. Interestingly, both student groups had almost the exact same mean on the postsurvey after participating in the CKH program for one school year. According to the Committee for Children (2015), the capacity to control thoughts and emotions in a variety of situations is self-management. A person that can effectively manage his or her stress and control impulses demonstrates competency in self-management (Rennie Center, 2015). According to Taylor et al. (2002), male students are more likely to exhibit aggressive behavior when upset or angry and may lack impulse control. The self-management scores on the presurvey and postsurvey indicated higher mean scores than most of the other CASEL competencies. The higher mean scores indicated that both student groups responded positively by participating in the CKH program as measured by the Hanover Social Emotional Learning Student Survey questions for self-management. One of the main tools for the CKH program is the Social Contract, which was used in every classroom. The Social Contract centers around four basic questions that promote self-management skills (Flippen Group, 2018b). These questions include the following:

1. How do you want me to treat you?

2. How do you want to treat each other?

3. How do you think I want to be treated?

4. How should we treat each other when there is a conflict? (p. 3)

These questions provide guidelines and dialogue for expected behavior for teachers and adults in the classroom. Furthermore, the inferential analysis for the presurvey or

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postsurvey did not indicate a significant difference between the male and female students for self-management skills. Additionally, the effect sizes for the presurvey and postsurvey for self-management skills were small between male and female students.

Relationship Skills

Descriptive analysis of ninth-grade students' relationship skills' scores revealed that the mean score for male students was higher than the mean of female students on both the presurvey and postsurvey, even though there was a notable decline in the male scores between the presurvey and postsurvey. This finding suggested CKH participation might have increased male students' awareness and provided clarity regarding relationship skills. This CASEL (2015) competency focuses on fortifying communication, navigating conflict, and dealing with inappropriate peer pressure. Interestingly, relationship skills was the only CASEL competency that demonstrated statistical significance for both the presurvey and postsurvey between the male and female student groups. Additionally, the presurvey effect size for relationship skills was much larger than typical between male and female students. Therefore, it might be speculated that gender accounts for the differences in relationship skills' scores before participating in the CKH program. Upon participating in the CKH program for one year, the effect size was small for relationship skills between genders. Therefore, these practical results indicated that the statistical results needed to be approached with caution due to the small effect size. Furthermore, these findings indicated that the gap in relationship skills between male and female students narrowed because of participation in the CKH program for one year.

Implications

After conducting this study on SEL for males and females, an important implication was revealed through inferential and descriptive analyses. Males and females respond to SEL instruction and gain SEL skills' growth differently. The importance of providing differentiated SEL instruction to males and females is to maximize the growth of SEL skills. Like delivering instructional content, Yoder and Gurke (2017) recommended a balanced delivery of SEL instruction to meet the needs of all learners in the classroom. The methods of SEL delivery may vary to include embedding the skills into the curricular lessons, teaching the SEL skills in isolation, or using a blended approach as suggested by Kendziora and Yoder (2016). This study provided empirical evidence that males and females learn and obtain SEL skills differently. This finding was important to create awareness for educators and maximize the benefits for males and females on each SEL competency. Although the findings of this study were mixed, the findings provided beneficial implications for educators who might consider implementing a SEL program for their students.

After participating in the CKH program for one school year, males demonstrated an increase in their self-management skills congruent with female students. Compellingly, this finding was the only CASEL competency that shifted gender dominance of a skill after participation in the CKH program. Furthermore, this result might indicate that the CKH program has a positive effect, specifically for males who need to increase their self-management skills. The significance of this finding for secondary male students supported the research from Taylor et al. (2002), which claimed

elementary-aged males gained self-management skills after participating in a SEL program.

Females demonstrated an increase in their self-awareness skills, even though their mean self-awareness score was lower compared to their male counterparts. This finding was especially interesting because the presurvey self-awareness scores indicated a significant gap between the genders, and the postsurvey revealed the gap no longer existed after participation in CKH. These results provided empirical evidence that SEL instruction positively increased female students' capacity for self-awareness skills. This claim was congruent with the findings of Taylor et al. (2002) for elementary female students who gained self-awareness skills after participating in a SEL program.

Recommendations

Potential for Practice/Policy

This study investigated differences in the five CASEL competencies between male and female ninth-grade students before and after their participation in the first year of a district-wide CKH program. The findings in this study revealed meaningful differences between male and female ninth-grade students on specific CASEL competencies before they participated in the program as well as gender differences on certain competencies after one year of participating in CKH. On the basis of these findings, the following recommendations are presented here to inform educational practice and policy and thereby ensure that students have the competencies and skills they need to be successful in the workplace.

The first recommendation for educators is to determine the specific SEL skill deficit(s) by gender. Educators should provide students with targeted SEL skill

attainment based on their specific needs and deliver the SEL instruction based on gender responsiveness to maximize SEL skill growth. According to Jones et al. (2017) and Weissberg (2015), effective SEL programs identify and target a specific set of skills. Based on this study, the recommendation is to take one step further and personalize the SEL skills to gender needs.

The second recommendation for educators is to determine the level of SEL competency for the teachers who deliver the SEL instruction. This information will assist with providing targeted professional development to increase the SEL competency of teachers (Hanson-Peterson et al., 2016; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Jones et al., 2017; Shafer, 2016). When the teachers' capacity is increased, they are able to provide more support and expertise to assist with their students' learning (CASEL, 2015; Elias, 2006; Jones et al., 2017; Kendziora & Yoder, 2016; Yoder, 2014). Meaningful professional development that increases the teachers' SEL capacity will directly affect the students' SEL development.

The third recommendation for educators is to implement the CKH program with fidelity as designed by the Flippen Group. School leaders can monitor implementation by first understanding the multiple components of CKH by attending the professional development with the teachers. Administrators can use classroom visits and observations as a method to capture observational data of the CKH processes in action. Then, administrators can provide timely feedback to classroom teachers in regards to the fidelity of the CKH processes to maximize student skill growth.

The final recommendation for lawmakers and educators is to cautiously approach adoption of SEL standards or frameworks. Further investigation should be funded to

investigate current SEL programs and to determine the behavioral effect for secondary students. While SEL has been linked to academic achievement gains (Durlak et al., 2011); bullying prevention (Smith & Low, 2013); deterring negative, destructive behaviors (Flay & Allred, 2003; Greenberg et al., 2003; Martinez, 2016); and promoting school and peer positive connectedness (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009), more studies should be conducted. All students should be afforded the opportunity to gain these valuable skills to be successful in their personal and professional future.

Future Research Considerations

Some of the findings in this study supported the positive benefits of a CKH program for secondary male and female students for SEL. Nonetheless, additional research and studies need to be conducted to fully examine the magnitude that SEL may have on secondary male and female students. Future research should target differentiating the delivery of SEL to males and females, assessing the SEL competency of teachers, determining long-term effects of SEL instruction, and applying SEL skills beyond high school. To fully understand the influence of SEL, recommendations for future research are provided:

1. An investigation on the differentiation of SEL instructional delivery to secondary male and female students should be conducted. Limited research exists for gender and secondary students. A needs assessment should be conducted to determine the SEL skill deficits for each gender. Based on the results of the needs assessment, targeted SEL lessons and instruction should be provided to the specific gender. Presurvey and postsurvey data should be collected to match individual students' growth.

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2. A researcher could investigate the correlation between the teachers' SEL competency and the growth of students' SEL skills. A recommendation would be to provide a survey to teachers to determine SEL competency. Presurvey and postsurvey data should be collected to match individual students' growth.

3. A researcher could investigate the teachers' SEL competency before and after targeted, on-going professional development. The recommendation is to provide a presurvey and postsurvey to teachers to determine SEL competency before and after training.

4. A multi-year investigation could follow students who receive gender-specific SEL instruction from middle school to high school to determine long-term outcomes for SEL and implications for students' future personal and professional success.

SEL provides students with the necessary skills to be successful in school and in the workplace. SEL instruction allows students to apply a set of learned skills to avoid participating in negative and destructive behaviors, to prevent bullying, and to understand and manage their emotions (Durlak et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2017; Portnow, Downer, & Brown, 2018; Sherwood, 2003). The increased capacity of students' SEL skills assists them with developing meaningful relationships, working as a team with classmates, appreciating diversity, monitoring impulse control, thinking reflectively, and developing an accurate perception of themselves (CASEL, 2017). The most significant conclusion found in this study was the importance of differentiating SEL instruction to males and females in high school. In order for male and female students to reach their SEL potential and enjoy the benefits of strong SEL competencies, educators are encouraged to provide

targeted SEL instruction based on gender skill deficiencies. The positive effects of strong,

SEL skill attainment by students is vital for them to be prepared, confident, and future-

ready.

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APPENDIX

HARDING
UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Status of Request for Exemption from IRB Review

(For Board Use Only)

Date: 3.27.19

Proposal Number: 2019-20

Title of Project: Effects of Participating in Capturing Kids' Hearts on the Social Emotional Learning of Ninth Grade Students in Central Arkansas

Principal Investigator: Angela Dischinger, adischinger@harding.edu, 501-539-7033

■ Research exempted from IRB review.

☐ Research requires IRB review.

☐ More information is needed before a determination can be made. (See attachment.)

I have reviewed the proposal referenced above and have rendered the decision noted above.
This study has been found to fall under the following exemption(s):

1 ☐   2 ☐   3 ☐   4 ■   5 ☐   6 ☐

In the event that, after this exemption is granted, this research proposal is changed, it may require a review by the full IRB. In such case, a **Request for Amendment to Approved Research** form must be completed and submitted.

This exemption is granted for one year from the date of this letter. Renewals will need to be reviewed and granted before expiration.

The IRB reserves the right to observe, review and evaluate this study and its procedures during the course of the study.

Rebecca O. Weaver

Chair
Harding University Institutional Review Board