

HOW PARTICIPATION IN STUDENT-RUN MEDIA IMPACTS A COLLEGE STUDENT'S
SENSE OF SELF EFFICACY: A TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Hugh Davis Bouchelle

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University

2021

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to discover and understand college students' perceptions of the ways their lived experiences while participating in college student-run media have impacted their sense of self-efficacy. The central research question was, what are college student perceptions of how participation in college student-run media impacts their sense of self-efficacy? Bandura's social cognitive theory of self-regulation, which explains how an individual's environment, behavior, and personal factors combine and intertwine to produce feelings of self-efficacy, was used as the framework for this study. Purposeful sampling was used to select full-time students that had worked at least one semester on staff in a college, student-run media service, and were still active. The study site was a single, medium-sized college of approximately 7,678 students in the Mid-Atlantic United States. The participants for this study had primary editorial control over the content of the media productions they managed. Data were collected through individual interviews, individual media projects, and observations of related media group activities. The data were then analyzed using both Creswell's and Moustakas's procedures to identify the essence of the lived experiences. The central research question served to discover and understand participant perceptions of how college student-run media participation impacted self-efficacy. Subquestions included how participants described the environmental, behavioral, and personal factors related to that lived experience. The resulting data discovered three major themes supporting Bandura's theory regarding how environmental, behavioral, and personal factors have a strong positive perceived effect on self-efficacy resulting from participation.

Keywords: advisors, college student, newspapers, reporters, self-efficacy, student-media, student-run media, transcendental phenomenology

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to college journalists throughout the world who dedicate their time, talents, reputations, and sadly, sometimes even their lives to speak truth to power. Their dedication to the craft bodes well for the future of journalism. I further dedicate this study to the advisors and administrators that support and encourage these student journalists, often at the risk of their reputations and academic standing. Finally, I dedicate this work to my Heavenly Father, who inspired me to this path and continues to lead my footsteps. May I always seek and find His will for me.

Acknowledgements

How do you thank someone who has helped you through life-changing events? There are so many to acknowledge as I reach the end of this academic journey. First, of course, are Dr. Gossett and Dr. Tierce, who guided me through the process and convinced me to continue even when I thought I should quit. I need to acknowledge my editor, Dr. Pinto, for her technical expertise and her teaching as she corrected. Thank you.

I must acknowledge the sacrifices my wife, children, and their spouses made to help me accomplish this work. They encouraged me and willingly listened to my complaints with patience. I need to especially acknowledge how my son Jeremy and his wife Jamie allowed me to share their home and office for weeks as I gathered data and worked away from home. I could not have done it without them.

Finally, I would like to thank the students and staff who participated in my study for their openness, willingness to take time out of their busy days to meet with me, and enthusiasm for my work. They encouraged me even as they shared their hardships and successes. They convinced me of the value of this work. I wish them all the best as they continue their academic journeys.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT.....	3
Copyright Page.....	4
Dedication.....	5
Acknowledgements.....	6
List of Tables	13
List of Abbreviations	14
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	15
Overview.....	15
Background.....	16
Historical Context	16
Social Context.....	17
Theoretical Context.....	18
Situation to Self.....	20
Problem Statement.....	22
Purpose Statement.....	22
Significance of the Study	23
Empirical.....	23
Theoretical	24
Practical.....	25
Research Questions.....	26
Central Research Question (CRQ).....	26
Research Subquestions (SQs).....	26

Definitions.....	27
Summary.....	29
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	31
Overview.....	31
Theoretical Framework.....	32
Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory of Self-Regulation	32
The Environment	38
Behaviors	40
Personal Factors	42
Related Literature.....	43
Educational Advantages of Self-Efficacy	43
Community Advantages.....	46
Stresses of Participation.....	48
Legal Aspects.....	51
Best Practices	53
Recent Cultural Shifts	54
The Problem and the Gap in the Research.....	57
Summary.....	59
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS.....	61
Overview.....	61
Design	62
Research Questions.....	64
CRQ	64

Research SQs	64
Setting	65
Participants.....	66
Procedures.....	67
The Researcher’s Role	68
Data Collection	69
Individual Interviews	71
Media Projects	73
Observations	74
Data Analysis	75
Trustworthiness.....	78
Credibility	78
Dependability and Confirmability	79
Transferability.....	80
Ethical Considerations	80
Summary.....	82
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS	83
Overview.....	83
Participants.....	84
Alexa, Participant 1.....	85
Bob, Participant 2.....	86
Charles, Participant 3	86
Debbie, Participant 4.....	87

	10
Eddie, Participant 5	87
Frank, Participant 6	87
George, Participant 7	88
Hannah, Participant 8	88
Janet, Participant 9	89
Kohl, Participant 10	89
Marie, Participant 11	89
Nancy, Participant 12	90
Paul, Participant 13	90
Results	91
Theme Development	91
Major Theme 1: The Environment Influenced Perceived Self-Efficacy	94
Major Theme 2: Behavioral Factors Influence Perceived Self-Efficacy	98
Major Theme 3: Personal Factors Influence Perceived Self-Efficacy	102
Research Questions Responses: CRQ	105
Research Question Responses: SQ1	106
Research Question Responses: SQ2	108
Research Question Responses: SQ3	109
Summary	111
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION	112
Overview	112
Summary of Findings	112
CRQ	113

	11
SQ1	113
SQ2	114
SQ3	114
Discussion.....	115
Theory	115
Environment.....	116
Behaviors	117
Personal Factors	118
Empirical.....	119
The Educational Advantages of Self-Efficacy.....	120
Community Advantages of Student-Run Media.....	121
Stresses Associated With Student-Run Media.....	122
Best Practices	124
Cultural Shifts.....	125
Implications.....	126
Theoretical Implications	127
Empirical Implications.....	127
Practical Implications.....	128
Delimitations and Limitations.....	129
Recommendations for Future Research	130
Summary	131
REFERENCES	133
APPENDIX A: IRB PERMISSION LETTER	144

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT LETTER.....145

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM146

APPENDIX D: OBSERVATION PROTOCOL FORM.....149

List of Tables

Table 1. Participant Demographics.....	85
Table 2. List of 25 Top Used Codes and Their Associated Themes.....	93

List of Abbreviations

American Association of University Professors (AAUP)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Researchers have reported that student-media participation is generally a positive lived experience for many college students (Bobkowski et al., 2017; Dvorak et al., 1994; Tinto, 1993, 2017). Additionally, various other researchers (Auger et al., 2017; Boyle & Zuegner, 2015; Drugunalevu & Manarae, 2015; La Noue, 2017) pointed to the critical role campus media play in campus society. However, Hamilton (2014) explained that campus administrators lack understanding regarding the value of journalism programs and their activities. Castillo-Montoya (2018) recently documented the lack of emphasis in recent literature related to understanding college-media students' lived experiences. Also, Madison (2014) noted that recent research falls short in describing student journalism experiences in schools.

In the present study, using data collected from in-depth interviews, individual media projects, and my observations of student-media group activities, I examined how participation in student-run media impacted how students described their self-efficacy. This research produced qualitative data in the primary form of rich data and thick descriptions, currently unavailable for administrators and faculty who need help designing and promoting pedagogies appropriate to enhancing college media students' educational experiences.

Chapter One includes two sections related to the topic's background and my motivation as the researcher to conduct the study. This chapter also includes a discussion of the problem, a statement of the purpose, an explanation of the study's significance, and the research questions that guided the study. Rounding out the chapter is a list of pertinent definitions and a chapter summary.

Background

This study's historical section begins with the first college newspapers and traces campus media's development and value over the last 200 years. The social section addresses the need to study this phenomenon to fill a gap in the literature and provide educators with valuable insights into appropriate pedagogy related to the experience. The theory section places this study within the recent research and existing theory. Specifically, the theory section demonstrates how the data produced by this current study have increased the understanding related to Bandura's (1991) social cognitive theory of self-regulation.

Historical Context

Since at least the 1800s, college media have allowed students to engage in journalistic activities like professional journalists ("America's Oldest College Newspaper," 2018). In the early 1990s, Dvorak et al. (1994) produced a pivotal quantitative study and declared that journalism students in high school do better academically and have greater persistence into college than do other students. For many years, this was the accepted paradigm often applied to college students. More recently, however, Bobkowski et al. (2017) suggested that participation in journalism draws the best students and, therefore, may not be the full cause of student achievement. While they did not dispute the earlier study about the value of extracurricular journalism, Bobkowski et al. suggested that future work consider this additional factor. Regardless, over the last 25 years, research continues to show the value of journalism programs in high school and higher education. Tinto's (1993) work was seminal in showing how student persistence positively correlated with feelings of engagement or belonging. In his later work, Tinto (2017) reemphasized these principles and connected a student's sense of self-efficacy to their sense of belonging. Hamilton (2014) pointed to an academic and persistence advantage for

participating students, while other studies indicated the critical role campus media plays in social and political issues on campus (Drugunalevu & Manarae, 2015; Boyle & Zuegner, 2015; La Noue, 2017). Baier et al. (2016) and Cardenas-Elliot (2016) also pointed to the positive relationship between self-efficacy, student success, and persistence. While all these studies suggest a valuable role for college student-run media, the recent research is silent regarding the specific lived experiences that make up this relationship between self-efficacy and a college student's work participating in a student-run media service.

Social Context

The results of this research can be used by educators and administrators tasked with advising or teaching college, student-run media staff at the college level. In understanding participants' actual lived experiences and how those experiences influence self-efficacy, educators can develop a better pedagogy based on more nuanced and detailed knowledge of what the students say influences them most. With rich data and thick descriptions of these student's biggest challenges, and their most sought-after successes, educators and advisors can help maximize the benefits of their lived experiences with student-run media. The practical guidance formulated from this study can help administrators who might not fully understand, and therefore, do not know what to do with college, student-run media. Too often, administrators only see student-run campus news as a potential problem with no benefit (Hamilton, 2014).

Additionally, these valuable empirical data documenting students' lived experiences involved in college student-run media, can be used by other researchers as baseline information for additional research. While Levi et al. (2013) examined how social, emotional, and academic self-efficacy related to high school students, researchers have done little to expand this research into the college student demographic. Focusing this current research on the college demographic

was especially important since student free speech rights and student media have recently garnered much public attention. When creating a policy that impacts student campus media, administrators and academics need data to make informed decisions. However, specific data related to college student-run media participants' lived experience is generally absent from the current literature (Madison, 2014; Smeltzer & Hearn, 2015).

Theoretical Context

The theory framing this research is Bandura's (1991, 2012) social cognitive theory of self-regulation. Researchers have used it to explain how the interactions between environmental, behavioral, and personal determinants drive feelings of self-efficacy. Bandura (1991) posited that people are not victims of their environment, but instead learn and modify their feelings of self-worth according to the interaction of three determinants. He also explained that self-efficacy played a vital role in the exercise of self-regulation because of its strong impact on "thought, effect, motivation, and action" (Bandura, 1991, p. 248). Often, the effect of self-efficacy on academic success is indirect and nuanced. For example, Bandura (1991) argued, "innumerable studies yield robust and consistent evidence that explicit, challenging goals enhance motivation and performance attainments (p. 260). However, continuing with a more nuanced explanation, Bandura (1991) wrote that goals individuals set for themselves would better predict performance than traditional measures (p. 264). Then, Bandura (1991) argued that self-belief in one's efficacy to accomplish a goal was positively related to the level of challenge they set for themselves and their commitment to accomplish the goal (p. 258).

In a study of 10th grade students, Levi et al. (2014) described several types of self-efficacy, which also nuance the experiences. Levi et al. found that while academic achievement indirectly influenced emotional and academic self-efficacy, social efficacy had little or no

influence. While Levi et al.'s (2014) study supports Bandura (1991), it leaves room for a further examination at the college level and with students experiencing the stresses, rewards, and goals inherent in the lived experiences of participation in a college-level, student-run media service.

The influence that each of these determinants has on an individual is determined by a multitude of additional factors including, but not limited to, a person's unique experiences, reinforcements of their behavior, a person's already existing self-efficacy, and an individual's ability to self-control (Bandura, 1991). The environment then, both physical and social, does not stand alone in determining a person's perception of self-efficacy. Instead, all three of the determinants described by Bandura (1991), including the environment, behaviors, and individual factors, play a role.

Bandura (2006b) took notice of how the "new realities present new challenges and vastly expanded opportunities for people to exercise some measure of control over how they live their lives" (p. 175). He explained that many of the theories he had used previously could not account for new communication technologies and the resulting change in how we interact with each other. Only a deep and nuanced examination of individuals currently participating in the phenomenon can reveal the intricacies of these interactions. Bandura (2012) argued that social cognitive theory could address the growing "primacy of the symbolic environment" (p. 12). This present research provides data that researchers can use to put that argument to the test by describing these factors from the participants' viewpoints within a social cognitive theory framework. Additionally, this research provides qualitative support for Bandura's (1991, 2012) social cognitive theory of self-regulation to the level that it describes students modifying their perceived sense of self-efficacy according to the three determinants' influences and interactions.

Situation to Self

As a student and educator, I have extensive experience with college students who participate in student-run media. As an undergraduate, I worked for my campus newspaper for 2 years as a reporter. Outside of the academic environment, I have worked as a full-time reporter and freelance writer for over 20 years. Finally, as a college instructor, I have advised newspaper staff at two different colleges, one of them for over 14 years. I still teach college journalism. During that time, I have seen students flourish and fail while serving on newspaper staff.

As an educator, I am motivated, both professionally and personally, to discover what I can do to increase the ratio of flourish to failure. The purpose of this research was to provide qualitative data, with an interpretation of that data, to help educators discover and understand the phenomena of participation in student-run media. With this understanding, they can provide the most educationally meaningful experiences for students participating in student-run media.

To acknowledge any preconceived biases I might have, I used bracketing to identify and control for my own lived experiences during data collection and analysis (Moustakas, 1994). While bracketing is seldom perfect (Creswell, 2013), I also had open discussions with study participants regarding my previous experiences before collecting data. I then bracketed out those experiences to the level possible moving forward. One of the advantages of bracketing that especially appealed to me was that, according to Moustakas (1994), it allowed me to experience a new curiosity regarding this study's phenomenon.

Philosophical assumptions are positions taken by the researcher that help frame a proposed study according to specific philosophical points of view (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For this study, the ontological assumptions generally followed the interpretive framework of social constructivism. Ontologically, social constructivism encompasses the assumption that each

individual constructs their own stories based not only on their values and experiences, but also through their interactions with others (Creswell & Poth 2018). Thus, it is a social activity. This interpretive framework perfectly fits the current understanding of how newspaper staff participants react to their lived experiences.

Epistemologically, I used a social constructivist framework for this study. In this framework, the interaction between the researcher and the participant constructs reality. For this study, after interviewing the participants and using inductive reasoning, I constructed meaning from the data, made general assumptions, and identified general themes that applied to the phenomenon. Then, to describe the lived experience, I used thick descriptions derived from rich data to construct a narrative that best described the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Within a social constructivism framework, axiological beliefs remain based on the individual participants' values (Creswell, 2013). For this study, an effective epoché process ensured that I reported the participants' values without bias. However, a social constructivist framework also means that researchers might expect to see individuals negotiate their values because of their lived experiences on a college media staff.

Finally, a social constructivist framework meant that the methodology used for this study required inductive reasoning to find the common themes of the lived experiences. These common themes give voice to the participants' values and experiences as they have constructed them through their participation in the phenomenon. Finally, the social constructivist framework required a more literary writing style to reveal the essence of the experiences using rich data and thick descriptions.

Problem Statement

The history of college student-run media is long and storied, so it is somewhat surprising that researchers have yet to complete a rigorous study of the phenomenon. Additionally, according to Pavlovic and Ljajic (2017), significant changes since 2010 in communications technology have drastically changed campus media and, therefore, the lived experiences. The academic and persistence advantages mentioned by Auger et al. (2017) and Hamilton (2014), combined with the recent research indicating that some of the best students are drawn into this activity (Bobkowski et al., 2017), all suggest that a deep understanding of the current phenomenon is essential to the body of knowledge on this subject. Other studies also point to the critical role that college student-run media play in the campus community (Boyle & Zuegner, 2015; Drugunalevu & Manarae, 2015; La Noue, 2017). According to Hamilton (2014), one problem is that too many administrators and key faculty have a poor understanding of how journalism programs impact student success and do not fully understand what pedagogic mechanisms might maximize the value of the experience. The problem addressed in this present study was the lack of understanding of college faculty and administrators regarding how participating in college student-run media impacts students' sense of self-efficacy.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to discover and understand college students' perceptions of the ways their lived experiences while participating in college student-run media has impacted their sense of self-efficacy at a midsized, Mid-Atlantic 4-year college. Bandura (1991) defined self-efficacy as an individual's belief in their ability to succeed at a particular task or in a particular situation that they attribute to their lived experiences. This study was focused on the participant's participation as a staff member for

college student-run media. Participation was further defined as greater than 5 hours per week, for a period longer than one semester, as a reporter, producer, or manager (Fosnacht et al., 2017). Student-run media is defined as a student-media service in which most editorial decisions are made by the students (Drugunalevu & Manarae, 2015). The theory framing this study was Bandura's (1991, 2012) social cognitive theory of self-regulation. Bandura's (1991, 2012) theory explains how an individual's sense of self-efficacy is influenced by three determinants: environmental, behavioral, and personal factors. The theory suggests that people are not victims of their environment, but instead can learn from the interactions of these determinants as mediated by a thinking individual (Bandura, 2012).

Significance of the Study

The results of this study provide baseline information, not currently available in published research, about the perceived impacts of participation in college student-run media on the participant's sense of self-efficacy. The study also gives voice to a previously unheard and small population of students within the college community that often affect campus life disproportionate to their small numbers. Having this information available significantly impacts college faculty advisors, administrators, and researchers' decision-making ability. This section includes explanation of the empirical, theoretical, and practical significances of the study. Each section also identifies the primary stakeholders in each category.

Empirical

Data from this study provide empirical evidence documenting the interactions of environmental, behavioral, and individual determinants, as students involved in college student-run media experience them. I used the research data to describe how those students said these interactions have influenced their sense of self-efficacy. This information is generally absent

from the literature (Madison, 2014; Smeltzer & Hearn, 2015) and leaves stakeholders such as administrators and teachers with little empirical data to help them explore ways to enhance this student lived experiences. The results of this study provide a baseline of reliable data that the stakeholders listed above can use to enhance the educational value of their student-run media programs. For example, this study showed that students involved in student-run media felt that associating with professional journalists positively affected their sense of self-efficacy. As a result, administrators may want to include more opportunities for students to mix with and be mentored by professionals in the field.

This study also provided data that other researchers may use to explore either the specific phenomenon of working within a student-run college media service or related subjects such as working with small groups on college projects that might impact student retention. This study revealed additional areas where quantitative studies might be appropriate to enhance our understanding of job-related stress. Stress, such as that generated by working for a college student-run media service, might enhance or degrade a student's academic success. The relatively un-researched nature of this field opens the possibilities of boundless research opportunities.

Theoretical

This study provided additional and specific qualitative evidence related to Bandura's (1991, 2012) social cognitive theory of self-regulation. While it is true that numerous researchers have examined Bandura's (1991, 2012) theory and the interactions of the determinants, none have looked at the specific phenomenon examined in this present work. The qualitative evidence provided in this research may help future researchers study general college student self-efficacy and how students modify how they describe their sense of self-efficacy

according to Bandura's (1991, 2012) environmental, behavioral, and personal factor determinants.

Perhaps more importantly, this study's qualitative data provides valuable, more nuanced insights, not available in a quantitative study, as to how these determinants influence and relate to one another from the individual participant's point of view. As such, the results of this study will be helpful to any researchers, even those examining different phenomena, who might be trying to clarify how each determinant, explained by Bandura's (1991, 2012) theory, quantitatively influences for good or bad, a student's sense of self-efficacy.

Practical

The results of this research provide a more nuanced understanding of students' lived experiences participating in college, student-run media to educators tasked with advising or teaching news media staff. According to Hamilton (2014), too many college administrators feel they do not adequately understand the value of these experiences. This current study provides these data, which were missing from the body of knowledge (Madison, 2014).

A better understanding by administrators of the lived experiences of student news staff can better serve students trying to overcome difficulties, make the right decisions, and maximize the benefits of their experiences. Educators can also better construct and modify the school's curriculum, policies, and pedagogy to enhance the positives and mitigate the negative experiences. Without an understanding of student-run media's value, it was often easier to end the media program rather than try to justify it. Therefore, results of this study might help money-strapped colleges trying to justify increasing or decreasing financial and administrative support for student-run media, by providing reliable data to help make more informed decisions.

Students running media programs can use this study's data and analysis to influence their school's administrative policy.

Research Questions

One central research question (CRQ) and three subquestions (SQs) were used to guide this phenomenological study. The CRQ was drawn from the problem and purpose statements and based on Bandura's (1991, 2012) social cognitive theory of self-regulation. Additionally, the CRQ provided an overarching guide for the SQs to follow. Each SQ addresses one of the three reciprocal determinants explained by Bandura (2012), showing how individuals experience and react to a phenomenon regarding their sense of self-efficacy.

Central Research Question (CRQ)

What are college students' perceptions of how participation in college student-run media impacts their sense of self-efficacy?

This CRQ directly addresses the purpose of this study to understand the way participation in college student-run media impacts student perceptions of their self-efficacy. This question addresses Bandura's (1991, 2012) social cognitive theory of self-regulation that an individual's environment impacts their self-efficacy. The CRQ also provided an overarching guide for the subquestions to follow.

Research Subquestions (SQs)

SQ1: What are college students' perceptions of how environmental determinants related to their participation in college student-run media impact their sense of self-efficacy?

SQ1 explicitly addressed the environmental determinants found in Bandura's (2012) exploration of perceived self-efficacy. According to Bandura (2012), this determinant is not monolithic, but changes according to the participants' reactions within it. How they react to the imposed

environment is one of the three primary determinants that can impact their sense of self-efficacy and is one of the three legs of the triadic reciprocal determination model (Bandura, 2012).

SQ2: What are college students' perceptions of how behavioral determinants related to their participation in college student-run media impact their sense of self-efficacy?

Behavioral determinants are the second leg of the Bandura's (2012) triadic reciprocal determination model that drives SQ2 and addressed a second determinant: behavioral experiences. Behavioral experiences include an individual's behavior and their reaction to the behavior of others. Their ability to react to other's behavior in appropriate ways can influence their self-efficacy.

SQ3: What are college students' perceptions of how personal factors related to their participation in college student-run media impact their sense of self-efficacy?

SQ3 addressed the third leg in the triadic reciprocal determination model (Bandura, 2012, p. 12). The personal factors referred to here are the ones that make an individual unique and are likely to have an impact on their sense of self-efficacy when faced with new lived experiences such as those associated with participation in college student-run media. When combined with the answers from SQ1 and SQ2, the answers to SQ3 provided a more nuanced and complete understanding of how their participation in college student-run media impacted students' self-efficacy.

Definitions

Provided in this section are definitions intended to increase understanding and provide uniformity throughout the study.

1. *College student-run media* - College media services that maintain a level of independence in which the majority of the editorial decisions are made by the students (Drugunalevu & Manarae, 2015).
2. *Environment* - In today's world of technology, the environment includes not only one's physical surroundings and traditional social networks, but also the cyber-world and its practically unlimited access to social networks and information (Bandura, 2012).
3. *Epoché process* - The process of setting aside one's bias to allow for a full description of an event based on the participant's actual description of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).
4. *Data saturation* - The point at which additional observations and interviews are not likely to produce additional significant themes or concepts applicable to the research theory (Francis et al., 2010).
5. *Determinants* - Determinant is a term used to describe the various influences on an individual's perceived sense of self-efficacy. According to Bandura (2012), these are divided into three primary categories: environmental, personal, and behavioral.
6. *Institutional Review Board (IRB)* - The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is the campus body that reviews research for its potential harm or risk to participants (Creswell, 2013).
7. *Lived experiences* - Also called "lifeworld" by van Manen (2016), who defined it as "the world as we immediately experience it pre-reflectively rather than as we conceptualize, categorize, or reflect on it" (p. 9). Castillo-Montoya (2018) explained that understanding the lived experiences is pedagogically important because of all the skills and knowledge students bring to class based on their lives outside the classroom.

8. *Medium-sized campus* - A campus with between 5,000 and 15,000 students (CollegeData.com, 2018).
9. *Phenomenology* - This is a description of an event. “It is concerned with wholeness, with examining entities from many sides, angles and perspectives until a unified vision of the essence of the phenomenon is achieved” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 58).
10. *Rich data* - Rich data are the result of qualitative inquiry because it imparts an intimate knowledge of the phenomenon. Rich data are data that result in thick descriptions (Schultze & Avital, 2011).
11. *Self-efficacy* - An individual’s belief in their ability to succeed at a particular task or situation (Bandura, 1991).
12. *Social media* - According to Ouiridi et al. (2014), social media encompasses a set of mobile and web-based platforms built on Web 2.0 technologies, and allowing users at the micro-, meso- and macro- levels to share and geo-tag user-generated content (images, text, audio, video, and games), to collaborate, and to build networks and communities, with the possibility of reaching and involving large audiences. (p. 119)
13. *Themes* - The common core of invariant constituents (Moustakas, 1994) or the key issues that transcend the cases in a phenomenological study (Creswell, 2013).
14. *Thick descriptions* - Thick descriptions take the physical and social context and the actor’s intentionality into account (Schultze & Avital, 2011).

Summary

Chapter One included an overview of this study, including the historical background, the researcher’s situation within the study, the problems the research results addressed, the purpose and significance of the study, and the research questions used. Scholars note college student-run

media plays a critical role in the college campus environment and tends to draw the best students (Bobkowski et al., 2017). Additionally, Tinto (2017) explained how participation in media studies also increased the persistence of students. However, the literature was glaringly absent of research documenting how these students describe their lived experiences (Madison, 2014). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to discover and understand college students' perceptions of the ways their lived experiences while participating in college student-run media have impacted their sense of self-efficacy at a midsized, Mid Atlantic 4-year college.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Chapter Two addresses the literature related to this transcendental phenomenological study to determine how students perceive participation in college student-run media impacts their sense of self-efficacy as a lived experience. The chapter begins with an examination of the theoretical framework, followed by the related literature describing the various issues that might also influence the lived experiences. The chapter ends with a summary.

The theoretical framework for this study was drawn from Bandura's (1991) social cognitive theory of self-regulation. The review is focused on literature related to the three reciprocal determinations, including environmental, behavioral, and personal factors within the theoretical framework section. This chapter shows how recent research supports the theory that each of these determinants influences, and is influenced by, the individual's perceived sense of self-efficacy.

The related literature section follows the theoretical framework discussion. This exploration of recent research includes how the three determinants might influence various psychological, educational, and even political influences, as they relate to participation in college student-run media and its possible effects on self-efficacy. In this section, the research is synthesized into the following subcategories: educational advantages of participation, community advantages, and stresses related to participation, legal aspects of participation, best practices, recent cultural shifts, the gap in the literature, and the problem that the gap creates for students, administrators, and faculty involved with college student-run journalism programs. I analyzed each topic as to its demonstrated effects on the three determinants, as explained in the theory section. If those effects were unclear or not explicitly examined in the existing research, I

explained how this current project has added to each subject's body of knowledge.

In the chapter summary section, I have synthesized the chapter and pointed out specific literature gaps. The summary section also explores how researchers can use the data produced to understand better how Bandura's (1991) social cognitive theory of self-regulation is an excellent framework for researchers trying to understand how the three determinants impact self-efficacy. Finally, in the summary section, I explain how the literature supports the need for a transcendental phenomenological study to help fill gaps in the body of knowledge, as they currently exist.

Theoretical Framework

This section serves to describe the theoretical framework for this study. For this transcendental phenomenological study, I chose Bandura's (1991) social cognitive theory of self-regulation to frame the study because it provided the best structure for completing a nuanced picture of the study phenomenon. The first subsection addresses the history and general elements of the theory and introduces the triadic reciprocal determinants model. Later subsections encompass each of the model's elements individually and then connect the determinants to the phenomenon under examination.

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory of Self-Regulation

Social cognitive theory began as social learning theory in the 1960s (Bandura, 1969). The theory was a follow-up work to the theories of Miller and Dollard, who, in 1941, had proposed a theory of learning based on the imitation of others (Bandura, 2006a). Bandura (2006a) advanced these ideas by theorizing that human agency had a central place and played a key role in the equation. Later, Bandura (2006a) added "cognitive" to the name to emphasize the individual's cognition in the behavioral learning process.

Bandura (1991) used the social cognitive theory to explain how people develop or adopt certain behavior patterns. According to Bandura (1991), people are not victims of their environment, but can learn by observing others and accounting for their environment. There are three factors, or determinants, that influence this learning. Each of these determinants also interacts with and influences the others. Those determinants, which comprise the elements of the triadic reciprocal determinants model, include environmental, behavioral, and personal factors (Bandura, 1991). Significantly for this present study, each of these determinants also influence and moderate an individual's feeling of self-efficacy and other personal factors (Bandura, 2012).

Self-efficacy, however, was key within this study due to its ability to moderate other psychological states. In a meta-analysis, Robbins et al. (2004) reviewed over 100 studies covering the previous 20 years and confirmed that out of nine commonly researched psychosocial constructs, academic self-efficacy was the best predictor of academic achievement. Yu and Luo (2018) confirmed self-efficacy primacy by examining the relationships between dispositional optimism, well-being, and self-efficacy; in addition, they found that all three elements, crucial to a college student's success, were significantly related. However, Yu and Luo also found that self-efficacy acted as a significant moderator to the other two. While neither of these studies focused specifically on self-efficacy as influenced by participation in college media, the results of both studies confirmed self-efficacy as an appropriate tool for this exploration.

As Bandura (1991) explained, the outside environment is not the sole factor driving a person's behavior, as some researchers have hypothesized. Instead, other factors such as an individual's feelings about others, their personal competencies, how they choose to react to others' behavior, and their self-efficacy will play a role as mediated by a thinking individual. He

explained that if people were regulated totally by external factors, people's behaviors would resemble a weathervane as they constantly shifted their focus and efforts toward whatever the social influence at the time most impacted them (Bandura, 1991). Because this is not the case, individuals must have internal mechanisms that control where and how they choose their path through life and how they react to other people and circumstances as they pursue their chosen path.

I used Bandura's (1991) social cognitive theory to create a framework for understanding how the lived experience of participation in college student-run media has impacted their perceived self-efficacy. Due to the comprehensive nature of Bandura's theory, I created a similarly comprehensive framework to ensure all the elements of the lived experiences and their interactions were considered. Bandura's (1991) theory is based on an individual's ability to self-regulate. In this study, the framework allowed me to make allowances for preexisting cognitive structures and self-beliefs stemming from and influenced by the three determinants. Using Bandura's theory, I was better able to structure my explanation of how these interactions contribute to each participant's self-efficacy feelings.

For example, Bandura (1991) considered goal-setting and self-directed changes were more likely to be effective if they were based on present situations rather than on long-term effects. He mentioned how the goals that one sets for oneself, versus goals assigned by another, are the ones most likely to increase successful performance (Bandura, 1991). Additional research supports this view, showing that high self-efficacy students are more likely to set high goals and pursue those goals more vigorously (Artino, 2012).

Artino (2012) also supported Bandura's ideas that other influences, such as others' opinions and a person's sense of their abilities, will influence and be influenced by their sense of

self-efficacy. As explained in Bandura's (1991) theory, the determinants' interactions provided a valuable structure for the current study in understanding participants' lived experiences in a situation that often requires them to be self-motivating and set their own goals while on a student-media staff.

Bandura (1991) explained that people, at least partially, form their standards in interaction with their social group's standards. Therefore, participation in a social group such as a college student-run media staff is likely to impact someone's standards of excellence. Perhaps, most importantly, according to Bandura (1991), as individuals self-regulate, they are likely to spend the most effort on activities that have the greatest significance for them. Since participation in college student-run media is a voluntary exercise, participants must value the activity and are therefore more likely to be influenced by social and personal constraints that they experience while participating.

Bandura (1991) wrote that among all the mechanisms that influence an individual's agency, the belief individuals have about their ability to complete and task by controlling their reactions to problems is the most central or pervasive element in making that decision. Bandura (1991) also explained that high self-efficacy levels are more likely to predict success than actual ability. While Artino (2012) agreed with Bandura that people who see themselves as highly efficacious tend to set their goals high and are willing to put more effort into accomplishing them, he added the caveat that self-efficacy is domain-specific. Artino did not believe that self-efficacy is a general disposition; instead, he argued that it must be considered in context to the challenges the individual faces. As an example, Artino described a medical student who might have a high level of self-efficacy related to taking a health history, so the student does well at that task. However, the same student might have a low sense of self-efficacy when it comes to

understanding biochemistry, so the student is less likely to excel or even pursue work in biochemistry.

Another more recent meta-analysis by Bartimote-Aufflick et al. (2016) also confirmed the value of self-efficacy, explaining that according to the 64 articles reviewed for their study, all of which had been published since 2000, noted that a strong association between self-efficacy and student learning outcomes existed. Bartimote-Aufflick et al. also found that self-efficacy is related to other factors such as “self-regulation and metacognition, locus of control, intrinsic motivation, and strategy learning use” (p. 1918). In addition, Bartimote-Aufflick et al. explained that college self-efficacy varies depending on the student’s choice of activities, and educators can improve a student’s self-efficacy with proper intervention. Bartimote-Aufflick et al. did not address self-efficacy in contextual terms, but only as a general attribute. After considering Artino’s (2012) expansion of Bandura’s understanding of self-efficacy, leaving out the contextual nature of self-efficacy is a weakness in the work of Bartimote-Aufflick et al.

Adding to these conclusions, Levi et al. (2014) further broke down the effects of self-efficacy on academics and determined that different types of self-efficacy, such as academic, emotional, and social self-efficacy, have various effects on academic performance. While academic performance was indirectly influenced by emotional and academic self-efficacy, social self-efficacy had little or no influence (Levi et al., 2014).

This research expanded Bandura’s (1991) theory by helping researchers understand the lived experiences of varying self-efficacy types. While Levi et al.’s (2014) study was not focused on media activities, the concept that working in the specific professional field is of value to long-term learning and professional success is supported explicitly in the research. For example, in a quantitative study of 72 undergraduate business students, Anders (2018) found that

integrating professional activities, such as working for a college student-run media service, into a formal education experience can improve a college student's sense of self-efficacy and their desire to continue the activities after college. Anders concluded that these activities might have long-term effects on lifelong learning and professional success.

Bandura (1991) explained that the self-regulatory processes influence and enhance students' education experience and success. However, Bandura (1991) also explained that the same self-regulatory processes, and their interactions with the three determinants, could undermine the positive effects resulting from the same experience (Bandura, 1990). For example, Bandura (1991) explained that one struggle likely to produce negative results is when individuals are punished in some way for behavior that they value, and he mentioned that nonconformists often find themselves in this type of situation. Researchers conducting a phenomenological study, such as this one that explores a student's lived experiences with a college student-run media, will need to address both the positives and the negatives of the lived experience. Bandura (1990) suggested that negative lived experiences cause self-efficacy to decline, while positive lived experiences cause it to increase. Using Bandura's (1991) social cognitive theory as a framework enabled me to glean both the positives and the negatives from the lived experiences and perhaps what causes each.

According to Bandura (1990), "Self-beliefs of efficacy influence how people feel, think, and act" (p. 397). Bandura's (1990) studies confirm that high levels of self-efficacy are associated with similarly high personal achievement levels and are crucial in determining how, and even how much, a person chooses to self-regulate. With this understanding of the critical position self-efficacy holds in the self-regulatory process and how it interacts with all of the determinants, self-efficacy was an excellent focal point for this current phenomenological study.

The Environment

Bandura (1991) explained that self-efficacy is not merely an interpersonal effort, and argued that people do not operate as completely autonomous agents, but instead react to and interact with life's social realities. According to Bandura (1991), social factors impact an individual's self-regulation exercise, and therefore their self-efficacy, in three significant ways. The first of these is that they contribute to and interact with all of the self-regulatory functions. The second way is that they provide either support or resistance to an individual's personal standards. Finally, the social environment helps individuals determine and test their moral standards against the environment's prevailing social standards. The individual's value to this social relationship and their already existing sense of self-efficacy will mediate the actual influence that social realities play on their lived experiences.

As society moves forward into a future of expanded modern communications, an important consideration is how well Bandura's (1991) social cognitive theory will continue to explain self-regulation and self-efficacy in a world of almost unlimited social media, 24-hour a day connectivity, and information available literally at one's fingertips. More recently, Bandura (2012) stated that his theory is even more relevant as an individual's world expands into the cyber realm. He based this conclusion on the fact that the ability to self-regulate and educate oneself is magnified through the ubiquitous nature of modern communications platforms and techniques (Bandura, 2012).

Over a decade ago, Bandura (2006b) wrote about how modern communications technologies generated a new and unique environment. This new environment is certainly the case for those working in the communication fields such as college student-run media. Bandura (2006b) explained that these new realities present new challenges for the way individuals self-

regulate, as they are driven by increased and more pervasive interactions with the social environment. He also explained that while in the past, a person's environment was limited to those within reach, today, the environment could include immediate contact with people all over the world, expanding social influences exponentially (Bandura, 2006b). This expanding audience and group of critics will likely have a significant impact on the self-efficacy of those involved in mass media projects. These same influences are likely to impact administrators that these college media students report to and try to please. The projects will require gathering information from a much larger variety of sources and appealing to an audience that could be worldwide.

Meanwhile, the pool of possible critics grows exponentially, perhaps to the alarm of administrators who were always comfortable with campus media as long as its reach was local. The effects of this new broader stage on an individual's sense of self-efficacy could be significantly different from what it might have been only 10 or 15 years ago. Bandura (2012) pointed out that the environment was never a monolithic force, and the new media environment is likely to be more complicated than ever.

Additionally, according to Bandura (2012), environments imposed on an individual, selected by an individual, or constructed cognitively by an individual, may all be different. These multiple ways of perceiving one's environment are multiplied in a multilayered and complex communications environment. Therefore, researchers and educators must understand the interactive effects of the environment on behaviors and the development of other personal determinants. According to Bandura (2012), the ability to change one's environment is easier to do than ever, thanks to modern communication platforms, and is directly related to one's efficacy as a self-regulating agent.

For this present study, environmental factors included anything within the environment that influenced an individual's sense of self-efficacy. Trying to guess what all of those elements are is impossible since researchers will not always detect those elements, even with an in-depth and detailed examination of the participant's lived experiences. The examination, therefore, must include the environmental influences participants bring to campus from home. While I designed this research to understand the environmental elements specifically related to participation in student-run college media, a home environment may also be a moderating factor to the effects of these discovered elements (Bradley, 2019). Bradley's (2019) study focused on the effects of a home environment on African Americans, Native Americans, and Latinos. A home environment's effects on participants' sense of self-efficacy for this current study were likely to be significant; therefore, I explored those possibilities to the extent possible during data collection.

Behaviors

Bandura (1991, 2006b, 2012) explained how both one's behavior and others' behavior impact an individual's lived experiences of a phenomenon and how behavior further influences and is influenced by the other determinants. If individuals received negative feedback when they thought they were providing a valuable service, that lived experience would likely negatively challenge their self-efficacy. According to Filak (2012), in a study of college media editors and their willingness to self-censor, even a mistaken idea by a student editor of what the reaction might be to a controversial story can impact a student-media editor's willingness to self-censor. Filak took a position in line with Bandura's triadic reciprocal determinants model by explaining that internal fears and the journalistic environment's nature will also play a role in a student-media editor's willingness to self-censor.

As Bandura (1991) pointed out, the strength of this influence is often related to a person's level of internal fear and the history of the media environment in which they have been working. According to Bandura (1991), the relative strength of the individual's self-efficacy compared to their strength and the value they give to possible social censoring will determine whether the lived experiences positively or negatively impact their self-efficacy. Related to this, individuals may behave in ways they usually would not consider moral as long as legitimate authority accepts the responsibility for the consequences of their conduct (Bandura, 1991). Therefore, an editor may not feel the need to self-censor if they feel the media advisor will handle any negative reactions generated by the decision.

In a study examining the effects of faculty confirmation on student self-efficacy in community colleges, Peaslee (2018) found that early faculty confirmation supporting a student's ability to complete their schooling was positively related to self-efficacy. Peaslee measured this effect with the Self-Efficacy for Learning and Performance scale of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ). Peaslee's study was especially important since the most significant effect of faculty confirmation on student self-efficacy was seen in students customarily considered at-risk and students who represented the first generation in their family to attend college. Peaslee's research supports Bandura's (1991) theory that our sense of self-efficacy might be moderated by the behavior, in this case, support, from others. The research also directly relates to participants on a newspaper staff whose members might adjust how they perform their media duties to remain within the bounds of the administration's approval, regardless of how they feel about the issue. Peaslee's study was limited in its application since it dealt specifically with community college students who typically have less opportunity to be involved in campus activities than those on a residential campus. However, Peaslee's research

still supported Bandura's (1991) theory that the participant's behaviors and those they associate with both influences and are influenced by the environment and the personal factors particular to each individual.

Personal Factors

Like the other two determinants, personal factors influence and are influenced by each of the others (Bandura, 1991, 2012). However, as Akiskal et al. (2005) explained, personal factors, such as an individual's temperament profile, are unique for journalists as it is for many other professions. These unique personal factors will have an effect on an individual's lived experiences. Activities under this category are likely to include influences established before participating in the lived experience being studied.

These personal factors may include, but are not limited to, the participant's previous sense of self-efficacy, previous experiences, expectations, knowledge of the field, competencies already obtained, and other personal factors. For example, in a quantitative study of general academic self-efficacy among high school students, Bong (2010) found that gender, ethnicity, and relative expertise all had significant effects on an individual's sense of self-efficacy. Bong also determined that more successful students made finer distinctions regarding the subject context of their self-efficacy. While not specifically aimed at college media students, Bong demonstrated how personal factors all intertwine and impact academic performance.

However, to help frame and focus this current study, I chose the personal factor of self-efficacy as the primary component for evaluation because it is easily verbalized by the individual participant and it has a key position in self-regulation according to Bandura's (1990) theory. Additionally, according to Bandura (1991), self-efficacy can impact an individual's ability to govern the use of their skills and competencies and overcome obstacles when others would quit.

This interaction again shows how even within the subcategory of personal factors, self-regulating activities constantly interact and or are acted upon by the other determinants. The researchers conducting these various studies reinforced the idea that social cognitive theory is nuanced and flexible enough to use as a framework when describing college students' experiences participating in student-run media.

Related Literature

This section encompasses the literature related to the phenomenon of participation in a college student-run media service. I began by examining the literature describing recent cultural shifts that are likely to impact the lived experiences and then examine the educational advantages and stresses of participation. I provided a short section on how college media's legal aspects may introduce additional stress into participants' lived experiences, due primarily to their confusing nature. Finally, I concluded the section by describing the problem addressed in this study, why the problem exists, and how this research might help fill in the gap related to understanding participants' lived experience in a college student-run news service.

Educational Advantages of Self-Efficacy

Over the last 25-years, various researchers have shown the value of journalism programs in high schools and higher education (Dvorak et al., 1994; Tinto, 2017). Seminal works such as Tinto (1993) demonstrated how student persistence positively correlated with feelings of engagement or belonging. These same conclusions were drawn by Kuh (2009) and then confirmed for community colleges by Lundberg (2014). Kim and Bastedo (2017) also credited engagement and belonging through extracurricular activities to be an asset even beyond school by impacting an individual's job satisfaction. Their work was focused on extracurricular activities on occupational prestige and job satisfaction, and not monetary rewards (Kim &

Bastedo, 2017). According to Kim and Bastedo, these factors were more representative of early career success. They also concluded that the changes in higher education, extracurricular activities, and the level of student engagement in these activities might often be the deciding factor for employers when looking at students who are similarly qualified academically (Kim & Bastedo, 2017).

In an extensive literature review, Seow and Pan (2014) confirmed that the predominant framework for studying the effects of participation in extracurricular activities is called a developmental framework in which the advantages of participation in extracurricular activities develop participants in ways that academics cannot. However, Seow and Pan also noted that two other frameworks existed. In the first of these, called the zero-sum framework, the researchers approached college time as a zero-sum game in which time spent on extracurricular activities was taken from other time consumers such as academics. The other framework, called the threshold framework, was one in which extracurricular activities were valuable up to a point and then began to harm academic performance as the student became overinvolved. Seow and Pan (2014) suggested future studies should consider all three frameworks as possibilities when studying any extracurricular activities.

Many of the studies in this literature review were not focused on media activities or their impact on self-efficacy. However, they do provide evidence as to the value of extracurricular activity to the education process. This current study fills that gap by helping researchers and educators understand how the specific extracurricular activity of participation in student-run media impacts the specific personal factor of perceived self-efficacy.

In his later work, Tinto (2017) reemphasized the value of participation and a sense of belonging to academic persistence and success, and then connected a student's sense of self-

efficacy to their sense of belonging. Dvorak et al. (1994) confirmed a positive relationship between student participation in journalism and student success; however, the focus was limited to high school students. Bobkowski et al. (2017) expanded on Dvorak et al.'s (1994) work by showing in a quantitative, nonexperimental, longitudinal study that participation in journalism tended to draw the best students and, therefore, may not be the full cause of student achievement. Bobkowski et al. did not dispute Dvorak et al.'s (1994) earlier study, but only suggested that future work consider this additional factor. Bobkowski et al.'s study supported Bong's (2010) study in determining that personal factors such as home environments and ethnicity can influence self-efficacy. Also, Bobkowski et al. found that students who participate in journalism, on average, enjoyed a greater English self-efficacy, although this greater self-efficacy did not significantly reflect an improvement in their English scores. Student participants in Bobkowski et al.'s study also experienced a greater sense of connection to their schools. Results of surveys by Baier et al. (2016) and Cardenas-Elliot (2016), reconfirmed the positive relationship between self-efficacy, student success, and persistence. In a meta-analysis of 43 articles spanning the last 25 years, Kent and Wanzek (2016) determined that the skills used in journalism studies consistently show that merely writing more, combined with the regular application of journalism skills, increase a student's writing ability across grade levels.

While acknowledging that self-efficacy and performance are positively related, Talsma et al. (2019) determined that self-efficacy does not always match students' abilities. Specifically, Talsma et al. found that students were often under-efficacious when considering their ability to complete assignments and over-efficacious when considering their ability to get a high grade for the course. Stronger students tended toward lower levels of self-efficacy, while weaker students tended to be over-efficacious. Talsma et al. noted that even determining the best self-efficacy

level was difficult since only matching self-efficacy to abilities does not push an individual to pursue more significant achievements. According to Talsma et al., some researchers would argue that a little less self-efficacy might motivate students to work harder. These complicated and varied research hypotheses point to the complicated elements that make up a person's sense of self-efficacy. Talsma et al. also pointed out the need for additional and more specific studies into this research area. Just as Bandura (2006b) suggested, personal factors play a large role, intertwining with and influencing an individual's sense of self-efficacy. Understanding this complicated landscape required an in-depth look into individual characteristics and motivations best suited to a qualitative study such as this present one.

Expanding on this body of work and acknowledging the academic and persistence advantages of student participation in media studies, Hamilton (2014) explained that there are other practical advantages for school administrators trying to understand and quantify student-media value. According to Hamilton, journalism programs are less expensive than many science programs and tend to draw good students to the college. Because student-media programs can also provide strong links to the community, Hamilton suggested that when a school journalism program is successful, it could often win significant recognition on behalf of the school.

Community Advantages

Another advantage of student-media participation is the ability to influence one's society on par with professional journalists. Several researchers also confirmed the critical role campus media plays regarding social and political issues on campus (Boyle & Zuegner, 2015; Cass, 2016; Drugunalevu & Manarae, 2015; La Noue, 2017; Mitchell, 2016). Other researchers, such as Crane and Leshner (2018), point to how college media is often an integral part of the community beyond campus.

For example, Zhuang (2014) used a quantitative, nonexperimental, correlational design to examine citizen journalists' importance in the new media environment when reporting on catastrophes. Surveying 48 communication students at a U.S. Midwest university, Zhuang determined that when Hurricane Sandy was striking the United States, citizen journalists' initial reporting had more credibility among those surveyed than did professional journalists reporting on the same event. A limitation of Zhuang's study was the small sample size and the participants' specific demographics since they were all college students. However, Zhuang showed how, under certain circumstances, student journalists can be accepted by the public as well as professional journalists. This power to affect one's world on par with professional journalists is likely to significantly influence the lived experiences and, therefore, participants' self-efficacy in college student-run media.

When Auger et al. (2017) completed their phenomenological study on students' reactions to convergent technologies, they discovered in focus groups that student participants, although sometimes anxious, were excited to learn the new technologies and felt these experiences would help them develop their journalistic skills. According to Auger et al., new technologies gave the students a greater sense of efficacy related to creating stories that the broader community would want to watch or read. These additional tools also expanded the students' world of community contacts, including both the contacts needed to gather community information and additional community contacts of those outside the campus community that might be interested in the stories themselves.

Freedman and Poulson (2015) explained that college journalism experience tended to enhance a student's portfolio, gave them access to jobs and internships, and gave them a chance to experience how real writers work on a day-to-day basis. One example that Freedman and

Poulson used in their study was the Capital News Service organization. The Capital News Service's goal is to provide training and opportunities for college journalism students to write articles for professional magazines, newspapers, and other professional media outlets. The Capital News Service has gained a national reputation for how its organizers have served the community with stories that might otherwise go unreported by over-stretched professional media staff and provide professional-level journalism opportunities to college media students.

Stresses of Participation

With all the advantages of student journalism, stressors remain that influence students' lived experiences working within college student-run media. Perhaps first on the list are the actual dangers inherent in some journalism work. For example, in their case study on media freedom in Fiji, Drugunalevu and Manarea (2015) described how a campus-based student newspaper covered the 2000 and 2006 government coups in Fiji. They explained that campus-based newspapers were somewhat less restrained by the financial threats and government coercion that often hobbled commercial newspapers. However, reporters for the campus-based newspaper described in the study faced many of the same dangers and political pressures as their professional counterparts. Even under such difficult circumstances, Drugunalevu and Manarea (2015) found that knowing that they were producing valuable, publishable materials during a crisis motivated the student reporters to improve their work. Dewey's (1916) theory of experimentalism also suggested that when faced with a threat to its survival, an organism will gain experience that it uses to face future threats.

While most campus newspapers do not face this level of political danger, journalism remains a dangerous business in some areas. According to a report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2018), 530 journalists were killed

between 2012 and 2016. Out of those 530 journalists, 92% were local reporters, and 21% were freelance journalists. UNESCO (2018) did not report whether any of those killed were student journalists.

Another, albeit less severe, but more pervasive problem facing student journalists, is what some researchers call “academic capitalism.” Herrmann (2017) argued that academic capitalism, or the need to make academic decisions based on their monetary value to the school, an attitude driven by the economic downturn of the last decade, has driven a wedge between faculty and students. This tendency to cut programs that do not make money has had a burdensome impact on student-run media programs, which, according to Hamilton (2014), already suffered from a lack of understanding by college administrations. In another qualitative study, Smeltzer and Hearn (2015) argued that it is uncontroversial to say that Western colleges are becoming increasingly corporatized. Further, Smeltzer and Hearn stated that students will sometimes avoid engagements and controversial extracurricular activities if they are at odds with apparent school administrative policies that they do not fully understand. According to Smeltzer and Hearn, if universities were less concerned over maintaining their brand, more students might feel safe to engage in campus activities such as student-run media. Although there are multiple studies on the effects of academic capitalism on faculty and staff, Smeltzer and Hearn recommended more work regarding the effects of this phenomenon on students. This current study fills that gap as it applied explicitly to students participating in campus student-run media.

Another concern over the adverse effects that might influence the campus media experience is in regard to the current controversies surrounding freedom of speech, primarily at public universities. In a recent survey of 1,500 current undergraduate students from various 4-year universities, Villasenor (2017) argued that many college students have “an overly narrow

view of the extent of freedom of expression” (p. 4), although he offered no solutions to this problem. However, a better understanding of the students’ lived experiences working for a campus student-run media service, a service that by its very nature involves the students in politics may improve understanding of this phenomenon and its effects on the lived experiences of students participating in student-run campus media. According to Filak (2012), college media editors’ level of willingness to self-censor is often determined by either a supportive or adversarial environment.

Finally, another major category of stress for students involved in campus media is burnout. Using the Maslach Burnout Inventory, Filak and Reinardy (2011) studied 185 college newspaper editors and found that participants were experiencing, on average, moderate levels of burnout. Compared to college newspaper advisors, student editors had significantly higher scores on burnout, even though both the advisors and editors scored high on job satisfaction. Of the 185 participants studied, 38.4% scored in the high category, while 34.1% rated moderate and 27.5% rated in the low category.

Filak and Reinardy (2011) also found that personal accomplishment could often be a countermeasure to burnout. However, personal accomplishment will only counteract burnout as long as the ratio of accomplishment to stress remains positive. As personal accomplishment becomes depleted over time, burnout will set in. Filak and Reinardy suggested that additional studies might pinpoint the specific stressors that lead to the most significant amount of burnout. The results of two literature reviews indicated that stress is a significant factor for journalists in general, and additional studies should be conducted on the specific stressors causing health issues (MacDonald et al., 2016; Penteadó & Gastaldello, 2016).

The American Association of University Professors (AAUP, 2017), along with the College Media Association, the National Coalition Against Censorship, and the Student Press Law Center, issued a joint statement in the fall of 2016 over their concern that media advisors were suffering from administrative pressure to “control, edit, or censor student journalistic content” (p. 25). While this current study was not designed in any way to be a commentary on the current standing of free speech on campus, this national issue is likely to impact the lived experiences of students participating in student-run media. The AAUP concluded the joint statement with, “Few colleges and universities are walking the walk of civic engagement in their governance of journalism, and too many are abandoning higher education’s traditional commitment to free and independent journalistic voices” (p. 33).

Legal Aspects

The legal aspects of participation in a college student-run media service can be confusing and disheartening (Malone, 2017; Pritchard, 2013; Silver, 2016). Therefore, this legal minefield’s effects on college student journalists’ lived experiences and their feelings of self-efficacy may be significant. This unavoidable stressor is something that students, advisors, faculty, and administrators must address at all levels.

In an early article addressing the confusing legal situation, Silver (2007) examined one of the significant court cases impacting college student journalism. In the 2005 ruling, *Hosty v. Carter*, the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals found that college administrations could use form analysis with subsidized newspapers to review student newspaper articles before they were allowed to be published (Silver, 2007). This decision seems to justify college administrations who wish to conduct prior review as long as the student-media is receiving funding from the school. However, since then, the debate over the exact breadth and meaning of this ruling have

been prominent in various federal courts (Wheeler, 2017). According to Wheeler (2017), the continuing question revolves around whether a campus newspaper is a limited public forum. Under one interpretation, a court might consider a student newspaper to be an internal publication and therefore can receive prior review. However, another court might consider the newspaper a public document and allow it the full spectrum of First Amendment freedoms.

The rules are different if the school is a private institution. Malone (2017) examined five court cases that addressed these issues from different perspectives and came to different conclusions in each case. According to Wheeler (2017), the good news is that the confusion generated by the *Hosty* decision has prompted some states (e.g., California and Iowa) to create legislation that expands student press rights to include private institutions. Whether administrations agree or disagree with these new laws, having them on the books creates a less cluttered legal landscape for the lived experiences of students working on campus student-run publications. Regardless, legal status at both public and private colleges remains an ever-moving target for which the confusion generated is likely to impact a campus student-run media environment's stability.

However, it is important to remember that these rules generally do not apply at private universities since they are not government entities and are not required to meet the same First Amendment standards as are state schools (Wheeler, 2017). Instead, contract law applies, and private schools are obligated to honor their academic freedom and student rights statements as contracts between the school and the students. Understanding these contracts can be just as difficult and confusing for the private school student as following various state laws might be for the student attending a state school.

Russo (2016) explained that the Supreme Court case of *Obergefell v. Hodges* had raised ongoing concerns about whether the academic freedom and freedom of religion rights of faculty, staff, and students might not survive new and pressing government interventions. These interventions, according to Russo (2016), are especially pertinent today as religious schools try to remain true to their beliefs on marriage's nature between a woman and man and other similarly controversial subjects. Russo (2016) expressed concern that *Obergefell v. Hodges* could eventually restrict academic freedom at religious universities. At the very least, it provides another unsettling element to the already unsettled environment that impacts the lived experiences that students participating in campus news media must face if they expect to publish any sort of controversial article for their campus media.

Best Practices

Not everyone agrees with the idea that journalism's pedagogy should follow the pattern of doing what real journalists do to learn how to do it. Joseph Pulitzer, the newspaper mogul, founder of the Columbia School of Journalism, and the Pulitzer Prize's original sponsor, felt that journalism schools should teach journalism's ethics and philosophy and avoid commerce concerns (Cass, 2016). However, in examining this argument, Cass (2016) came to a different conclusion: Students learn best when they are doing the work in a manner as close as possible to how they will do it outside the university. Cass admitted, however, that many educators, especially non-journalists, do not see it that way. Subsequently, Cass identified the same problems as Hamilton (2014) did; that too many decisions made in colleges related to student-run media are made by those with little understanding of the process or the pedagogy that works best. Smeltzer and Hearn (2015) discussed the corporatization of education in their work and seemed to agree with these researchers. They concluded that media students should experience

as much of the process of producing a newspaper as possible, including activities such as shooting videos, working on websites, and selling ads, even if it does not prove to be a moneymaker for the university (Smeltzer & Hearn, 2015).

Recent Cultural Shifts

While there seems to be a lack of research specific to the lived experiences of college student-run media staff, there is no lack of information available regarding the rapid cultural changes that are taking place in this field. Many of these changes relate to the large political and social changes taking place on campus. Aleman (2014) pointed to an increasing campus newspaper mission to lean toward what she called the “counter news story” and described how new teaching methods can encourage students to write more in support of minority positions traditionally silenced by the limited nature of campus news media. Aleman suggested that a new pedagogy encouraging students to use the counter news story would demystify the false notion of objectivity in mainstream media, identify what she called “majority stories,” and encourage the practice of counter news stories. This increasing interest in college politics directly affects college media and those living the experience of being part of the media staff.

Related to this movement are articles inspired by a continually changing political landscape, and often, the college administration’s pushback occurring as a result (Dreyfuss & Ryan, 2016). Snyder (2018) called this a contagion and expressed concern that too many colleges are moving to censor their students to protect them from opposing viewpoints, believing this to be a serious threat to liberal education. For this current study, it might be a significant factor in understanding the environment and social conditions under which student-run media staff must operate. LaNoue (2017) suggested a list of questions that campus administrators can ask of themselves to ensure that on-campus policy debates and political discussions cover the

entire gamut of positions. While the complete list of questions is not needed here, LaNoue suggested using questions that reveal the school's methods for preparing students for citizenship, how the school exposes students to various points of view, and the regularity and diversity of public debates. How each school chooses to answer the questions posed by LaNoue and how they create an academic policy that supports a positive campus environment to discuss challenging topics could profoundly impact students' lived experiences working within campus student-run media.

To compensate for the reduction of financial resources to support campus media programs primarily driven by the economy, and also due to increased access to digital media communications making off-site work possible, some schools are turning to various programs of internships, practicums, and other self-supporting news services within their journalism programs. This massive change in journalism culture can take two paths, one toward a market orientation, or second, a path toward public service (Hanitzsch, 2007).

Madison (2014) argued that recent shifts in journalism education had tended more toward market orientation and that this shift is so pervasive, an entire pre-session at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication's 2012 conference was dedicated to this topic alone. Madison explained that at many universities, technical advances have created what he called "communities of practice." Communities of practice, according to Madison, are educational environments organized around student-run media, the college, and community participants. He explained that these communities of practice could create social learning environments where members experience shared histories that become lived experiences (Madison, 2014).

Nah et al. (2014) described a more community service-oriented organization and called the students working under these circumstances “citizen journalists.” These students do most of their work for community service organization’s publications. In this work, they increase social capital between nonprofit organizations, the volunteer sector, themselves, their communities, and the school they attend. Madison (2014) wrote that working together in these types of environments “changes who people are and whom they become” (p. 321). The small number of personal experiences that Madison used suggests a need for a detailed study of this experience and how the students involved operate and feel about these issues. Hanitzsch’s (2007) differentiation between market orientation and public service journalism adds another aspect to how the environment could influence students' sense of self-efficacy as they participate in their school’s student-run media service.

Driving nearly all of these changes are the opportunities and challenges created by new technologies. Both Boyle and Zuegner (2015) and Pavlovic and Ljajic (2017) addressed the significant changes driven by new technologies in journalism education. Boyle and Zuegner focused on the use of Twitter by campus newspaper staff to find out how much of this particular social media was used by different sized newspaper staff. They found that the use of Twitter is changing. Its first use was as a way to provide updates on stories published in other venues. Today, however, student reporters use Twitter to increase the social network for media workers who need to be aware of the conversations taking place in the cyber world (Boyle & Zuegner, 2015).

Pavlovic and Ljajic (2017) looked more generally into how journalism students use various technology types to prepare for and complete their journalism assignments and found that students are using technology for presentations, but not for completing other assignments.

Like Boyle and Zuegner (2015), Pavlovic and Ljajic explained how the use of communications technology, still in its infancy, would likely continue to grow and influence the lived experiences of college journalism students. However, similar to Boyle and Zuegner's (2015) study, Pavlovic and Ljajic's study was severely limited by its demographics (i.e., one school in Serbia and only 50 participants). Pavlovic and Ljajic's study stands as another example of studies concluding that modern media technologies play an important and rapidly changing role in students' lived experiences participating in journalism and mass communication studies today.

The Problem and the Gap in the Research

The problem addressed in this current research was how too many school administrators and key faculty members are confused or have a poor understanding of what college student-run media programs can do for the students and the school. Additionally, those same administrators and faculty members do not understand how teachers and administrators influence these lived experiences and maximize participation advantages (Hamilton, 2014). Nah et al. (2014) explained that college journalism could contribute to the community, citizenship, and civil society. However, after interviewing several university provosts, Hamilton (2014) discovered that they did not feel that they understood how these organizations work or how they contribute to the school. Castillo-Montoya (2018) explained that the quest for academic rigor often overlooks the contribution that students' lived experiences make and how those experiences impact the students' ability to advance their academic potential. Other researchers, such as Madison (2014) and Smeltzer and Hearn (2015), suggested that specific, student-based research in this field might go far to alleviate this problem.

As an example of this confusion, Madison (2014) discussed the rapid changes in journalism education prompted by the digital age and wondered how journalism students, who

are often asked to produce content on par with professionals, accomplish this feat. In describing communities of practice, Madison expressed concern that administrators and educators must remain alert to the genuine possibility that students could be used simply as free labor. His research, however, was limited by not asking what the students feel about these communities of practice and how well they interact with them (Madison, 2014). The same is true for the research by Nah et al. (2014) already mentioned. For example, if there are significant differences between the educational advantages of commercially motivated journalism versus community service-oriented journalism, educators and administrators need to know that. Unfortunately, the research to answer these questions is sparse and not specific.

Bockino (2017), for example, suggested a close coupling of the student newspaper staff, their audience, and advertisers outside the school, much the same as it might be for employees working in a professional environment after graduation. Bockino utilized a survey administered by the Associated Collegiate Press to over 1,000 college newspaper advisors to examine the pedagogical value of the college newspaper experience. In this study, Bockino explained that when student newspapers are supported financially by the school, they are less likely to be involved in the commercial processes that newspapers outside academia must use to survive. He argued that without these stresses, the pedagogical value of having a student newspaper on campus is diminished. The primary weakness of Bockino's study is similar to that of Madison's (2014) study, in that Bockino's data, gathered from a survey conducted on faculty advisors, left out direct student input. Understanding how these various factors influence student-run media workers, using direct communications with the affected parties, was an integral part of the purpose of this current research.

In another study examining the effects of corporatization on the freedom of expression within American Universities, Smeltzer and Hearn (2015) expressed concern that students are avoiding engagement in activities that could draw them into conflict with the corporate nature of the university. While Smeltzer and Hearn (2015) made a significant effort to explain the problem, they did not approach students to get their personal feelings about how this corporatization impacts their lived experiences. As in the Bockino (2017) study, Smeltzer and Hearn suggested a need for more nuanced and student-specific research to examine how students feel these issues impact their self-efficacy regarding the practice of college journalism.

Summary

Chapter Two supported Bandura's (1991) social cognitive theory of self-regulation as a framework for this transcendental phenomenological study. The three reciprocal determinants can provide an organized and nuanced framework covering the entire participation phenomenon in college student-run media. The theory also suggests a central focus on student perceived sense of self-efficacy that I used for this transcendental phenomenological study. The research explored in this review shows how each determinant acts as an integral part of the phenomenon; each in need of separate consideration, yet inexorably intertwined with the other three determinants. This intertwining, and the relative strengths of the various elements of personality traits that influence academic success, pointed firmly toward self-efficacy as an effective tool for understanding the effects of influences on the lived experience.

In this chapter, I also examined the advantages of increased student self-efficacy. First, I explored the research describing the general advantages of extracurricular activities. Then, I focused on the advantages of increased self-efficacy with multiple sources confirming its primacy as a measure of predicting student success. The combined effect of this examined

research confirmed self-efficacy as an appropriate tool for understanding the role of the three determinants.

The research showed that major cultural shifts are occurring in journalism. The movement to social media and other new communication technologies and new and confusing legal concerns increases the potential stress of participation and possibly has a significant influence on participants' lived experiences. However, little research provides a comprehensive and in-depth picture of the phenomenon from the participant's perspective (Madison, 2014; Smeltzer & Hearn, 2015).

In a study on how networking within a professional context improves student self-efficacy, Anders (2018) found that understanding how to promote self-efficacy in college students should be a primary challenge for education researchers. Similarly, Peaslee (2017) explained that college faculty is in a unique position to have a positive impact on their student's self-efficacy. However, more research, and more targeted research, will help educators and administrators structure their pedagogy to be more likely to achieve positive results. This current study allows administrators and faculty to fill that gap in the current body of knowledge and help college administrators and faculty make better decisions regarding policy and pedagogy related to student participation in college student-run media.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

Qualitative research, according to Creswell (2013), is an excellent choice for research. The excellence of this choice is especially apparent when the information needed is nuanced, when the lived experiences vary from participant to participant, when the phenomenon needs to be observed in its natural setting, when the description needs to focus on the participant's perspective, or when the lived experiences are best captured with rich data and thick descriptions. In this study, each participant's lived experiences were a uniquely interwoven tapestry of the reciprocal determinations, as explained by Bandura's (1991) social cognitive theory. Therefore, I used a qualitative method to understand how college student-run media participation influences college students' perceived sense of self-efficacy. The qualitative design used for this research was a transcendental phenomenological study (Moustakas, 1994). The results of a transcendental phenomenological study provided a more nuanced and holistic view of the phenomenon selected for research. Using rich data and thick descriptions, the results of this study provide empirical evidence for understanding the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994) and fill a gap in the research that was previously lacking (Elliot, et al., 2017; Madison, 2014; Smeltzer & Hearn, 2015).

Chapter Three includes an explanation of the design, restatement of the research questions, and further explanation of the setting and participant considerations. The procedures and the role of the researcher are explained. This chapter also addresses how I collected and analyzed data and how I weaved trustworthiness and ethics into the entire work. The chapter ends with a summary.

Design

Creswell and Poth (2018) explained that defining qualitative research has become more difficult over the years because modern researchers are hesitant to propose a fixed definition. However, considering the key elements of this study (Creswell and Poth, 2013), the theoretical framework that informed the study, the methods used for data collection, and how data were analyzed through inductive and deductive reasoning, this research perfectly fit the qualitative profile outlined by Creswell and Poth (2013). The best choice for this study was to select a qualitative design, and the specific qualitative design used was a transcendental phenomenological study (Moustakas, 1994).

Phenomenology has an appropriately strong historical background to support this study. Groenewald (2004) wrote that phenomenology could be traced back to Kant and Hegel. Creswell (2013) explained that phenomenological research has its historical roots in sociology and draws extensively from Edmund Husserl's and Clark Moustakas's work as it expanded on Husserl's writings. Transcendental phenomenology is especially popular in the health sciences and educational studies, and so should be familiar to those using this study's results in educational fields. Creswell and Poth (2018) considered transcendental phenomenology a return to the more traditional philosophical study perspectives since a transcendental phenomenology is used to find the common essence within the lived experiences of several people joined together in a community of interest (Moustakas, 1994). For this transcendental phenomenological study, I collected data through detailed interviews, individual media projects, and observations of student-run media group activities. Understanding how students perceive that these experiences impact their sense of self-efficacy required an understanding of the common essence of their lived experiences.

There are four major components to a transcendental phenomenological study, according to Moustakas (1994). The first of these is epoché, or bracketing of the phenomenon, by acknowledging and then bracketing out the researcher's biases. An established epoché is especially important for this research because of my experiences, which I discuss later in this chapter. The second major component is a phenomenological reduction, a process in which the researcher creates a composite textual description of the lived experiences. For this research, a careful, detailed transcription of all observations and interviews was required. The third component is the creation of a composite structural description of the phenomenon through imaginative variation. Bracketing was still required in this phase. Imaginative variation required that I, as the researcher, make inferences and seek meaning from the data while using intelligence gained from the participants' experiences without biasing the work. Finally, as the researcher, I created a synthesis of composite textural and structural descriptions. This final synthesis was the culmination of the research. It is valuable because it provided interpreted data to understand how students perceive that their college media participation impacts their sense of self-efficacy. The procedures section below includes more details on exactly how each of these components was accomplished in this research.

Phenomenological investigations are an ideal way to examine a topic, such as the topic in this study. In the case of this transcendental phenomenological study, the research questions involved "autobiographical meanings and values as well as involving social meanings and significance" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 103). A transcendental phenomenological approach offers a systematic way of organizing data gathered from multiple participants, each with their personal experiences that might otherwise be an overwhelmingly complicated issue.

Moustakas (1994) explained that the researcher's first challenge is to find a topic that has both social and personal significance (p. 104). In this current study, I believed that this topic was socially important, if for no other reason than the recent controversies related to freedom of speech on campus. These recent controversies have added social pressure to those participating in college media staff's lived experiences. I was also personally interested because the study offered me the chance to examine student experiences in an area where I have worked for over a decade. Creswell and Poth (2018) suggested that one should use a phenomenological study when it is important to understand the lived experience to provide data for developing policies and practices or obtain a deeper understanding of the lived experience. One benefit of this study is that it provides data not found in recent research (Hamilton, 2014). Finally, Creswell and Poth (2018) explained that a transcendental phenomenological study is beneficial for novice researchers looking to provide structure for their work.

Research Questions

CRQ

What are college students' perceptions of how participation in college student-run media impacts their sense of self-efficacy?

Research SQs

SQ1: What are college students' perceptions of how environmental determinants related to their participation in college student-run media impact their sense of self-efficacy?

SQ2: What are college students' perceptions of how behavioral determinants related to their participation in college student-run media impact their sense of self-efficacy?

SQ3: What are college students' perceptions of how personal factors related to their participation in college student-run media impact their sense of self-efficacy?

Setting

For this study, I chose a single Mid-Atlantic university with a student-run campus news service of which the students had primary editorial control over the production content. I used a pseudonym to represent the selected school in all public documents. Creswell and Poth (2018) explained that selecting a single site for a phenomenological study allows researchers to avoid the problem of too broad a database that makes finding common themes difficult. For this study, the selected site was a medium-sized college with 5,000 to 15,000 students. This size designation accords with business-standard definitions for college size (CollegeData.com, 2018). The choice of a midsized, Mid-Atlantic college was primarily made to find a school that allows for as much transferability as possible. While this choice limited transferability to very large or very small schools, since all schools have unique populations, demographics, and social personalities, the issue of transferability will always exist to some measure. Using a midsized school also increased the chances of finding the required number of participants over the choice of a smaller school, while it avoided the problem of too broad a database mentioned by Creswell and Poth (2018).

Student editorial control means that students run the media and have the final say in editorial decisions. Faculty advisors are appropriate if they do not have veto authority over editorial decisions. The student editorial control requirement removed from consideration campus publications that were primarily academic courses or administratively controlled productions. I removed these media to allow for the most complete student lived experiences. The concern was that getting a good grade might too heavily influence the lived experiences if the production was primarily a graded class. Additionally, under college administrative control, a lack of decision-making opportunities might diminish the full range of the lived experiences.

Participants

For this study, I used a mixture of purposeful and maximum variation sampling to select 13 full-time undergraduate students. The selected students had all already worked at least 1 semester on staff and were currently active with the service at the personal interview time. In this study, I defined current activity as presently holding a named position and working an average minimum of 5 hours per week exclusively on those duties (Fosnacht et al., 2017).

According to Creswell (2013), maximum variation helps ensure that multiple perspectives and diverse views are represented. Maximum variation was especially important in this study as it allowed for a more complete and nuanced understanding of how activities working in a college campus media might impact student perceptions of self-efficacy in various ways. Purposeful sampling ensured that participants could fulfill the research purpose and give complete and informed answers to interview questions (Creswell, 2013). I used purposeful sampling to select participants from pools of qualified students provided by the school administration, media advisors, and student media managers. Compensation, sex, race, religion, or any other demographic except age was not an initial requirement or disqualifying factor. However, age was a qualifying factor to avoid needing parental permission to allow an individual to participate. Otherwise, to ensure a diverse population of participants, I selected the final candidates for the study using varied demographics to allow for maximum variation in sampling and as broad a range of demographic diversity as possible (Moustakas, 1994).

The total sample size was 13 participants. According to Fusch and Ness (2015), data saturation in qualitative research is reached after three states are achieved. First, no new data is being produced with each new interview. Second, no new themes or coding elements are discovered. Third, enough information has been gathered for other researchers to duplicate the

study. The interview questions were structured so that each participant was asked the same questions (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Additional snowball sampling was required to achieve the numbers needed to reach saturation (Creswell, 2013). For detailed information on data saturation for this study, see the subsection Individual Interviews under the Data Collection section.

Procedures

Following a successful proposal defense, I was granted approval to conduct the study from the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB; see Appendix A). Approval was also required from the college administration at the school selected as the study site. A copy of that approval is on file but not attached with this document to protect the privacy of the participant institution. No other administrative approvals were required. After the approvals were received, the participants for the study were selected. Only after having informed participants of the nature of the study in the recruitment letter (see Appendix B), and those participants signed an Informed Consent Form agreeing to participate (see Appendix C), was data collection started. Data were collected through in-depth, semistructured, open-ended interviews, individual media projects, and researcher observations of student-run media group activities.

After the initial interviews were completed, the individual media projects collected, and observations concluded, data analysis began. I used AtlasTi computer software to assist with data handling and analysis due to its superior capability to create logic maps and its overall reputation for quality. I also used member checking and transcript review to ensure the transcribed records accurately reflected the study participants' lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This research culminated with a complete description of the phenomenon using all the information gathered as described above. This final product contained the essence of the lived experiences. For this study, I have included a description of my personal experiences with the phenomenon as part of the bracketing procedure. This description allowed me to focus on only the participants' lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994). To mitigate the potential for unintended researcher bias, I used regular personal journaling to monitor and contain, to the level possible, any bias (Moustakas, 1994).

The Researcher's Role

The primary researcher for any study acts as a key human instrument in collecting, analyzing, and eventually presenting the data. The validity of the process, especially in a transcendental phenomenological study, will often depend on that researcher's validity as a human instrument. For a transcendental phenomenological study, the ability to maintain epoché during data collection and analysis is critical to the study's validity. However, the researcher's passions and skills also factor into their ability to plan a study, select proper questions, and understand the answers within their given context. Then, having collected and analyzed the data using epoché to the level possible, their ability as an instrument of accurate, descriptive writing is tested. The brief introduction below was designed to address my abilities as a human instrument in a transcendental phenomenological study.

I currently work as a journalism instructor at Southern Virginia University. For the past 14 years, I also worked as their faculty advisor for the campus newspaper. As an undergraduate student at Salisbury University, I was a reporter for the student newspaper for 2 years before I began work as a full-time reporter right after graduation. I later worked as a freelance writer for

more than 15 years for various publications. My lived experience with this phenomenon is, therefore, significant.

However, I understood the need for bracketing out, as much as possible, the biases I have attached to my lived experiences for this transcendental phenomenological study (Moustakas, 1994). Creswell and Poth (2018) also explained that epoché, or bracketing, helps the researcher suspend their understanding of the phenomenon and generate a new curiosity. Moustakas (1994) suggested that researchers include their own lived experiences with the phenomenon as part of the data collected. For this study, I followed the advice of Creswell and Poth (2018) and only used personal reflections at the beginning of the phenomenological study and here, in Chapter Three. With personal journaling and a regular examination of my ongoing emotions and motivations, I alleviated most potential bias problems. As the researcher, I had no personal or professional relationship with any of the participants or the research site used in this study.

Data Collection

Creswell and Poth (2018) explained that there are seven basic data collection activities, including locating the site, gaining access, selecting a sample, collecting data, recording the data, dealing with field issues, and securing all data. For this study, I examined each of these steps, specifically to identify all ethical considerations. Progress through each step was contingent upon all ethical considerations being satisfied. The data sources were interviews, individual media projects, and observations of student-media group activities. These varied data collection techniques were chosen to provide a diversity of expression that helps discover the phenomenon's essence (Creswell, 2013).

Data collection began with individual interviews to allow participants to speak freely, without their peers present or the prompting or opinions of other participants. "Typically in the

phenomenological investigation, the long interview is the method through which data is collected on the topic in question” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 114). Further, Moustakas explained that personal interviews also take away the pressure of writing responses where grammar and style may hinder the writing.

After the individual interviews, the second data collection method was collecting a writing or other media sample. The individual was asked to complete a media project to describe the single best experience they have had while working as a staff member for their media service. This data collection came after the personal interviews to allow the participants to think about what project they felt would best express their lived experiences. The experience they chose and the media form they used to describe it proved valuable in interpreting the participants’ lived experiences.

The third data collection method was my observations of student-media group activities (see Appendix D). These observations covered a broad range of group activities over several weeks. School restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated that most of these meetings occurred online. I attempted to remain as unobtrusive as possible during these observations. The hope was that these observations would provide a more in-depth and more nuanced insight into the regular staff interactions.

I used two standard digital recorders to record all interviews, and a professional transcriptionist transcribed most of the interview recordings. Observations of student-run media group activities were recorded using Voice Record Pro, a digital recording program. Handwritten notes recorded on the question sheet were used to timestamp each question to its digital recording location. Notes taken during observations of student-run media group activities were personally transcribed and added to the collected data. Most of the student projects were

textual, and those documents were added to the data just as they were received. In the two cases when a media sample was included with the text, the participants' textual description was complete enough that no additional researcher description of the media example was needed.

Individual Interviews

For a transcendental phenomenological study, interviews are, appropriately, the primary source of data (Creswell, 2013). The interviews for this study were semistructured, in that there was an established set of open-ended questions that I asked each participant. Follow-up questions, driven by the participant's answers to the standard questions, were needed to ensure complete data-rich answers. To help ensure consistency throughout the various interviews, I set a time constraint of 60 to 90 minutes for the first interview. I also created a standard set of core questions aligned with the study's philosophical framework. If later analysis indicated a need for follow-up questions, I applied similar constraints. I recorded all interviews and established pseudonyms for both the participants and the school they attended to protect anonymity. Thirteen participants were selected for this study.

In their study on sample size determination to achieve saturation for interview research, Francis et al. (2010) found that generally, only 12 interviews were needed to find 97% of the significant codes. To confirm data saturation after the initial 10 interviews, I used a stopping criterion of three interviews without significant additional data, themes, or coding (Francis et al., 2010; Fusch & Ness, 2015). To increase the number of interviews when saturation was not reached by 10, snowball sampling increased participant numbers. Below is a list of the interview questions with the CRQ and/or the related SQ noted in parentheses for each, followed by a justification for each question.

1. Please introduce yourself and give me a little background on your experiences with campus media production. (SQ3)
2. Please explain what you do in your current position with (media name). (CRQ)
3. Please describe with a detailed word picture the physical environment where you do your work with (media name). (SQ1)
4. Now, describe with a similarly detailed word picture the social environment specific to (media name). (SQ1)
5. Describe the biggest personal challenge or challenges (embarrassments, problems, mistakes) you have faced during your tenure with (media name). (SQ2)
6. Describe the biggest success or successes you have had while working for (media name). (SQ2)
7. How have your views on journalism changed since you began working at (media name)? (SQ3)
8. How has your social life outside of your work with (media name) changed since you began working (media name)? (SQ3)
9. How has your academic life changed since you started working at (media name)? (SQ3)
10. How has your self-confidence in your ability to do journalism changed since you started working (media name)? (CRQ)
11. How has your overall self-confidence changed since you started working for (media name)?

I designed all these interview questions to discover how students describe the three determinants of Bandura's (2012) triadic reciprocal determination model. Using immediate

member checking and later transcript reviews, each participant had an opportunity to expand on each of the questions presented during the interview. Follow-up questions during the interviews expanded on the theme of the question as new and interesting information was uncovered. I added or modified these questions as discoveries emerged during the interviewing process. None of the participants required more than one interview session. However, I was able to speak informally with a majority of the participants in informal meetings. None of these informal meetings were recorded except as personal impressions in my journal.

Interview Questions 1 and 2 are general introductory questions to allow the interviewee to warm up to the subject and focus their attention on the specific areas that address the lived experiences' structural and textual descriptions (Moustakas, 1994). Interview Questions 3 through 5 were focused on each element of Bandura's (2012) triadic reciprocal determination model. Interview Questions 6 through 9 provided data about the changes that had occurred due to the lived experiences of participation in a student-run college media service.

Finally, Interview Questions 10 and 11 provided the participants with an opportunity to self-evaluate their lived experiences in the context of self-efficacy. These questions appeared at the end of the interview to allow the participants to reflect on previous answers that might help them construct more thoughtful and nuanced descriptions.

Media Projects

Elliot et al. (2017) described the value of various media types in understanding the lived experiences of study participants. Therefore, after the interviews, participants for this study were asked to complete a media project in which they described the single best experience they have had while working as a staff member for their school's student-run media service. Participants were allowed to complete the project in any media form: written, video, audio, or photo essay.

Each participant determined the length and type of project they would complete. For example, the project could be a single frame cartoon drawing, a 15-page photo essay, or perhaps a written story of the event. Any type or length of project was acceptable as long as the project could stand alone in telling a story. If needed, the project could be paired with a written explanation describing its intended meaning.

A 1-month time limit encouraged timely completion. This individual media project allowed participants to have more thoughtful and personal expressions than they might otherwise provide during the semistructured interview. The project also helped provide the individualized and nuanced data that Moustakas (1994) discussed as being key to a phenomenological study. The type, length, and topic participants chose for the project provided additional valuable insight into the depth and nature of their lived experiences.

Observations

Because of this phenomenon's complex nature and the potentially large deviations in lived experiences, I made a point to observe key interactions among the staff and note the tone of the social interactions that help describe the environmental, behavioral, and personal factors influencing the interactions. The observations were focused on obtaining a detailed description of the working environment, both physical and social. The observations then were focused more specifically on the interactions of environmental, behavioral, and personal determinants. I used a nonparticipant observation method (Creswell & Poth, 2018) and unannounced visits to various staff meetings or work–training sessions. The purpose of these visits was to gather data describing, in detail, the behaviors of participants during group interactions and how the triadic determinants play a role in those interactions. Data from these observations were added to the data gleaned from the interviews and projects to establish the themes that emerged during data

analysis. A protocol form to record these observations is contained in Appendix D. This third data collection method increased the study's credibility by providing data triangulation between personal interviews, personal projects, and observed group settings and better defined the role of triadic reciprocal determinants regarding self-efficacy (Bandura, 2012).

Data Analysis

A transcendental phenomenological study to provide unbiased and accurate descriptions of the lived experiences must utilize a systematic design for data analysis (Moustakas, 1994). This section includes an explanation of the data analysis procedures and rationale for each type of data collected. The specific steps of the analysis were based on Creswell (2013) and Moustakas (1994). For this study, I used three types of data collection: individual interviews, media projects, and observations of student-run media group activities. In the case of nontextual media projects or pictures or graphics created during observations, I transcribed the participant explanations of the meaning of their project and inserted these transcriptions into the data pool. I then used those participant interpretations during data analysis (Elliot et al., 2017). After this process, I examined all three types of data collected using the same analysis procedures. In each case, the data were collected, transcribed into text, and then analyzed using epoché, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis of composite textural and composite structural descriptions as explained below. This approach added significantly to the narrative's rich data and thick descriptions with pertinent images and graphics included in the final report (Elliot et al., 2017).

Before beginning the actual analysis process, and after approval from all the institutions concerned, I created a filing system to track all data produced in both recorded and textual form. I then used a qualitative data analysis system, AtlasTi, to process most of the data. All the data

were collected, recorded, and transcribed with the permission of the participants. I read through the entire texts of the collected transcripts several times to obtain a composite view of the data. I made notes in the margins and the researcher's journal and within the AtlasTi program as a part of every reading. At this point, I began to form initial ideas for potential code designations. Additional readings revealed a more definitive list of recurring or significant data statements (Moustakas, 1994). Throughout this process, I ensured that each step was completed following a transcendental phenomenological study's primary suppositions according to the design laid out by Moustakas (1994).

Moustakas (1994) noted the "first and perhaps most significant presupposition" (p. 60) in transcendental phenomenology is that of the epoché process. Epoché is a Greek word describing the state where one refrains from everyday judgments and ways of seeing things. Within this process, the researcher sets aside their biases and preconceived notions about the phenomenon and approaches the lived experience with a fresh look. I used the epoché process throughout the entire study. However, during the initial reading and evaluation phases, this process was critical. Moustakas explained that the researcher must immerse themselves entirely in the world they are studying without biases and prejudgments. The epoché process is never perfect but remains an important first step in removing prejudice from research. Only to the level it succeeds, can the next step, phenomenological reduction, be successful. I recorded a regular evaluation of my success at bracketing and epoché in my journal, which continued throughout the data analysis process.

In a transcendental phenomenological study, the next major component is a transcendental phenomenological reduction (Moustakas, 1994). The goal of phenomenological reduction was to describe in textual language, using rich data and thick description, precisely

what the participant was seeing and experiencing related to the lived experience of participating in college media and then perceiving a change in self-efficacy. This textual description includes what one sees in the external object and what can be understood as occurring in consciousness (Moustakas, 1994). The reduction process also requires multiple readings of the gathered data looking for horizontal elements (Moustakas, 1994). Horizons are meanings that stand out as invariant elements of the lived experience (Moustakas, 1994). I used memoing and coding to identify any suspected horizons or other common words and themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This process was vital in organizing and recognizing those and themes. I used the AtlasTi system to record and organize these codes and memos.

Each time a researcher looks at a phenomenon from a different angle or viewpoint, they are more likely to see what is texturally meaningful and essential to the lived experience. However, van Manen (2017) also explained that a researcher can never discover all the possible horizons. Instead, they must determine when there is enough description to identify the horizons that are invariant descriptions of the lived experience under study. I knew I had reached this point when continued reading of the data no longer revealed new and significant invariant horizons. At that point, I moved on to the next step, imaginative variation.

If a transcendental phenomenological reduction is the “what” of the phenomenon, then imaginative variation is the “how” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 98). The goal of imaginative variation is to create a structural description of the lived experience. Imaginative variation means that I had to imagine how these phenomena under study might occur and find the essential structures of the phenomena that remained even after the variations. In other words, what experiences in participation within a college student-run media service are essential for a student to experience a change in their sense of self-efficacy? “In this phase of the process the structures of the lived

experience are revealed; these are the conditions that must exist for something to appear” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 98). This step’s final product is a composite structural description that integrates all the individual structural elements discovered during imaginative variation. The coding and memoing completed in the previous step continued to provide structure to this process. Using the composite structural description and composite textural description, I created a synthesis of the two.

This research’s final product was a complete description of the phenomenon using all the information gathered. Chapters Four and Five contain the essence of the lived experiences and, therefore, the culmination of the research (Moustakas, 1994). Together, Chapters Four and Five required integrating the textural and structural descriptions into a single report that revealed the essence of the lived experiences. Using rich data and thick descriptions, those two chapters provide a clear picture of the participants’ lived experiences and how they impacted their sense of self-efficacy.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is vital to the validity of this study. The following is a discussion of the steps needed to support credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Methods used to establish this study’s trustworthiness include triangulation, member checks, prolonged engagement, and other techniques described in more detail below.

Credibility

Credibility is the confidence one can have in the unbiased truth or accuracy in the descriptions of the lived phenomenon (Olivia, 2018). In this case, that phenomenon was experiencing a change in perceived self-efficacy attributed to participation in a college student-run media service. Preskill (2018) wrote, “To me, a story counts as credible evidence as much as

a 0.05 statistical result would” (p. 91). Techniques listed here, drawn primarily from Creswell (2013), support credibility for this study. An open explanation of my prior experiences with this phenomenon and the study participants’ introductions helped mitigate research bias. As much as possible, prolonged engagement increased credibility with both the participants and those who will review the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Member checking, both during data analysis and before publishing the final report, helped ensure the descriptions are accurate (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Perhaps most importantly, rich data and thick descriptions have helped ensure credibility (Creswell, 2013).

Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability, reliability, and validity are words often used interchangeably in qualitative research. They define the potential for another researcher to duplicate a study's results using only the original researcher’s data (Olivia, 2018). Accomplishing dependability begins with detailed field notes and reliably transcribed recordings of all interviews, observations of participant activities, and media projects related to participation in student media activities (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Creswell and Poth (2018) explained that this also means researchers must establish rules for transcription that require even trivial pauses, repeats, and exclamations such as “umm,” to be included in the written transcript. Rules selected during the professional transcription request governed the transcription process. Member checking of transcribed quotes used in this study increased the dependability of the study. Creswell (2013) explained the importance of maintaining a sense of the “reflexive” (p. 44) during the entire process of analyzing the data, so regular reflective journaling was an integral part of the research.

Confirmability is the level of unbiased neutrality inherent in a phenomenological study (Olivia, 2018). Using epoché and bracketing, a transcendental phenomenological study provides

a systematic approach to analyzing data gained from participants' lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994). This design helps erase the problematic conflict between objective and subjective data by allowing researchers to "develop an objective 'essence' through aggregating subjective experiences of several individuals" (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004, p. 32). I used triangulation between the interviews, individual media projects, and information gathered from student-media activity observations to establish confirmability (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, a researcher's journal, regularly kept, with a specific focus on epoché and bracketing, helped identify any bias problems and identify solutions as the research progresses.

Transferability

Transferability is the level to which the study's descriptions and findings can be applied to other locations and situations by other researchers (Olivia, 2018). To establish transferability, I used rich data and thick descriptions that allow the reader to understand the phenomenon's exact circumstances in this present study and evaluate its transferability to other situations (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Ethical Considerations

I drew the ethical considerations for this study primarily from Creswell and Poth (2018), who explained that ethical issues should address three subjects. The first subject is respect for persons, which primarily concerns privacy and consent issues. The second subject is a sincere concern for the participant's welfare, indicated by minimizing harm. The final subject, justice, is maximizing fair treatment and inclusivity. I considered each of these subjects during every step of the research project.

Before beginning data collection, I obtained approval from Liberty University's IRB and the chosen university's school of communications administration. Before participation, all

participants signed a consent form, approved by the appropriate administrative entity at each participating institution. These consent forms explained, at a minimum, the right of participants to withdraw from the study at any time, explained the purpose of the study, explained the way confidentiality was to be protected, explained any known risks to participation, and explained the benefits to participation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I informed all the participants verbally and within the consent form, that they did not have to sign the form or participate in the study. I also explained the consent form details, the purpose of the study, the use of information, and how privacy would be protected. Questions were welcomed and answered before, during, or after the consent form signing. For this study, I did not include any students needing parental consent as participants. If students needing parental consent were present or entered a researcher-observed meeting, I did not record or use their activities in any report or data set.

Interviews for this study did not include leading questions, offer personal impressions, or share personal experiences except as described above for bracketing purposes. In conducting this study and transcribing the data, I did not share the personal experiences or identifiable information with others except as described in the consent agreement. I reported all findings, including those contrary to the general findings, in this study's results. I protected the participants' identities and the school they attend by using fictitious names and composite stories when individual stories could make the participants or their school identifiable. I plan to give copies of the final report to study participants to review and comment on before publication of the final manuscript. I have kept all of the documents, interviews, and digital components of this study in secure, locked locations, only accessible to me. For digital data, this means data are encrypted and stored in a double-password-protected off-campus site.

Summary

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to discover and understand college students' perceptions of the ways their lived experiences while participating in college student-run media have impacted their sense of self-efficacy at a midsized, Mid Atlantic 4-year college. I selected a qualitative method and a transcendental phenomenological study to answer the research questions. I structured my analysis of the data using Moustakas (1994) and Creswell & Poth (2018) as they presented the best structure for describing and understanding the participants' lived experiences. I chose individual interviews, individual media projects, and observations of student-run media group activities as the best vehicles for data collection. In Chapter Three, I also examined the researcher's appropriate role in this study and how my personal biases and experiences might affect the work. Examining my motivations, creating detailed field notes, and reliably transcribing recordings all contributed to the resulting data's dependability and confirmability.

This study is significant because it will help college administrators, academic advisors, and curriculum developers understand the challenges and advantages for those who participate in college student-run media. I used thick descriptions and rich data to describe the phenomenon in detail. A review of the current literature revealed that while this phenomenon is vital to college society, the story of those who participate in college student-run media has yet to be told (Castillo-Montoya, 2018; Madison, 2014). However, the data produced by this research gives voice to those lived experiences.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

This chapter includes the analysis of data collected from interviews, media projects, and observations at a midsized, Mid-Atlantic university where student-run newspaper, radio, and television are present. Three major themes and eight subthemes that directly relate to the study's theoretical framework are identified. A fourth theme, related to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the students' environmental, behavioral, and personal determinants is also included, but only discussed as a part of each of the other themes. This chapter begins with a restatement of the study's purpose, followed by an introduction of the participants, a section on theme development, and the results from the interviews, projects, and observations. The chapter ends with a summary.

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to discover and understand college students' perceptions of the ways their lived experiences while participating in college student-run media have impacted their sense of self-efficacy at a midsized, Mid Atlantic 4-year college. This study was focused on the participants' participation as staff members for their college's student-run media. Participation was defined as more than 5 hours per week, for longer than 1 semester (Fosnacht et al., 2017). Student-run media was defined as a student-media service in which the students make most of the editorial decisions (Drugunalevu & Manarae, 2015). The theory framing this study was Bandura's (1991, 2012) social cognitive theory of self-regulation. Bandura's (2012) triadic reciprocal determination model was used to evaluate how an individual's sense of self-efficacy is influenced by three determinants: environmental, behavioral, and personal factors. The theory suggests that people are not victims

of their environment but can learn from these determinants' interactions mediated by a thinking individual (Bandura, 2012).

Participants

Participants were chosen based on their experience with student-run media. I initially contacted the school of communications at the participant school to get a list of names and perhaps mail and email addresses to send the recruitment letters. Instead, perhaps because of limitations imposed by the COVID-19 restrictions, the school asked that I contact the students directly. I obtained the campus newspaper advisor's name, who suggested I try to contact each media organization's student leaders. I contacted the school's newspaper editor, who agreed to give me a list of newspaper staff members to whom I then emailed recruitment letters. She also provided me contact information for the campus TV and radio station managers. I also contacted them, and they were willing to send me email addresses to contact their staff with recruitment letters. As a result, between November 3 and November 27, I interviewed 13 participants, seven women and six men, in various stages of their undergraduate college education that met the research criteria (see Table 1).

Table 1*Participant Demographics*

Participant	Sex	Age	School year	Staff year	Zoom	Job
1	F	20	Sophomore	1.5	yes	Editorial editor
2	M	21	Senior	2	yes	Radio host
3	M	23	Senior	4		Music manager
4	F	23	Senior	4		Editor in chief
5	M	21	Senior	4		General manager
6	M	20	Junior	2		Personnel manager
7	M	21	Junior	3		Graphic design
8	F	21	Senior	1.5	yes	Treasurer
9	F	21	Junior	2		Marketing
10	M	20	Senior	2.5	yes	Programming
11	F	19	Sophomore	1		Production
12	F	20	Junior	1	yes	Copy editor
13	F	19	Sophomore	2		News editor

Note. Most participants hold multiple positions on staff.

Of the 13 participants, eight were interviewed in person, and five were interviewed using Zoom Video Communications software over the Internet. For the in-person interviews, I was required to set up a safe location and follow all the meeting rules that the participant university had put into place to protect its students during the pandemic. At the initial meeting with the participant, I went over the informed consent form, answered any questions they had, and explained the project's details following individual media projects protocol. After the consent form was signed, the interview consisted of reading the interview questions in the same order for every participant. I observed four group meetings over 3 weeks, starting with the first interview. All the participants were observed participating in at least one meeting. The interviews were all recorded and transcribed later. Following is a brief description of the student participants.

Alexa, Participant 1

At the time of the interview, Alexa (pseudonym), a White female, was a 20-year-old sophomore attending a midsized university in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. She

was also the editorial page editor for her school's student-run newspaper and had been on staff for approximately 1.5 years. Her personality was upbeat and outgoing. During the interview, Alexa showed no hesitation at speaking openly about her experience with the newspaper staff. Alexa began with the staff as an opinion columnist and had since moved up to the editor position. At the time of the interview, she was slated to be the next editor in chief for the paper. She appeared to be very proud of her work as a staff member.

Bob, Participant 2

At the time of the interview, Bob (pseudonym), a White male, was a 21-year-old senior attending a midsized university in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. He was working as a radio host for a regular sports program running on its student-run radio station. Bob had been on staff for 2 years. He seemed very excited about his work at the radio station and his prospects after graduation in broadcast journalism. Bob spoke excitedly during the interview and with a little nostalgia about his graduation and past work with the radio station. Bob was slated to graduate the month following this interview.

Charles, Participant 3

At the time of the interview, Charles (pseudonym), a White male, was a fifth-year senior at a midsized university in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States and the music manager for the radio station. Still, like many others on staff, he had served in many positions since he began working for the radio station 5 years before this interview. Charles spoke openly about his reasons for taking 5 years instead of the usual 4 to complete his degree. He also spoke candidly about the up and downs of the radio station he has observed over the past 5 years. Charles spoke with authority on the business politics of the student-run radio station.

Debbie, Participant 4

Debbie (pseudonym), a White female, was a 21-year-old senior at the time of the interview, who had spent 4 years on the staff of her university's student-run newspaper at a midsized university in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. She was the editor in chief but preparing to graduate the month after this interview took place. Debbie was quietly reserved during the interview, which was a little surprising for the person in charge of a group of more than 25 student administrators, reporters, and photographers. She had been with the newspaper for 4 years and started as a copy editor. While otherwise quiet and reserved, Debbie was very professional and straightforward in dealing with her staff. She seemed to be a polite and caring person who is passionate about making the newspaper the best it can be. Her staff treated her with respect and seemed to care for her as much as she cared for them.

Eddie, Participant 5

At the time of the interview, Eddie (pseudonym), a White male, was 21-years-old and a senior at a midsized university in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. He was also the general manager of the campus student-run radio station. Eddie had been on the staff of the station for 4 years and was previously the music manager. Judging from how he answered the questions during the interview, it seemed that Eddie was excited and passionate about his work and took great pride in his staff's quality. He also seemed excited about this study, and his friendly relationship with his staff made it easy to use snowball recruiting to gain additional participants.

Frank, Participant 6

At the time of the interview, Frank (pseudonym), a White male, was a 20-year-old junior at a midsized university in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. He was working as the

personnel manager for the student-run radio station at the university where he has been on staff for 2 years. Frank spoke quickly and was very expressive; he obviously enjoyed telling a story. Frank originally joined the radio station staff as a freshman after he attended a club fair and was introduced to the program. Since then, like many others on the staff, he has held many positions, including time behind the microphone. Frank was passionate about his work as a personnel manager and viewed his job as maintaining discipline in a fun and enjoyable way, even when someone is being corrected. He seemed to have the fun and funny personality that allowed him to make that work.

George, Participant 7

At the time the interview, George (pseudonym), a White male, was a 21-year-old graphic design manager for his campus student-run radio station at a midsized university in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. He was a junior who had been at the radio station for 3 years. After hearing about it in one of his first communication classes, he joined the group when he was looking for something to do. Along with his graphic design duties, George does several on-air programs as a cohost with other students. George seemed to be quiet, and even shy, during the interview until he was asked questions about his work at the radio station. Then, he opened up and enthusiastically wanted to share his positive experiences with the radio station and the staff that works there with him.

Hannah, Participant 8

At the time of the interview, Hannah (pseudonym), a White female, was a 21-year-old senior at a midsized university in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. While she was working as treasurer for the TV station, she had also participated in many TV production capacities, from camera operator to director. Hannah was in her third semester with the TV

station. During her interview, she seemed somewhat reserved, even distracted. However, I soon learned that the interview day was also a production day and her thoughts kept returning to her duties there. Regardless, her enthusiasm for the work she does for the TV station and her planned future in communications seemed to draw her out. She was very articulate and seemed to know the ins and outs of TV production intimately.

Janet, Participant 9

At the time of the interview, Janet (pseudonym), a White female, was a junior and the marketing manager for the student-run radio station at a midsized university in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. She had been on staff with the station for 2 years. Smiles and laughter came easy for her, and she spoke with enthusiasm about the social relationships she had with the other staff at the station. She joined the staff as a freshman and had since become the host of her own program.

Kohl, Participant 10

At the time of the interview, Kohl (pseudonym), a White male, was a 20-year-old senior at a midsized university in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. In his second year with the station, he worked as the programming manager for the student-run radio station at the university. Kohl seemed to be very detail-oriented as his job as programming manager requires that he make sure all the music played at the station meets the required rules, laws, and regulations. However, Kohl was also an outspoken and enthusiastic promoter of the station, its staff, and the progress he said they have made over the last few years.

Marie, Participant 11

At the time of the interview, Marie (pseudonym), a White female, was a sophomore at a midsized university in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Marie was working as the

student-run radio station's production manager. Marie was a well-spoken 19-year-old who came to the university after hearing about the student-run radio station and the opportunities there. Although only a few hours away, Marie said she feels far from home and finds her radio station relationships necessary in filling that void.

Nancy, Participant 12

At the time of the interview, Nancy (pseudonym), is a White female, was 20 years old junior and working as a copy editor for a student-run newspaper at a midsized university in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. She was introduced to the newspaper opportunity by her roommate who was already on staff. Nancy seemed to be detail-oriented and, along with her copy-editing duties, also worked as a writing center consultant at the university. Nancy answered all the questions during the interview with youthful enthusiasm; however, her dedication to professional standards was evident. She appeared to be a fun-loving person who took her job responsibilities very seriously.

Paul, Participant 13

At the time of the interview, Paul (pseudonym), a White male, was a 19-year-old sophomore news editor who approached his job with the student-run newspaper as one might expect from a seasoned professional. Paul was attending a midsized university in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States and had been on staff with the newspaper for 2 years. During the interview, Paul's answers were straightforward and revealed how seriously he took this job and how he felt his articles served the campus community for good. His answers also revealed how much he enjoyed the work, regardless of the additional stress it brought to his life.

Results

Theme Development

A transcendental phenomenological study to provide unbiased and accurate descriptions of the lived experiences must utilize a systematic design for data analysis (Moustakas, 1994). For this study, I used three types of data collection: individual interviews, media projects, and observations of student-media group activities. In each case, the data were collected, transcribed into text, and then analyzed using epoché, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis of composite textural and composite structural descriptions.

My experience in this field made understanding the data and the implications easier through familiarity with the college media environment and the sometimes-unique language peculiar to the media profession. However, as Creswell and Poth (2018) explained, epoché, or bracketing, is needed to help the researcher suspend their understanding of the phenomenon and generate a new curiosity. For this study, I followed Creswell and Poth's (2018) advice, especially during the data collection and analysis phases of this work. I bracketed out personal experiences with the phenomenon to the level possible. Personal journaling, and a regular examination of my ongoing emotions and motivations, I believe, alleviated most of the potential problems of bias.

The first step in the analysis was to read through the entire text of the various data sources to obtain a composite view. From this point forward, using deductive reasoning, I began recording common themes present in the material. As part of this initial evaluation, I attempted to immerse myself in the world the participants were describing while maintaining a state of epoché, which refers to a state in which the researcher sets aside biases and preconceived notions about the phenomenon and approaches the lived experience with a fresh look. At this point, I

also began a more regular series of entries into my research journal. Second and subsequent readings included coding and recoding the data to confirm the emerging themes using the AtlasTi computer software to analyze qualitative data.

Specific themes began to emerge. However, during the initial reading, it became clear that COVID-19 would play a role in each of these themes manifest in the participant's lived experience. The effects of COVID-19 had significant impacts on all the participants' experiences within the context of every theme and subtheme discovered. While this theme was not listed or addressed separately, I examined its effects within each theme's discussion.

Using phenomenological reduction aided by coding and analysis through AtlasTi, I began to describe textually, using rich data and thick descriptions, precisely what the participants were seeing, doing, and experiencing as they participated in student-run media. These experiences were grouped into themes that changed with the nuanced understanding that additional analysis provided. Several readings and constant code analysis were needed to discover the invariant horizons or common descriptions of the lived experiences under study. A complete list of the codes used to accomplish this analysis phase is not included in this work. However, a list of the top 25 codes, how often they were used, and which theme they were initially assigned is included in Table 2.

Table 2*List of 25 Top Used Codes and Their Associated Themes*

Code	Frequency	Code group
Friend	37	Behavioral factors
COVID	22	COVID-19 factors
COVID effects on the work environment	19	COVID-19 factors
Better understanding of the job	16	Behavioral factors
Self-confidence increased	15	Behavioral factors Personal factors
References to fun	13	Social and physical environment Personal factors
Improved skills	11	Behavioral factors
Accomplishments	10	Social and physical environment Personal factors
Collaboration	9	Social and physical environment
Academic changes	9	Behavioral factors
Social nature of staff good	8	Social and physical environment Behavioral factors
Social network helped out a freshman	8	Social and physical environment Behavioral factors Personal factors
Self-confidence at job up	8	Behavioral factors Personal factors
Family feel on staff	8	Behavioral factors
Community service	8	Social and physical environment Personal factors
Busy	8	Social and physical environment Behavioral factors
Wider social group	7	Social and physical environment
Learned to prioritize time	7	Behavioral factors
Learned from student leadership	7	Behavioral factors
Leadership skills increased	7	Behavioral factors
Future projects/goals discovered	7	Social and physical environment
Variety of skills developed	6	Social and physical environment Behavioral factors
Team building learned	6	Social and physical environment
Relaxing Environment	6	Personal factors
Outside social life influenced	6	Social and physical environment

Note. Some code names were modified for clarity.

Further readings using imaginative variation helped create and fine-tune a list of common themes needed to describe the essential structure of the phenomena under study, regardless of the variations between the participants' circumstances and personal characteristics. Using these common themes that were created and corrected out of the coding process and deductive reasoning, a composite textual picture of the phenomena was created using the final themes as a structure. Following is the composite description structured around the final themes and subthemes resulting from the data analysis.

Major Theme 1: The Environment Influenced Perceived Self-Efficacy

The first major theme confirmed that the social and physical environments surrounding participation in campus student-run media influenced student participants' perceived self-efficacy. Since the theory guiding this study (Bandura, 2012) suggested that the environment, both social and physical, would have this effect, finding this major theme supported the decision to use Bandura's (2012) theory as a structure for this study. The subthemes that support this major theme are drawn from participant comments that illustrate how participants found the physical and social environments supportive of their perceived self-efficacy.

The Physical Environment Helps Calm Participants

According to Bandura (2012), the ability to change one's environment (something easier to do than ever, thanks to modern communication platforms) is directly related to one's efficacy as a self-regulating agent. The data in this study clearly show this to be the case. Even with COVID-19 restricting the participants' physical environment, many participants expressed a reverence, if not a preference, for the physical environment of media studios and offices. A sophomore and production manager for her school's student-run radio station, Marie described

the main room of the station, where the walls are covered with radio memorabilia from years back:

I also want to mention these decorations in this office. I think that it really shows how close we are as a club because we all put something up, we all contribute something.

When I got my position, I was told, “Okay, it’s your turn. You have to put something up now.” And it’s left up. It is just left up until it’s either destroyed or can’t be hung up anymore.

At one point, right after an informal meeting that I was there to observe, a former student, perhaps in his late 20s or early 30s, knocked on the door and came in, introducing himself as a former student from several years ago. He wanted to show his family where he used to work and his wall posting. While the room is a working room, it is also a comfortable room that connects the present with the past. The room feels almost like a museum dedicated to those who came before to encourage those present today.

Other students have called the physical environment relaxing. Eddie, a senior and general manager at the station, said, “This is a relaxer to me to come into here and not only to be able to enjoy the business aspect of my job and the leadership aspects I have to do, which are stressful at times.”

Newspaper students had a similar affinity for their physical offices. Debbie, a senior and editor in chief for her campus newspaper, said of her offices, “But ultimately, it’s a workspace for people who are involved with the newspaper. This is kind of our own little space that we can use to get our work done.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has made these safe spaces both more critical and less available. Often, the spaces where the staff gathers are restricted to just a couple of people who

must remain well separated. Additionally, most of the official staff meetings take place over Zoom. During my observations of these meetings, I was impressed that a sense of formality was not present during the in-person meeting. Each individual in the meeting was also in another physical environment, often one utterly foreign to the newspaper offices. Bandura (2006b) explained that new communications methods expanded individuals' social connections in complicated ways; expanding social influences exponentially. This expanding audience is likely to have a profound effect on those involved in mass media projects. While these observed Zoom meetings were new to the groups and their student leadership, it seemed to me that they approached their duties to the job in a completely different way when the meetings were done online. While the effects were being manifested in the physical environment, the social environment also seemed significantly affected.

The Social Environment Guided and Supported Participants

Out of the shortlist of 25 top occurring codes (see Table 2), seven were related to the social environment and its effects. The shortlist also included the Number 1 most common code, "friend." At least eight participants mentioned during their interviews how involvement in student-run media helped them through the freshman transition from the time many of them entered the university setting. Eddie, now a senior, said,

Well, to put it bluntly, coming out of high school, I was not that cool of a person. Kind of ostracized for my likes and music and my tastes and the way I looked in the way I dressed. Coming here, I met many people that had similarities with me. To put it bluntly, I had my fair share of partying my couple of first years of joining the station, meeting new people, but through the radio station, my social life has only flourished. I can't say I have gone down in social interaction at any time.

Frank, a junior working for the student-run radio station, also explained,

So even in freshman year, I lost a friend that freshman year. So beginning of then, I didn't have a whole ton of social life, I actually came here to help find a social life. It was part of it. You join a club so you can meet people, stuff like that. So it was one of the reasons why I joined because I like the people here . . . that's when I started really becoming more social, especially around people my age. So, you know, I go out with them, and we have a good time. We talk about it. They try to get to know me. They really actually want to try and get to know me and stuff like that.

Many participants spoke about the nature of the media clubs they worked with as a family or their primary social group. However, the comments about how these close relationships helped the participants reach their potential on and off the job were most intriguing. Frank explained during his interview how his work at the station made him feel: "When I was younger, back when I was a freshman, it really felt important that I was like, damn, I'm really making stuff happen. Things are happening because I was there doing them. Does that make sense?"

Debbie explained the need to work together and the benefits of doing so in much the same way: "I feel like we have a pretty open communication between the staff members. We talk and collaborate a lot because we work with each other on articles."

Collaboration and the mentoring process, whereby others with more experience guide the less experienced, seem to generate a general sense of team effort. The feeling dominates the work environment in all three media services located at the participant school. A brief analysis of the codes of the environmental effects related to work, when normalized for the different

numbers of male and female participants (seven men and six women), showed that both the men and women mentioned these effects in equal amounts.

Major Theme 2: Behavioral Factors Influence Perceived Self-Efficacy

The second major theme was how behavioral factors surrounding participation in campus student-run media influenced student participants' self-efficacy. Bandura (1991, 2006b, 2012) explained how one's behavior and others' behaviors would influence the individual lived experiences of a phenomenon and therefore influence their self-efficacy. Bandura (1991, 2012) also explained how those behaviors both influence and, in turn, are influenced by the other determinants. Like the previous major theme, the effects of behaviors on the lived experience and perceived self-efficacy became evident early in the data analysis. There were three subthemes identified that supported this Major Theme 2. The first subtheme was the way participant skills improved, which led to an increased sense of self-efficacy. The second subtheme was how time management skills improved even in the face of increased time constraints. Finally, the third subtheme addressed how leaders' encouragement led to increased participant perceptions of self-efficacy. These improvements would later help those same participants accept and do well in their leadership positions.

Participant Skills on the Job Have Improved

Operating in a supportive environment, one with a history of support from those that came before, leads to behaviors aimed at improving one's skills to live up to the adopted social group's expectations with the knowledge that help is available as one progresses. This effect was evident in the statements of participants who, almost to a person, mentioned how their job skills improved through practicing their craft as well as from others on staff who were willing to

collaborate and help them as they progressed. Frank, personnel manager for his school's student-run radio station, put it this way:

I sat in there with people, juniors, seniors who were doing the show long before I was here, and they taught me how to do it. I'd talk to them and was like, "Oh, these people are really cool." So I stuck around, and then I did my show.

Debbie said,

I've learned a lot more about journalism in college than I ever did in high school. Being part of a news organization, it's like you learn by doing rather than, like, sitting in a classroom and learning about it, for instance. I feel like overall, my confidence in my own journalism abilities has grown.

Crissy, a junior and a copy editor for the student-run newspaper where Debbie serves as editor spoke of what it was like working in a mentoring environment:

So going in, I mean, I was not confident at all . . . I told [Debbie], I said, listen, I'm gonna wanna make sure that I'm doing everything right. I'm very sorry if I'm going to be blowing up your phone with every little thing, but that's also how I learn.

Forced Time Restraints Have Generally Improved Time Management

For the participants in this study, time constraints, and their ability to handle them, played a critical role in their success and how in control they felt. While all of the participants had paid staff positions, many also said that they usually worked two to three times the hours they were paid for (typically 4 hours a week), and they were more than happy to do it. Alexa, a sophomore and editorial editor for the school's student-run paper, explained,

When I work with staff writers, their schedule does not always correlate with my office hours, so I will take additional time, like during my weekends, to kind of go through with

the writers line by line on their papers and edit. Yeah, it's definitely more and goes beyond my office hours.

All the students interviewed that mentioned the extra hours (six participants total) also mentioned their willingness, even their desire, to put in the extra time willingly. Frank, for example, said,

Another big thing was for me, more recently, was not only time management, but keeping up the love for it. Like, last year was really busy. I had a lot of stuff going on. I was traveling for a club sport. I was doing this and that; projects and stuff. And I was like, I love this club, and I love doing this, but sometimes it's just hard to really stay with it. And I always will as long as I'm here; it's just time management is difficult, which is, I imagine, probably a typical answer.

Janet is the marketing manager for the student-run radio station. As a freshman, she has already decided that the time constraints help her:

I feel like it's helped me; I definitely like more of a crunch schedule. I like having things kind of line up together; it just keeps me more in line. So, I've kind of appreciated the fact that I come in and I do this work here, and then I leave and maybe do some other work. But then [I] also have my academic self. I like the time management that it's given me, and the ability to also break out [of] my day and do schoolwork, and then come here and do my job . . . it was an adjustment saying, like, "Okay, how am I going to line up my day with my classes, when am I going to come in and do work?" But I think that for me, it's been really beneficial to time management, and just paying attention to what I need to get done and prioritizing things and stuff like that.

Leadership Positions Increased Participant Self-Efficacy Generally and Their Potential as Leaders Specifically

An additional behavior element discovered through data analysis was the effect leadership behaviors have on student self-efficacy. Debbie, the current editor in chief for the campus student-run newspaper, put it this way:

I think my self-confidence changed the most when I became editor-in-chief of the [publication name deleted to maintain anonymity] because I was taking on a leadership position. I feel like my self-confidence improved as I learned that I could lead this organization again. It was something I knew that I wanted to do, but again, I wasn't sure how well I would do it until I actually did it.

Another leader, Eddie, the general manager for the student-run radio station, explained, "Being able to lead a team of students that are just as passionate as I am has only made me happier and has only made this less of a job and more of a hobby."

The behavior of leaders leading their student staff also seems to have had a significant effect on self-efficacy. Combining codes related to the positive effects of leadership on self-confidence produced more than 40 notable quotes. One of those by Janet, the radio station's marketing manager, is a subtle, but powerful, testament as to how behaviors shape the environment and self-confidence:

I think I would just say that my overall self-confidence is definitely elevated, and I think it's just because the environment that we've created here; it's such a respectful and motivated [place], and everyone is so kind to each other. We want the best for each other, and I think that that for me, has translated into the way that they motivate me and push me, and they're just such good people, and this environment is so warm and helpful

that it's made me feel more confident in what I'm doing in this office, outside of it, whatever I'm doing.

Major Theme 3: Personal Factors Influence Perceived Self-Efficacy

The third major theme confirmed that personal factors influenced student participants' perceived self-efficacy. As explained by Bandura's (1991, 2012) theory, even with all the positive effects of behavior and environmental factors that study participants reported, how a person interprets or reacts to these determinants will have a significant role in the effect of the phenomena on one's sense of self-efficacy. During the data collection for this study, it quickly became apparent that many participants had experienced changes in their personal characteristics, which were likely to lead to positive self-efficacy changes.

There were three subthemes uncovered that support Major Theme 3. The first subtheme was how shyness diminished during the lived experience. The second subtheme, which was related to the first subtheme, was how participants became more extroverted through participation in student-run media. The third and final subtheme, again a natural follow-on resulting from Subthemes 1 and 2, was how participants became more open to new challenges and unique experiences.

Shyness Diminished

Almost half of the participants (five) interviewed for this study talked about how their participation in student-run media diminished their shyness. Charles, a senior and the music manager for the student-run radio station, said,

I guess [I was] kind of shy when I first started at [university]. Cause it was just, I wasn't used to it. I didn't have too much of a social life in high school . . . I used to really only hang out with those guys [the ones in his dorm], but, um, eventually somebody finally

kind of pulled me aside and said, “Hey, I’m doing this thing [radio station club]. Would you want to come by?” And just since then, it’s just been nice to have a much wider circle of people.

Nancy had a similar experience with the newspaper:

It’s also made me more confident in journalism overall because I think I’ve really grown over this last semester, and I’m not as shy and timid anymore. . . . now on Sunday, I’m going to be giving a presentation on the AP style just so like, you know, it refreshes everyone’s mind.

Introversion Diminished

An additional subtheme was how introversion diminished. This correlates with Subtheme 1, the reduction in shyness, but goes further since it includes those who did not claim to be shy, but tended to stick to themselves for whatever reason. Marie humorously quipped about her work for the student-run radio station, “It’s a perfect atmosphere for introverted people. I feel like we’re a big group of introverts . . . almost.” But she also said, “And that, I think, is one of the reasons why maybe some of the people that I’ve talked to like talking with me and why I feel comfortable coming here [the radio station]. I have the same mind, you know?”

Yet participation does not limit these former introverts to only benefiting from socializing with club members. In her project’s textual explanation, Alexa mentioned, “As time progressed, I became more comfortable networking and asking questions during interviews.” Then, in her interview, she added,

I would say I’ve been able to branch out of my shell a lot more. I’m really comfortable.

Before, I used to be really nervous and awkward . . . [now] if I’m not really comfortable

with my topic, that's kind of taught me to be okay with things being a little awkward, and it's okay to kind of embrace that and be comfortable talking with people, right?

Participants Were More Open to Challenges and Unique Experiences

Perhaps the most significant and helpful personal factor development observed was how participation in student-run media opened up the participants to new challenges and experiences. All 13 participants mentioned personal accomplishments they were proud of that had resulted directly from their participation in student-run media. Frank provided this example:

But we had a bunch of, like, personally successful; we had a fundraiser concert at a restaurant. I played and DJ'd at that concert. It wasn't a big deal, but it actually was for me, you know. I had been practicing it, and I was like, you know what, we need another act to fill time. And [the other DJ] was like, "Do you want to do it?" I'm like; he also was on the board. He was better than I was, but he didn't want to do it. So, I was like, "You know, if you really want me to do it, I would be happy to do it." And that was big for me. I was super nervous, but you know, performing in front of people, it's something I'd never really done before for music. And so that was big.

Hannah, a senior and treasurer for the student-run TV station, explained why she chose the particular project she submitted for this study:

Here is our Halloween special for this year called "Spooks and Treats." I wrote the script for this Halloween trivia video. This video is one of the first ones filmed by [TV station] that encompasses a COVID-friendly broadcasting workspace. Though I was unavailable during the filming of this, I think this truly captures what [TV station] is capable of when it comes to a 2-hour production.

Like I said in the interview, there wasn't a lot of planning that went into this production, but I think the overall product turned out well.

The participants seem to enjoy these challenges and often reported that facing these challenges increased their self-efficacy regarding their ability to face future challenges. Sometimes the participants did not explicitly mention the apparent connection between challenges and skill development. Still, the idea seemed always present as they talked about their challenges and then about their increasing competence after having met those challenges. Alexa put it this way, "This leadership role posed even more challenges, allowing me to attain additional skills."

Eddie discovered that radio was more than music, and it opened a new aspect of opportunities for his student-run radio station:

Before I came here, I would've told you that radio was all music and that talk shows, that [type of] stuff didn't work. It wasn't engaging to an audience because of the upcoming emergence of podcasts. As of now, our talk show . . . which is an all-sports talk show and previous talk shows, have been our most successful and most listened-to shows.

As these new horizons have opened for participants, changes in personal goals and the confidence to try new things that one might find more interesting also open up. In his interview, Eddie also mentioned, "I came to [this university] undeclared. I did not have a major, but after joining the radio station in my second semester of freshman year, I declared myself as a media studies major with a conflict resolution minor."

Research Questions Responses: CRQ

To understand the phenomenon under study better, research questions were devised to inform and structure the data collection analysis. The CRQ guiding this study was, "What are

college students' perceptions of how participation in college student-run media impacts their sense of self-efficacy?" In answering this central question, I gathered rich data and thick descriptions regarding the impact of working as a student in a college student-run media service on the participant's perceived sense of self-efficacy. All 13 participants described their experiences as positive in regard to their self-efficacy.

The discovered themes and subthemes answered the CRQ and the SQs and provided a complete and nuanced picture of the phenomenon and the various ways the experience impacted participants' perceived self-efficacy. Admittedly, as George, a graphic designer for the student-run radio station, put it, these increases in self-confidence may not be all due to participation in student-run media:

Yeah. It's [self-confidence] going up for sure. I know that it's not just the club that's helped that; it's definitely helped out, but there's also age, and I think that [also helped]. It started off . . . I was very unsure of myself towards the beginning. And I still am in a lot of ways. But I think maybe it's just a maturity thing, like an age thing. But I think over the years, I've become more confident in my ability to do my job. And I think that that's had an effect on my life overall, which has been pretty cool.

The complete answer to the CRQ was only found in the total of the responses to the SQs answered below.

Research Question Responses: SQ1

SQ1 was, "What are college students' perceptions of how environmental determinants related to their participation in college student-run media impact their sense of self-efficacy?" While all three of the major themes influenced the answer to this question, the theme primarily addressing how the environment influenced perceived self-efficacy was how the environment

influenced perceived self-efficacy (Major Theme 1). As described in Major Theme 1, environmental factors, both physical and social, heavily influenced the participants' sense of self-efficacy. The physical decorations that coat the radio station's walls, as Marie described in Major Theme 1, provided a sense of history that encouraged participants to live up to their predecessors' standards. Others described the physical environment as a safe space to work and even unwind from academic life stresses outside. They called the environment "relaxing."

The social environment, in which many participants considered themselves part of a second family, was also evidenced in Major Theme 1. All the participants expressed views that credited a greater sense of self-efficacy to the close social environment they experienced through their participation in student-run media. As outlined in Major Theme 1, in every case, participants described their lived experience as participants in student-run media as taking place in a positive social environment. According to Bob, "For us, it feels like we're family in a way." Similar expressions were common among the participants. Other participants commented on the supportive environment created by the club leadership. Others pointed out how their participation as freshmen in the organization made the transition to college easier. Many others spoke of their participation in student-run media as their primary source of socialization into college life. Many of the younger participants mentioned under Major Theme 1 that socialization had been essential since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, it seems clear that the answer to SQ1 is that, at least for the participants interviewed for this study, and under the current situation, the social and physical environment they have experienced through participation in student-run media has significantly influenced their sense of self-efficacy.

Research Question Responses: SQ2

SQ2 was, “What are college student perceptions of how behavioral determinants related to their participation in college student-run media impact their sense of self-efficacy?” Because of the intertwined and interdependent nature of the discovered themes, all three major themes helped answer SQ2. However, the major theme describing how behavioral factors influenced self-efficacy (Major Theme 2) was the primary source for relevant data. The way participants behaved in reaction to the environment and how leaders and other staff members behaved in their reactions to the participants, as described in Major Theme 2, had a significant effect on their perceived self-efficacy feelings. As with Major Theme 1, the participants’ feelings were almost universal. Their current relationship with the student-run media staff and their leaders positively influenced their sense of self-efficacy. However, there were two exceptions to this rule.

The first exception was Charles, a senior and music manager for his school’s student-run radio station. He complained that the radio station had hired a new manager several years before who did not enforce the rules: “She was a lot more relaxed than he was. So, a lot of, you know, enforcement of things started slipping.” He explained that staff numbers also started to slip during this time but picked up again when a new general manager was hired. Charles also stated that he quit the radio station for a short while but rejoined when the new general manager was hired. While negative, this example still supports Major Theme 2 by showing how good or bad management behavior can affect participants’ belief in their ability to do their job.

In the second case, Debbie, who would later become the editor in chief of the campus newspaper, told of a time early in her experience with the student-run paper when she was disciplined for a mistake she made by allowing anonymous quotes to be published in the paper:

She [the editor in chief at that time] texted me asking, have you seen this article? I said yes. She was like; “They used anonymous sources; you should have caught that. We don’t do that. I asked the editor to take the article down.” [Debbie’s editor said], “In the future, just make sure that you are paying attention to things like this” . . . I had a talk with her afterwards, but we made sure that I knew the rules like that going forward, so that when I became editor-in-chief, that I could make sure that everybody else knew the rules and that everything was going smoothly.

Again, this negative example also supports Major Theme 2 by illustrating how behaviors affect participants’ self-confidence in student-run media. Interestingly, in both cases, the participant’s behavior after the event still demonstrated growth in their sense of efficacy related to their experience with the student-run media service and supports Major Theme 2. With all the other examples being positive experiences, it seems that the answer to SQ2, as addressed by Major Theme 2, indicates that at this school, at this time, student participants agreed that behavioral factors influence their sense of self-efficacy. In the case of these student participants, that effect has generally been positive or led to positive results.

Research Question Responses: SQ3

SQ3 was, “What are college students’ perceptions of how personal factors related to their participation in college student-run media impact their sense of self-efficacy?” This research question was primarily answered in Major Theme 3, describing how personal factors influenced the participants’ perceived self-efficacy. As described in Major Theme 3, personal factors, or how everyone interprets their on-the-job environment, others’ behaviors, and their own behaviors, impact the participants’ sense of self-efficacy. Additionally, as described in the previous themes, the major themes are so intertwined and interdependent that separating them

was difficult. Personal factors, just like the other two determinants, influence and are, in turn, influenced by each of the other determinants (Bandura, 1991, 2012). Based on Bandura's (1991) theory, finding that the first two determinants affected participants' sense of self-efficacy and finding no effect caused by personal factors would be unlikely. However, there was no conflict of logic found in the collected data for this study. Every participant's narrative confirmed how their sense of self-efficacy, which relies on their expectations of success, knowledge of the field, job competencies, and other personal factors, increased for the better because of their lived experience working for student-run media. According to the data discovered under Major Theme 3, all the participants credited their lived experience of participation in student-run media as a factor in these improvements.

One subtheme not singled out, but running through the entirety of Major Theme 3, was the way participation in student-run media increased participant altruistic desires. Of the participants, three mentioned the "ability to give back" aspect of their job as being a plus, while eight others mentioned community service in a similarly positive light. Some of these students had never participated in community events, at least not as leaders or organizers. Kohl, a senior and a program manager for his school's student-run radio station, said that music's ability to bring communities together definitely generated for him an appreciation for the people involved. Four participants said they changed their majors to the media arts due to their time with student-run media. Many of the other participants were already majoring in the media arts.

Another common subtheme was evidenced as several students mentioned their increased willingness to take on and even enjoy new challenges. One participant, Eddie, explained one challenge this way:

My first year as a music manager, my sophomore year, our system went down; it was a critical failure. We could not add music. As a radio station, each DJ has the ability and wants the ability to curate each show by themselves and play their own music within legal reasons. We could not provide them that option, but that led to our next issue of getting a new system, a new database. Cost us a lot of money, a lot of hoops to jump through, and unfortunately, it had been delayed, and delayed, and delayed, and we just recently got it in this semester, but that was 2 years off [due to] of delays.

When asked what he learned from the experience, Eddie replied, “Patience, team-building, how to build morale, how to be a better leader, how to listen to complaints better, how to understand people’s opinions, and how to move forward with failure.”

Summary

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to discover and understand college student perceptions of the ways their lived experiences while participating in college student-run media has impacted their sense of self-efficacy. The intent was to provide administrators and advisors a more nuanced picture of precisely what student media participants do and how that might benefit both the students and the school. This research revealed three well-supported major themes and eight subthemes that supported the three determinants of Bandura’s (1991, 2012) social cognitive theory of self-regulation. These themes and subthemes also directly address Hamilton's (2014) issue with college administrators’ lack of understanding about the value of student-run media.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this study was to discover and better understand the impact of participation in college student-run media on a participant's sense of self-efficacy. Using Bandura's (1991, 2012) social cognitive theory of self-regulation as a theoretical framework, I explored how each of the three determinants, as manifest in the participants' lived experiences, affected their sense of self-efficacy. While not originally planned as part of the study, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the related restrictions are briefly examined as it specifically influenced these three factors. Chapter Five consists of six sections, which include an overview of the chapter, a summary of the findings, a discussion of the findings and implications section, an outline of the study's delimitations and limitations, and a section with recommendations for future research. The chapter ends with an overall summary of the completed study.

Summary of Findings

This section provides a concise summary of the research findings and briefly answers each research question. The study was designed to examine and learn about how participants involved in student-run media activities feel those activities influenced their sense of self-efficacy, utilizing personal interviews, individual projects, and group meeting observations to collect data illustrating the phenomena. The data were then evaluated using epoché, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis of composite textural and composite structural descriptions to create the final description of the phenomena under study. The results showed that in almost every situation, participants felt participation in student-run media influenced their sense of self-efficacy and that, overwhelmingly, this influence had a

positive effect on their lived experience. Below I address each research question and provide a summary of the findings.

CRQ

The CRQ was, “What are college students’ perceptions of how participation in college student-run media impacts their sense of self-efficacy? The answer to this question was obvious. Overwhelmingly, student participants reported that their participation in student-run media influenced their sense of self-efficacy. The participants also reported, overwhelmingly, that the influence was positive regarding its effects on their sense of self efficacy and their experience overall as students. This finding held true even in situations when the participation in student-run media resulted in additional stress and challenges for the students involved. A more detailed explanation of how the lived experience of participation in college student-run media positively influenced participant self-efficacy is contained in the answers to the subquestions that follow.

SQ1

SQ1 was, “What are college students’ perceptions of how environmental determinants related to their participation in college student-run media impact their sense of self-efficacy?” Therefore, participants were asked to describe the physical and social environments and give their impressions of how these environments played a role in their participation. Nearly all the participants said they found both the social and physical environments to be encouraging and beneficial. The physical environment was described as a relaxing place to work that often provides a break from regular academic stresses. In particular, regarding the radio station, where the walls are covered with posters and memorabilia of past staff, participants reported that the environment also provided a sense of professional responsibility and connection to history. Regarding the social environment, participants consistently reported that their lives, academics,

and self-efficacy were improved by the support they received through the family-like connections each staff provided to its members.

SQ2

SQ2 was, “What are college students’ perceptions of how behavioral determinants related to their participation in college student-run media impact their sense of self-efficacy?” How an individual responds to others’ behaviors is often seen to measure maturity. For the study participants, fellow staff members’ behavior was consistently mature and, perhaps most importantly, supportive. This support from others seemed to encourage a reciprocal response back from the participants. Participants consistently reported that their leaders were excellent. In addition, the participants responded with loyalty to the organization and a sense of responsibility to pass on the tradition of supporting junior members.

SQ3

SQ3 was, “What are college students’ perceptions of how personal factors related to their participation in college student-run media impact their sense of self-efficacy?” Personal factors were more challenging to examine since they are usually only seen as reactions to other determinants. According to Bandera (1991, 2012), all three determinants are interwoven, and I found separating personal factors from the other determinants incredibly taxing. One aspect, however, was clear. Participants consistently reported that personal factors such as their previous sense of self-efficacy, previous experiences, former expectations, previous knowledge in the field, and competencies already obtained were nearly always enhanced by their participation in student-run media. These findings were consistent regardless of the sex, background, or media type the participants represented.

Discussion

This section includes discussion of the study findings as they relate to the empirical and theoretical literature upon which this study is based and outlined in Chapter Two. This theoretical literature primarily drew from Bandura's (1991, 2012) social cognitive theory of self-regulation. The empirical literature explores recent research describing how various influences, such as psychological, educational, and political influences, might affect the three determinants. Included is a discussion on how participants saw these influences affecting their sense of self-efficacy while participating in college student-run media activities.

Theory

Social cognitive theory began as social learning theory in the 1960s (Bandura, 1969). Bandura (1991, 2012) theorized that human agency had a central place in learning and behavior and played a vital role in the learning process and, therefore, in the education process. According to Bandura (1991), people are not victims of their environment, but can learn by observing others and accounting for their environment. Bandura (1991, 2012) theorized that there are three factors, or determinants, that influence this learning. Each of these determinants also interacts with and influences the others. Those determinants, which comprise the triadic reciprocal determinants model elements, include the environment, behaviors, and personal factors. The results of this study support Bandura's (1991, 2012) theory in that the three determinants play a crucial role in learning and behavior from the participants' viewpoint.

Just as crucial for this study was Bandura's (1991, 2012) additional insight that these influences moderate and are moderated by feelings of self-efficacy. The participants' impressions of how the determinants affected their sense of self-efficacy became key to this study because it was easily observed as it moderated, or was moderated by, the three

determinants. Robbins et al. (2004) confirmed that out of nine commonly researched psychosocial constructs, academic self-efficacy was the best predictor of academic achievement.

Environment

Looking at the three determinants individually, perhaps the most easily observed is the environment, both social and physical. Bandura (1991) explained that self-efficacy is not merely an interpersonal effort, and he argued that people do not operate as completely autonomous agents, but instead react to and interact with life's social realities. According to Bandura (1991), social factors impact an individual's self-regulation and therefore, their self-efficacy, in three significant ways.

The first of these is that individuals contribute to and interact with all the self-regulatory functions. The results of this study indicate this is the case. The study participants, finding themselves in a supportive social environment (according to all the students interviewed), reported that their self-confidence grew. They also reported that they then felt obligated to support others within their workgroup.

According to participant responses, performing the behaviors needed to accomplish tasks required by participation in student-run media resulted in an increased sense of self-efficacy. In turn, an increased sense of self-efficacy was followed by a desire to search for and even look forward to more challenging opportunities, a personal factor. Without using Bandura's (1991, 2012) exact terms, and throughout the study, participants told how behaviors changed personal factors, which changed the social environment, and influenced their sense of self-efficacy. Often, during the coding and analysis process, it became difficult to separate one determinant from the next in its specific influence on participants.

According to Bandura (1991, 2012), the social environment influences self-efficacy because it provides either support or resistance to an individual's standards. Again, participant responses confirm this part of Bandura's (1991, 2012) theory. Participants reported that support from leadership or the student-run media social network provided inspiration and motivation that increased their sense that they could accomplish a media task which they previously believed was beyond their ability.

Finally, the social environment helps individuals determine and test their moral standards against the environment's prevailing social standards. Again, Bandura's (1991, 2012) theory is in accord with the results of this study. Participants reported that their work ethic and willingness to follow the journalistic craft rules they were practicing increased with student-run media participation. Participants disciplined for some infractions reported how they came back from the experience looking to do better. In those who later became leaders, these experiences affected how they saw their work ethic and sense of right and wrong in their roles as leaders responsible for teaching and disciplining others.

Behaviors

Behaviors, the second element in Bandura's (1991, 2012) triadic reciprocal determinants model, consists of two elements. First are the behaviors of others that influence one's sense of self-efficacy. The second, just as important, is the participants' behaviors in response to the behaviors of others. In this study, behaviors always seemed to be reported as the changeover point at which the scale measuring self-efficacy was moved.

For example, in several cases, participants reported feelings of a close or even family-like relationship with the student media staff. These feelings were described based on the behaviors of others in the group. At this point, a change would occur in the participant's self-efficacy who

reported that they felt they could now accomplish a difficult task they had not considered possible before. Participants based this new confidence on the support they felt they had from the group, and often reported changing their behavior to match the group's norms regarding their work ethic and support for others. Again, as suggested by Bandura (1991, 2012), all the determinants influenced and were influenced by the others.

Personal Factors

Personal factors can be one of the most difficult of the determinants to isolate for observation and measure. According to Bandura (1991), personal factors are a vital factor moderating the behavioral determinants and how individuals react to their environment. These personal factors may include, but are not limited to, the participant's previous sense of self-efficacy, previous experiences, expectations, knowledge of the field, competencies already obtained, and other personal factors. Personal factors are commonly thought of as the elements that a person brings to the experience that are then subject to change.

For this study, there were two considerations regarding personal factors that especially intrigued me. First was the unusually upbeat attitude of all the study participants regarding their work in student-run media. The second was the participants' willingness to talk about very personal aspects of their lives, from former drug use and severe medical conditions to troubled histories and personal failures.

My concern with the first element (i.e., the consistent upbeat attitude) may have resulted from interview techniques or the fact they were being interviewed by someone generationally distant from their experience. However, Bandura (1991, 2012) proposed that others' positive environment and positive behaviors are likely to produce positive personal factors for participants. Therefore, the study requirement that all the participants be experienced with time

on staff (average time on staff for this study was 2.5 years), and the resulting positive reports were not surprising.

Regarding the second element, perhaps the reason the participants were so willing to share personal information had more to do with their increased sense of self-efficacy and confidence as well as how they had overcome the fears of their past. Regardless of the reason, participants in this study consistently described personal, environmental, and behavioral factors as crucial elements influencing their sense of self-efficacy as proposed in Bandura's (1991, 2012) theory. Therefore, the results of this study support the theoretical assumptions made at the beginning of this research. As reported by the participants, the three determinants are present and interacting to influence self-efficacy in almost every case. Additionally, for this group's experience, participation in college student-run media had an overwhelmingly positive effect on the participants' sense of self-efficacy. While these findings may not surprise many, one novel aspect of this study is that for the first time, according to the literature review, Bandura's (1991, 2012) theory was put to the test and aimed explicitly at participants' lived experience with college-level, student-run media.

Empirical

For this study, the empirical research was focused on five general categories: educational advantages of self-efficacy, community advantages of student-run media, stresses associated with student media, best practices, and cultural shifts. In this section, I evaluate how this study adds to or diverges from past research. I also explain how the unique nature of this study makes a novel contribution to the field.

The Educational Advantages of Self-Efficacy

The connection between educational success and self-efficacy is well established as long as self-efficacy is proportional to the student's actual abilities. Studies such as Baier et al. (2016) and Cardenas-Elliot (2016) reconfirmed the positive relationship between self-efficacy, student success, and persistence. The purpose of this current study was not to confirm that general relationship. Instead, this research was meant to discover and understand how any relationship between self-efficacy and student success might hold when applied to the particular phenomena of participation in college student-run media. According to the data collected and analyzed from students participating, the answer is yes, confirming another aspect of connecting self-efficacy and student success. What is novel about this study is that it also demonstrates the circular relationship between a good education and increased self-efficacy. Data from this study showed that a good education that includes support and encouragement from peers led to increased self-efficacy for the individual participant. Increased self-efficacy leads to better education as the individual participants are more motivated and confident in sharing their valuable experiences with newcomers to the group. The group dynamic of being student-run seems to be very successful when done the way the participants in this study experienced it.

This sense of belonging to a group, so prevalent in the current study data, was also emphasized by Tinto (2017), who pointed out the value of participation and a sense of belonging to academic persistence and success, and then connected a student's sense of self-efficacy to their sense of belonging. The results of this present study support Tinto's (2017) work. Additionally, Bandura's (1991, 2012) explanation of how the three determinants interact and influence each other is well supported by this current study, as multiple participant narratives show.

Community Advantages of Student-Run Media

Several studies have confirmed the critical role campus media plays regarding campus social and political issues (Boyle & Zuegner, 2015; Cass, 2016; La Noue, 2017; Mitchell, 2016). Other researchers, such as Crane and Lesher (2018), pointed to how college media is often an integral part of the community beyond campus. In the present study, data suggest that community service was a significant motivator for the participants. For example, three participants mentioned that the need to give back was a motivating factor for them, and eight participants mentioned enjoying the community service aspects of their participation in student-run media. When asked about their most significant accomplishments while participating in student-run media, two more participants mentioned community projects for which they used talents developed through student-run media participation.

One of the advantages for the general community outside the university is how their college student-run media helps the participants. Freedman and Poulson (2015) explained that the college journalism experience tended to enhance a student's portfolio, gave them access to jobs and internships, and gave them a chance to experience how real writers work on a day-to-day basis. In this current study, several participants mentioned awards they had received and skills they could now prove with real-world work examples. However, I did not hear any examples of participants who had received internships, and I wondered if this was due, at least in part, to the poor connections between faculty and students or perhaps the lack of jobs brought on by the COVID-19 restrictions.

Participants in this study often mentioned how the social and work connections between student participants were somewhat diminished from what it was before the pandemic. There were 19 mentions of how COVID-19 had negatively impacted the media staff's ability to

function effectively. The chances are good that communications between advisors and student staff had also suffered, and that is typically where the connections are made between internship jobs and students.

Not all the benefits to the community are seen as benefits to school administrations. Two newspaper participants identified the same story as one of their most significant challenges. The story was about a student government leader accused of a sexual crime. The difficulty and the learning experience for the participants was deciding how, or even whether, to publish the story. While I did not interview any of the school administrators for this project, I can imagine that they were concerned about how the student-run media would decide to cover it. The students collaborated extensively on the story to make sure it was right and then published it. None of the students involved mentioned any pushback from the administration or their advisor, who is not on school staff, but is a community journalist. Looking at this situation and having read and analyzed the participant narratives about it, I have trouble imagining a situation that would teach real-world journalism skills better than this. Both students involved spoke of this challenge and how their confidence to do the job increased. This learning might not have taken place if the school administration had suppressed their efforts.

Stresses Associated With Student-Run Media

In their case study on media freedom in Fiji, Drugunalevu and Manarae (2015) chronicled actual dangers that are generally rare here in the United States. However, on too many campuses today, student media is often at the center of political controversy and sometimes the target of actual violence. That was not the case on the campus of the university chosen for this study. No study participants reported backlash regarding their work except for the editorial editor of the newspaper, who explained that during the recent 2020 election,

I was expecting comments, but I wasn't expecting the types of comments that . . . that I received. . . . But it was . . . it was, I think, a learning experience too. . . . Whenever that happens, though, I'll reach out to our editor in chief, or one of the other section leaders, and [we] will be laughing about it.

In stressful situations, study participants consistently found relief in their student leaders and fellow staff members.

One stressor that I expected to find was never mentioned by those interviewed for this work: pushback from the administration. Herrmann (2017) argued that academic capitalism, or the need to make academic decisions based on their monetary value to the school, an attitude driven by the economic downturn of the last decade, has driven a wedge between faculty and students. While this may have been true in Herrmann's study data, the school sponsoring the student-run media for this present research was only mentioned one time concerning administrative backlash. In that quote, Debbie, the editor for the school's student-run newspaper, said, "We've had backlash before from administration and from the student government and things like that, where they might not like the way we've put things out there." She did not elaborate on any particular incident. During one online meeting, the newspaper advisor (a non-faculty community journalist) complained about the quality of several articles that he had recently reviewed. However, participants with the paper turn this critique well and seemed to accept that the advisor was doing his job.

Whether this school–student media relationship is the exception to the rule is difficult to say. However, in a recent non-peer-reviewed study by the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (2021), the percentage of schools earning their worst rating for freedom of speech on campus fell again in the 2021 report for the 13th year in a row. It now stands at 21.3%, a 3%

drop from the previous year and an almost 50% drop from 2009 (Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, 2021).

Another concern for student-run media staff is burnout. Using the Maslach Burnout Inventory, Filak and Reinardy (2011) studied 185 college newspaper editors and found that participants were experiencing, on average, moderate levels of burnout. Filak and Reinardy also found that personal accomplishment could often be a countermeasure to burnout if the ratio of accomplishment to stress remains positive. Without the expertise to measure burnout, this present study did not directly address that issue; however, after collecting data from the student leaders from all three student-media organizations, none reported burnout symptoms or mentioned any associated problems one might expect in someone suffering from burnout. The data lead to the assumption that either burnout is not a problem or that the ratio of accomplishments to stress is such that burnout is currently not a factor for the participants in this particular research.

Best Practices

Joseph Pulitzer, the newspaper mogul, founder of the Columbia School of Journalism, and the Pulitzer Prize's original sponsor felt that journalism schools should teach journalism ethics and philosophy and avoid commerce concerns (Cass, 2016). However, in examining this argument, Cass (2016) came to a different conclusion. He explained that his experience and research led him to believe that students learn best when they are actually doing the work in a manner as close as possible to how they will do it outside the university (Cass, 2016).

For the participants involved in this study, the situation is somewhere in the middle. The sponsoring university owns the studios and offices that each of the media clubs use. Key leaders within each organization are typically paid a small stipend, which is not enough to cover the

work, according to the narrative data. Additionally, the clubs receive an operational budget provided by the school, but any additional projects or equipment must often be paid for with funds raised by the organization. None of the student-run media services run ads.

Complaining about this system would be difficult based on an evaluation of the data gathered from the participants. While some of the participants mentioned the extra work involved over and above their salary (10 separate entries), there were no complaints about working conditions or the unfairness of this arrangement. One participant reported that he took the job working for the student-run media and only discovered later that he would be getting paid for his work. I got the impression that many of the participants would do the work for free if asked.

Cultural Shifts

When someone in the field of communications thinks about cultural shifts, they are likely to be thinking about the tremendous shift in communications technology over the last 20 years. According to Auger et al. (2017), new technologies give the students a greater sense of efficacy related to creating stories that the broader community wants to watch or read. Combine with the COVID-19 crisis and the restrictions imposed on gathering, and one can see that without modern technology, student-run media would not be operating at this time. The participants in this research seemed to come generationally after the cultural technology shift of the last 20 years. Thus, they are digital natives and do not seem to be concerned with technology that has always been there from their perspective.

Pavlovic and Ljajic (2017) looked more generally into how journalism students use various technology types to prepare for and complete their journalism assignments and found that students are using technology for presentations but not for completing other assignments.

Like Boyle and Zuegner (2015), Pavlovic and Ljajic explained how the use of communications technology, still in its infancy, would likely continue to grow and influence the lived experiences of college journalism students. This research is not in accord with the findings of this present study in that participants in this study use various technology in every aspect of their lives. However, communications technology is moving so quickly that an article written based on data from just 4 or 5 years ago is likely out of date when describing current college students. Additionally, with every year that passes, we move deeper into the generations of students raised on new media, are much more familiar with it, and more comfortable using it for all their activities.

The data analysis from this present study supports the conclusion that this group of student participants is part of that upcoming generation and uses the most modern communications both on the job and off. For example, at the time of this study, all regular meetings were conducted online, articles were turned in electronically and published online. All of the student-run media services have web pages and social media accounts. Most interpersonal communications among the staff are through Snapchat or other similar social media. While there are no quantitative data to measure the percentages of social media used by the study participants, group observations and interviews all point to a group intimately familiar with social media that uses it on and off the job.

Implications

This section addresses the theoretical, empirical, and practical implications of the study. Because each type of implication overlaps with the others, the theoretical, empirical, and practical implications are often hard to distinguish one from the next. Therefore, theoretical

implications will lead to empirical implications, which should always lead to real-world practical implications.

Theoretical Implications

The primary theory undergirding this work was Bandura's (1991, 2012) social cognitive theory of self-regulation. The data gathered in this research and the resulting analysis consistently confirm the premises of Bandura's (1991, 2012) theory that self-efficacy is supported and supports the three determinants. The data imply that we can use the social cognitive theory of self-regulation to explain how small organizations, such as the student-run media organization examined in this study, can be understood using Bandura's (1991, 2012) theory and the personal, behavioral, and environmental elements of that theory. Bandura (1991, 2012) explained that people are not victims of their environment but can learn by observing others and accounting for their environment. An additional theoretical implication supported by the present study is that an individual's lived experience, as defined by personal factors, environmental factors, and others' behaviors, can profoundly impact their sense of self-efficacy inasmuch as they allow it to do so. The overarching theoretical implication discovered in this study and applicable to both the disciples and critics of Bandura's theory is that Bandura's theory explains the phenomena almost entirely in this situation, time, and environment.

Empirical Implications

The empirical implications of this study reflect the theoretical implications mentioned above. This research was an examination of participants' lived experience specifically as it was manifest in student-run media. The empirical implication was that in similar circumstances, improvement in one of the determinant areas is likely to improve self-efficacy. Therefore, this study provided empirical data that not only support Bandura's (2012) theory, but also provided

tangible evidence of a specific pedagogical environment that is producing positive results in a real-world situation. For example, Frank, the personnel manager of the student-run radio station, said, “I think my quality of work has improved . . . I have surprised myself in how well I’ve done in those things.”

When asked how her academic life had changed since she started working for the station, Hannah, the treasurer for the student-run TV station, said, “I think it’s actually improved . . . you think it wouldn’t because it’s taking up so much [of] my time every week.” Her example, and others like it, provided empirical evidence of the positive influence of an environment, behaviors, and personal factors that support increased self-efficacy.

The data also support the implication that self-efficacy improvement is likely to influence and improve the environment, student behaviors, and personal factors, therefore improving the entire education process synergistically. Janet, a marketing manager for her student-run radio station, explained that her confidence improved due to the support she received from her leaders. She then used that increased self-confidence to become a leader herself and now feels, “super-content in who I am and what I’m doing here.” Her experience also provided empirical evidence to support Bandura’s (2012) explanation of how each element of the triadic reciprocal determination model influences and is influenced by the other elements within the model.

Practical Implications

Finally, building on the implications presented above, the practical implications of this study are significant. For example, suppose an educator has trouble with student behavior in a similar situation, such as the one described in this study. In that case, they may want to consider ways to improve the physical or social environment, or they might look at ways to improve their

own personal factors by changing how they view the situation. As the findings of this study show, looking at the whole picture may reveal the answer to a particularly vexing problem.

Perhaps for parents, a clear implication of this study might be that encouraging a sense of common purpose or team among family members might help, as it did for those in this study, with members who are experiencing problems with self-esteem. For administrators to decide whether to sponsor a media club on campus, perhaps taking a chance and giving students the freedom to collaborate with other students and learn from each other in a mentoring environment might be worth the risk. For professors, finding ways to encourage senior members to mentor the younger students may have value in creating a supportive environment that goes beyond what a single professor can do.

Those wishing to duplicate the success described in this study should remember that this study was specific to a school with a long history of liberal policies toward independent student-run media. They have the advantage of a long history of success used to give students guidance on what has traditionally worked in this simulated, but in many ways, authentic media world. Additionally, the current batch of student leaders who presently seem so successful in implementing a sense of family among their teams may also be unique. Most of them have had years to learn the system. Regardless, the practical implications of the findings of this study must be used cautiously, keeping in mind that what works in this situation might not work or may need to be modified in another setting.

Delimitations and Limitations

There were several delimitations placed on this study. All the participants were required to be 18 or older. This limit avoided the need for parental consent and ensured a certain level of independence and maturity. Participants were also required to have served at least 1 semester on

their student-run media staff and be currently working on that staff. I created this requirement to ensure that participants had a level of experience suitable to providing answers to the interview questions that were knowledgeable, well informed, and nuanced. However, setting these two requirements also ruled out the voices of younger, less experienced members. Additional research to correct this limitation is discussed below. The breadth of the study was limited to one single university campus. This limit was placed on the study primarily for my convenience. The requirement to limit the breadth of the study was also needed to contain the time, distance, and money required to complete the work within my resources. Again, additional research to correct this limitation is discussed below.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research in this area is almost unlimited. One of the reasons for choosing this subject was the lack of formal research examining the value of college-level student-run media. A study similar to this should be conducted to include less experienced and former staff members as participants. One of my concerns with this study was the possibility that the responses were so overwhelmingly positive because younger students and students who had a bad experience had left the club were therefore not part of the participant pool. A broader participant pool that included younger participants might provide greater insight into the value of student-run media programs on retention and student satisfaction.

Another similar study to this one, done after lifting the COVID-19 restrictions, might also produce different findings. Without COVID-19 restrictions, the participants will be freer to socialize and spend time at activities outside of their on-campus media jobs. A study of that nature might show that COVID restrictions increased the power of the lived experience selected for this research study.

Studies done at different schools, schools of different sizes, or from different parts of the country could expand on this research study's credibility and trustworthiness. Research that focused on faculty and their experiences and opinions related to student success when involved with student-run media might reveal a more nuanced picture of the phenomenon. Even a study to explore administrator experiences might provide a different angle to look at pedagogical issues related to student-run media. In that same area, a study to examine the effects of school-run media on self-efficacy would provide data to compare with this study's data examining student-run media.

Finally, a host of quantitative studies, conducted at the college level and exploring qualitative questions that would examine measurable improvements in either student success or self-efficacy, would go far to confirm or question this study's results. While there have been multiple studies conducted by researchers, such as Brusckke and George (1999), who found positive, measurable effects of journalism programs on academic success in high schools, little work has been done at the college level to confirm that these effects continue into secondary education. Qualitative studies could help support or question these present findings.

Summary

Before this study was completed, Debbie, the former editor in chief for her school's student-run newspaper, was considering her entry into the workforce following her January graduation. Her success in finding a good job in what she now considers her chosen field of journalism may well be determined by her experiences and accomplishments obtained through her real-world lived experience as a college student-run media participant. This real-world experience was not achieved in a formal classroom or even from a favorite professor. Instead, the significant learning experience was achieved by taking part in a community of student peers

and learners. In this unique community, the more experienced taught the less experienced; one's talent was encouraged, shared, and demanded by tradition, and personal bonds were formed, likely to last a lifetime. Based solely on my experience as an educator and journalist, I have found that first jobs in professional media are nearly always awarded to those with real-world experience to back up their education. In Debbie's case, I believe her chances are excellent.

This study was an exploration of how participants in student-run media saw the effects of that experience related to self-efficacy. The results across the participant pool were overwhelmingly positive. One of the most critical implications of this research is how a group of dedicated students, given the freedom to chart their own course for learning, can create impressively effective learning environments. In this case, the administration took a chance on this form of education decades ago and has consistently won since. More importantly, the students living the experience made available by the school have also won and perhaps will continue to win due to the lessons learned in this unique learning environment.

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APPENDIX A: IRB PERMISSION LETTER



irb@liberty.edu

Fri 8/14/2020 2:14 PM

To: Bouchelle, Hugh; Gossett, Kenneth D (School of Education)



LIBERTY UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

August 14, 2020

Hugh Bouchelle
Kenneth Gossett

Re: IRB Approval - IRB-FY20-21-21 UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACTS OF PARTICIPATION IN STUDENT- RUN MEDIA ON SELF-EFFICACY

Dear Hugh Bouchelle, Kenneth Gossett:

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval is extended to you for one year from the date of the IRB meeting at which the protocol was approved: August 14, 2020. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make modifications in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update submission to the IRB.

These submissions can be completed through your Cayuse IRB account.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. This form should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document should be made available without alteration.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT LETTER

[Insert Date]

[Recipient]

[Title]

[Company]

[Address 1]

[Address 2]

[Address 3]

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to discover and understand college student perceptions of the ways their lived experiences participating in college student-run media has impacted their sense of self-efficacy, and I am writing to invite you to participate in my study.

If you are 18 years of age or older, have served at least one semester on staff with your college's student-run media service, are currently active with the media service, and, and are willing to participate, you will be asked to allow us to conduct a personal interview, complete an individual media project and allow researchers to observe your group media activities over a period of several weeks. It should take approximately four hours for you to complete the procedures listed. Your name and other identifying information will be requested as part of your participation, but the information, including your identity and the school you attend will remain confidential in all published reports.

To participate, go to [webpage] and click on the link provided to complete and return the consent document to the researcher. After you have completed the consent form, we will contact you to schedule an interview and provide additional information regarding the details of this research project. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Hugh Bouchelle at 540-570-1908 during regular working hours.

A consent document is provided as the first page you see after you click on the link above. The consent document contains additional information about my research. Please click on the survey link at the end of the consent information to indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the survey.

Sincerely,

Hugh Bouchelle
Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

Understanding the Impacts of Participation in Student-Run Media on Self-Efficacy

Hugh Bouchelle
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study to understand the impact of participation in college, student-run media on perceptions of self-efficacy. You were selected as a possible participant because you are 18 or older, are currently participating in your college's student-run media service and have at least one semester of prior participation experience. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Hugh Bouchelle, a doctoral candidate in the school of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to discover and understand college student perceptions of the way participation in college student-run media impacts their sense of self-efficacy.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Complete an audio recorded personal interview with the researcher. This should take about one hour to complete.
2. Complete a personal media project of your own type and choosing that represents your best single experience you have had while participating with your school's media service. This is estimated to take about four hours total time, completed over a one-month period. The project may be a written or photo essay, web or blog site, or any project you choose, limited only by your time, interests and talent.
3. Allow the researcher to observe your campus media activities over several weeks when you are involved in student media group activities. These observations will be cleared with the staff in advance, no video or audio will be recorded. However, the researcher may make and keep notes of his or her observations.
4. You may be asked to review the transcript of your personal interview for accuracy. This review is estimated to take less than ½ hour.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits:

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include a better understanding for college administrators, faculty and media advisors of the challenges and rewards available to participants in college student-run media.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report, I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant or the school they attend. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. I may share the data I collect from you for use in future research studies or with other researchers; if I share the data that I collect about you, I will remove any information that could identify you, if applicable, before I share the data.

- Participants and the school they attend will be assigned a pseudonym. I will conduct the interviews in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- I cannot assure participants that other members of the student-run media service will not share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University [Insert the names of any other cooperating institutions here.]. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study:

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Observation data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the observed activity will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Hugh Bouchelle. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at hbouchelle@liberty.edu or at 540-570-1908. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Dr. Kenneth D. Gossett, at kdgossett@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Investigator

Date

APPENDIX D: OBSERVATION PROTOCOL FORM

Date: Time: Total Time: Name of Event:	
Sketch of meeting room	
General Observations	Reflective Notes
Environmental Determinants	Reflective Notes
Behavioral Determinants	Reflective Notes
Personal Determinants	Reflective Notes

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