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Exploring the Impact of the Habitat for Humanity Home-Building Process on Partner Families' Holistic Well-Being

Authors

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EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF THE HABITAT FOR HUMANITY HOME-BUILDING PROCESS ON PARTNER FAMILIES' HOLISTIC WELL-BEING

Hawkley Pusey, Nikhil Mathur, Kathryn Figliomeni,
Nanditha Srinivasan, Keely R. Dehn, Jason A. Ware

STUDENT AUTHOR BIO SKETCHES

Hawkley Pusey graduated in May 2022 with a bachelor's degree in English Education from Purdue University. Hawk has started teaching English at Battle Ground Middle School in the Greater Lafayette area. Hawk has been involved in various service and engagement projects both locally and abroad.

Nikhil Mathur is a junior in Professional Flight Technology at Purdue University. His primary research experience was with the Purdue Honors College during his sophomore year. He plans to pursue a career as an airline pilot. He was involved with Habitat for Humanity of Lafayette in his sophomore year.

Nanditha Srinivasan graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Economics and Finance from Purdue University. After graduating she will be working with NetApp Inc. as a financial analyst. During her time at Purdue she was involved in Purdue Project RISHI, a countrywide organization that aims to improve the welfare of remote villages in rural India. In the past, she has also worked on development projects such as renovation of classrooms and installation of rainwater-harvesting systems for rural schools in Naivasha, Kenya.

Keely R. Dehn is an upcoming senior majoring in Neurobiology and Physiology at Purdue University with minors in Psychology and Human Development and Family Studies on a pre-medical track. She currently works at IU Health Hospital as a medical scribe in the neurology and hospitalist departments. She is also involved in research with the MAC Lab (Measurement, Autism, and Child Development) within the Purdue HDFS department. She plans to pursue medical school to specialize in pediatric neurology. She aspires to work for Doctors Without Borders in the future.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to evaluate how participating in the Habitat for Humanity house-building process influenced participants' purpose well-being, social well-being, community well-being, physical and mental well-being, and financial well-being, and how effective Habitat for Humanity is in aiding neighborhood revitalization within the Greater Lafayette area. The research project resulted in a presentation of quantitative data and a testimonial video that highlighted the stories of families that had worked with Habitat for Humanity. Quantitative data was gathered through a survey that addressed respondents' levels of satisfaction within the various categories of well-being mentioned above.

Testimonial information was gathered from interviews with respondents to gain a more personal insight into their stories. The majority of respondents indicated their satisfaction with the overall Habitat for Humanity process and noticeable positive impacts on all aspects of their well-being. Responses were more varied to questions regarding a sense of community within their neighborhoods and a sense of safety. Respondents also indicated occasional dissatisfaction with the inadequate level of homeowner-related education provided through the Habitat for Humanity house-building process. Habitat for Humanity might consider focusing more attention on neighborhood revitalization initiatives including a focus on a general sense of community, overall safety, and periodic check-ins with those who have previously participated in the house-building project.

INTRODUCTION

Habitat for Humanity is a nonprofit organization responsible for creating affordable housing for communities around the world. They construct homes for families in need of safe and affordable places to live in addition to aiding in neighborhood revitalization in the communities they serve. Their work has helped many individuals who are unable to afford homes on their own to build their homes and build a better future.

Through interviews and surveys with Habitat for Humanity homeowners, the study aimed to gain an understanding of the changes homeowners undergo with regard to various aspects of well-being and community as well as how they feel Habitat for Humanity has the potential to improve—informed by the Gallup National Health and Well-Being Index as a framework. The study also aimed to understand how COVID-19 has affected

Habitat for Humanity homeowners by comparing their well-being before and after the pandemic.

The findings of this study gleaned from the surveys and interviews were used to create an effective presentation for the Habitat for Humanity Lafayette board. The findings are more pertinent and imperative due to the recent change in leadership because they have the potential to provide new leadership with context revolving around the house-building project and guide their decisions moving forward. The study culminated with the production of a testimonial video that highlights the stories of families that have worked with Habitat for Humanity in Greater Lafayette. The video will serve to spread Habitat's mission, values, and the tangible results they have produced for people under their care.

The study begins with our goal, which is to understand the impact the Habitat for Humanity house-building project has on the residents' purpose, social, community, physical, mental, and financial well-being while also examining the impacts of COVID-19. The study also seeks to articulate how effective Habitat for Humanity is in revitalizing neighborhoods. Next, the study discusses the methodology, which explains our choices for data collection and analysis. Surveys and interviews acted as the main source of data collection with supplementary support from the census data for the Lafayette community. The data collection began by identifying areas where there were many Habitat houses to provide context for survey and interview responses. Then, the survey was finalized and sent to residents of Habitat houses. The survey results formed the foundation for data analysis while the recorded interviews highlighted individuals' lived experiences. Finally, using the analyzed data and interviews, the study evaluated the impact of Habitat for Humanity on the current residents and the neighborhoods and provided Habitat for Humanity with the next steps to increase the effectiveness of Habitat for Humanity's house-building project and better meet their goal of neighborhood revitalization.

Habitat for Humanity of Minnesota (HFH Minnesota) launched a similar and much larger study in 2015 facilitated by Wilder Research, called *Impacts of Habitat for Humanity Home Ownership: Connections to Quality of Life* (Mattessich, 2015). This study, much like HFH Minnesota's previous pilot study, investigated the connections between owning an affordable Habitat for Humanity home and homeowners' quality of life. The study focused specifically on health and safety, social connectedness and family interactions, education, economics, and personal well-being. Wilder Research

contacted 1,200 HFH homeowners throughout Minnesota by phone, obtained a 34% response rate, and conducted 15- to 30-minute survey interviews with 402 participants.

The results from the HFH Minnesota study suggest that Habitat for Humanity has positively impacted homeowners' quality of life within the study's target categories. In terms of safety, 90% of homeowners felt safe in their homes, and 80% felt more safe than they did in their previous homes. The data from the health category was limited to respiratory illnesses, and 57% percent of homeowners reported improved health after moving into their Habitat homes. Within the social connectedness category, more than 80% of the homeowners felt connected to their neighbors and participated in community activities. Approximately 75% of the homeowners felt significantly better about themselves after having their Habitat home built—an improvement in their personal well-being—while 67% of them said they get along better with their families and spend more time with them. More than 50% of the homeowners reported having better jobs and having more money since they had a Habitat home built, which is an improved economic situation. This HFH Minnesota study suggests that Habitat for Humanity has had a positive impact throughout the state and that replicating this kind of study within other communities could provide meaningful data about community impact. What follows, then, is a similar study within Greater Lafayette, Indiana, where Habitat for Humanity Lafayette has built or rehabilitated more than 225 homes and builds at least three homes each year.

METHODOLOGY (IRB #1706019274)

Nature of Inquiry

The nature of our inquiry was both qualitative and quantitative. Since our question was focused on the subjective experience of individuals who have participated in the Habitat for Humanity house-building project, our inquiry included qualitative data derived from interviews with these individuals. We then analyzed the qualitative data gathered in interviews to uncover and quantify trends within individuals' lived experiences, thus converting qualitative data into quantitative data. Undergoing this process allowed us to meet Habitat for Humanity's goal of having qualitative and quantitative data that brings to the forefront the role and outcomes of Habitat for Humanity's house-building project; creates a narrative that showcases the role they play in building, rebuilding, and nourishing communities; and highlights the mission and values, as well as the tangible impact

Habitat for Humanity has produced for individuals and the community.

Habitat for Humanity Survey

Summary

This survey was the first point of contact with individuals who participated in the Habitat for Humanity house-building process and the first method of data collection. The survey was sent out to all individuals who participated in the Habitat for Humanity house-building process, indicated that they were willing to talk about their experiences going through the process, and provided an email on the "Habitat Families—Story Gathering—Sheet" page on Brightspace.

Habitat for Humanity Phone Interview Protocol

Summary

After examining survey responses, we reached out to individuals who indicated an interest in being interviewed over the phone or in person through email. Once a time for a phone or in-person interview was arranged, we used the interview protocol we created to conduct our phone interviews.

Video Process

We conducted a video interview with at least one participant in the Habitat for Humanity house-building process who indicated on their initial survey interest for an in-person interview and were willing to be recorded. The interview was recorded and analyzed similarly to the phone interviews, with the footage being used to produce a testimonial video that highlights the stories of people that have worked with Habitat for Humanity in Greater Lafayette. The video will serve to spread Habitat for Humanity's mission and values, as well as the tangible impact Habitat for Humanity has produced for individuals and the community.

Rationale for Data Collection Method

Our primary data collection methods were the surveys and phone and video interviews, which were supplemented with secondary data from the U.S. census data. The census data was used to gauge the general demographic of our population sample and answer our research questions. The current circumstances impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic complicated physical meetings, hence participants were offered a choice between phone and in-person interviews. The survey was used to collect quantitative data that addressed respondents' levels of satisfaction within the various categories of well-being and allowed the study to reach out to more

participants and collect more data. The phone interview was used to dive deeper into the questions asked in the survey and act as an alternative for meeting with participants in person. If a participant indicated that they were comfortable with being recorded for a video interview, we met in person and conducted a recorded interview with questions similar to those in the phone interviews. The video interview was used as part of our final deliverable: the testimonial video.

Data Analysis Techniques

The surveys provided quantitative data and a larger data set to analyze and uncover trends that answer research questions. This data can easily be displayed in graphs and diagrams that help visual trends. The interviews provided rich, nuanced, qualitative data that further illuminates individual experiences within the trends indicated in the survey. The data was analyzed for the impact of pre- and post-Habitat for Humanity housing on various aspects of well-being using a coded system organized by the various aspects of well-being to see if any themes or trends emerged, especially areas of concern or stories that give credibility for the work and well-being improvement that resulted from the Habitat for Humanity experience. The testimonies of the interviewees were used to highlight aspects of the house-building process that cannot be measured using quantitative data and provide context for some of the quantitative data we collected.

FINDINGS

The first question in the survey had participants provide consent to participate in this survey. We had 15 total respondents, all of whom provided consent. The survey can then be split into five categories to analyze results: current living situation, the Habitat for Humanity process, the participants' well-being, the neighborhood, and the impact of COVID-19.

Current Living Situation

The participants were asked to describe their current living situation to determine how many were still living in their Habitat for Humanity houses. Approximately 80% of respondents are still living in housing subsidized by Habitat for Humanity, 6.7% have sold their home due to moving out of state, 6.7% have a housing USDA loan, and 6.7% sold their Habitat for Humanity house and purchased a new home. The participants were then asked if they currently fully own their Habitat for Humanity house, to which 80% said no and 20% said yes. When asked what year they moved into their Habitat for

Humanity home, the respondents had a range of answers equally divided over the years 2002 through 2018.

Process

This section of the survey helped determine participants' satisfaction with the Habitat for Humanity house-building process. The first question in this section asked how satisfied respondents were with the overall process: 66.7% said they were very satisfied, 20% said they were satisfied, and 13.3% said they were somewhat satisfied. The survey allowed them to expand upon their answers if desired, and most wrote about their house and the house-building process being a great experience that helped them when they needed it. There were two comments mentioning parts of the house that were made too cheaply or not finished as well as they would have liked them to be. They were then asked if they had the choice, would they continue to live in their Habitat for Humanity housing? To that question, 86.7% said yes and 13.3% said no. One respondent answered no due to needing a house that is more handicap friendly, and another respondent reported how the neighborhood had negatively changed since they moved there, including many rentals that are not well taken care of. This respondent stated that they no longer feel safe in their neighborhood. Lastly, they were asked if they felt all of their needs have been met through this process, to which 93.3% said yes and 6.7% said no. Those that stated yes explained that the process allowed them to work and they felt that they were helped through every step of the process. A few respondents suggested the houses should have more rooms for larger families. One respondent reported that the majority of Habitat for Humanity homeowners are single women, and they need more help from Habitat for Humanity with home maintenance and repairs.

Well-Being

This section of the survey discussed how the Habitat for Humanity house-building process impacted various aspects of the participants' well-being. The first aspect was financial well-being: 60% stated that the process had a strong positive impact, 26.7% responded with a positive impact, and 13.3% responded with no change in their financial well-being. The second aspect was sense of safety: 60% stated the process had a strong positive impact, 20% stated positive impact, 13.3% stated no change, and 6.7% stated negative impact. The third aspect was sense of purpose: 66.7% reported the process having a strong positive impact, and 33.3% reported a positive impact on their sense of purpose. The fourth aspect was physical well-being: 46.7% reported

a strong positive impact, 33.3% reported a positive impact, and 20% reported no change in physical well-being. The fifth aspect was mental well-being: 60% stated that the process had a strong positive impact and 40% stated the process had a positive impact.

Neighborhood

For this section of the survey, participants were asked to reflect on their current neighborhood and how the neighborhood affected their experience. The first question asked the participants to state their overall satisfaction living in their current neighborhood: 46.7% said very satisfied, 26.7% said somewhat satisfied, 20% said satisfied, and 6.7% said very dissatisfied. They were then asked to what extent moving into their neighborhood impacted their sense of community and belonging: 66.7% reported a positive impact, 13.3% reported a strong positive impact, 6.7% reported no change, 6.7% said a negative impact, and lastly, another 6.7% reported a strong negative impact. When asked to expand on their reasoning for these two questions, some respondents stated that the process allowed their children the opportunity to attend better schools and gave them a great community where they watch out for each other. Other respondents discussed their neighborhoods negatively changing since they first moved in, with problems such as vandalism, drugs, trash left on the ground, and cigarette butts left on their property. They were then asked to choose factors of their neighborhood that are the best parts of living there. The majority answer was their house, followed by answers such as access to amenities, distance to work, and their neighbors. But when asked to choose factors they least liked about living in their neighborhood, the majority answer was their neighbors, followed by access to job opportunities and distance to work. The next question asked them to reflect on the extent to which they feel a part of their neighborhood: 40% said some extent, 33.3% said a great extent, 13.3% said a very great extent, 6.7% said little extent, and another 6.7% said no extent. Lastly, they were asked when thinking about basic retail necessities, such as food, clothing, and banking, what portion of those basic goods and services are available in their neighborhood? For this question 33.3% reported some, 20% reported many, 20% reported almost all, 13.3% reported few, and lastly, 13.3% reported none.

COVID-19 Impact

This last section had participants reflect on how COVID-19 has impacted them. The first question specifically asked how their connections with others in the

neighborhood were before the pandemic, to which 40% said they had some connections with neighbors, 33.3% said they had minimal connections with neighbors, 20% said they had many connections with neighbors, and 6.7% said they had no connections with neighbors. They were then asked how the restrictions from mid-late 2020 affected their connections with others in the neighborhood: 60% said these restrictions had no change on their connections, 20% said it weakened connections, 13.3% said it strengthened connections, and 6.7% said it removed all connections. Lastly, they were asked how, at the present moment, had the restrictions imposed in response to the pandemic impacted their connections with others in the neighborhood: 66.7% said there was no change, 20% said it weakened their connections, and lastly 13.3% said it strengthened their connections. The respondents were allowed to expand upon their answers to these questions. Some stated they quarantined themselves from the neighborhood. Some stated that everyone pretty much stayed to themselves, and others stated that the pandemic allowed them to create connections due to their growing reliance on one another.

Interviews

In the survey, participants were asked to indicate if they were comfortable being interviewed by our research group to discuss their Habitat for Humanity experience. Approximately half, 53.3%, said yes, and 46.7% said no. The eight respondents that said yes were then asked to leave their contact information and asked if they preferred a phone interview or an in-person interview. Five of them indicated that they preferred a phone interview, and three indicated that they preferred an in-person interview. We then contacted all eight people with the given contact information, and from that, we received three responses to set up the interview. The three interviews included one in-person interview with Shana Benson (pseudonym) and two phone interviews with Melanie Hayes (pseudonym) and Roberta Tate (pseudonym).

Shana Benson

Prior to the Habitat for Humanity process, a common theme in Shana's life was the deterioration of both her community and her financial well-being. She explained how she simply did not feel safe in her apartment complex and felt constant financial stress due to the continuous increase in rent. However, as she discussed her Habitat for Humanity experience, she said that her well-being changed for the better in many ways. She described how she gained a positive network with two other women as they all went through the process: an

enhancement to her community well-being. She also reiterated how the process was a financial stress reliever as the money she earned went to investing in herself, not as rent to someone else: an enhancement to her financial well-being. However, Shana did mention many potential things for Habitat for Humanity to improve on. She wishes Habitat for Humanity Lafayette built within communities where the majority of the population are homeowners rather than renters. Currently, her neighborhood lacks a community feeling as many of her neighbors are in and out and do not invest in their property or the neighborhood. She explained how her neighborhood is unsafe: drug paraphernalia, gunshots, people walking through her backyard, needing to keep her blinds closed at all hours, and the inability to take her dog for a walk without feeling threatened. One improvement for Habitat for Humanity to consider is selecting sites for future builds within safe and homeowner-majority communities. Another area of improvement Shana discussed was the training of homeowners. She wished that there were more classes to learn the ins and outs of homeownership, especially as a female who was not taught any of these tasks growing up. Specifically, she wished there was another class on simple repairs around the home, so she would not need to hire out. While Shana indicated many ways that Habitat for Humanity has room for improvement, she was grateful for the way it has given her a sense of confidence in her homeownership, alleviated financial stress, and helped her cultivate a group of supportive women.

Melanie Hayes

After our interview with Melanie, a couple of themes stood out. She frequently mentioned the sense of gratitude she felt toward Habitat for Humanity. In her opinion, the opportunity that Habitat for Humanity has given her through their sweat equity program is invaluable. Her previous residences were not conducive to a healthy lifestyle, and she felt her rent was much too steep for the quality of her rental. Her apartment complex was also full of loud and abusive neighbors. Moving into her own house allowed her to learn new skills and meet new people. Melanie found the process to be lengthy and stressful, and it involved doing lots of work outside her comfort zone and with people she did not know. Yet, even as she talked about the process, her radiant positive attitude shone through. She took on all the challenges and now reflected upon them as learning lessons and an opportunity for her to build a new network of support. The only problem that Melanie encountered during and after the house-building process was meeting other Habitat for Humanity homeowners who tended to focus only on the faults in their houses rather than being

grateful for the opportunity they received. Over the pandemic, even as a more reserved person, Melanie did see a drop in the communications and connections she had with her neighbors. Overall, Melanie was really happy with her new home. She was able to get another cat. She now has her own space and privacy where she does not need to worry about the neighbors being too loud. All in all, Melanie seemed to imply that her mental, physical, and financial security was improved by the program, and she was extremely grateful to Habitat for Humanity for the opportunity to own her own house.

Roberta Tate

Our interview with Roberta yielded a few important points of interest that easily could be grouped into a few themes: physical well-being, community well-being, financial well-being, the house-building process, and spiritual well-being. Roberta described her previous place of residence, Section 8 housing, as unsafe. She lived in a run-down neighborhood where she never went outside and always had her doors locked. She did not feel connected to nor did she even communicate with any of her neighbors. For a brief stint in between living in Section 8 housing and her Habitat home, she lived with her mother in her childhood home. Although this neighborhood was very safe and welcoming, she discussed the social pressure she felt to have her own place of residence rather than relying on her mother. During this time, she worked two part-time jobs and was barely making ends meet, and this was without the stress of making a housing payment. After hearing about Habitat for Humanity's house-building program and receiving encouragement from her babysitter and another mother, both of whom went through the Habitat for Humanity house-building process, she decided to apply. Roberta spent much of our interview discussing her experience going through the Habitat for Humanity house-building process. She talked about enjoying the financial instruction from Dave Ramsey, spending her volunteer hours on job sites, getting to know the Habitat for Humanity community, and she expressed her deeply felt and religiously informed sentiments. She talked about how each of these experiences deeply changed her. She loved learning about managing money and homeownership through the classes Habitat for Humanity provided. She also mentioned the way her interactions with her fellow participants opened her eyes to the vast array of experiences individuals can have. She discussed how the whole experience instilled a deep sense of gratitude. She also highlighted how involved she was in the building process. She loved putting up drywall in her daughter's room, placing brand-new windows in her home, and picking the carpet, siding, tile, and cabinets for her home. She highlighted

the location and community of her Habitat home as extremely important to her improved sense of safety. She has settled into her new home. She has put up a fence, planted some flowers, and hung up her own pictures. She now only works a second job occasionally to supplement her paycheck. She says that the mortgage is extremely affordable. At the encouragement of her previous employer, she is now a full-time student studying accounting at Purdue University. She also mentioned how pursuing more education has helped her get a better job. In regard to COVID-19, Roberta said it did not affect her that much. She was furloughed from her full-time job, so she worked her part-time job for six nights a week until her full-time job called her back. Her family has also stayed pretty healthy through it all. Roberta also discussed some of her favorite aspects of Habitat for Humanity, which included the supportive community that has been there to help if she needs it and the assessing she received through the process. She was also very adamant to emphasize the importance of this program in her own faith journey and hopes that Habitat continues to emphasize this moving forward.

CONCLUSION

Implications

Based on our research, several key trends can be identified. The majority of respondents who went through the Habitat for Humanity house-building process expressed satisfaction with their experience. The opportunity to have affordable housing was an obvious advantage with many respondents mentioning the benefits of the lessened financial burden. More niche aspects of the program also positively impacted patrons such as the sweat equity component, a greater sense of connectedness to fellow participants, and equipping participants for homeownership and money management. There is a definite split in residents' feelings of safety within their neighborhoods, which is understandable as each neighborhood will have its own characteristics and levels of safety. The Habitat for Humanity house-building process would benefit by placing extra emphasis on neighborhood safety when accessing and selecting future job sites.

Participants also expressed some dissatisfaction with Habitat for Humanity's educational program, saying that they did not truly feel prepared for the responsibilities of homeownership, specifically in the realm of home repairs. There is some knowledge training provided, but it may be inadequate for the average individual who may

have little to no experience with the small repairs that come with owning a house.

Community Impact

The data gathered will be a valuable resource for Habitat for Humanity of Lafayette. With an insight into the minds of people who have gone through their house-building process, Habitat for Humanity will better identify potential flaws in their program and work toward finding solutions, leading to a more positive experience for future participants. Additionally, some of the concerns raised regarding the quality of neighborhoods could impact Habitat for Humanity's neighborhood revitalization programs and shed light on specific areas of need. Our work will also serve largely as an affirmation for Habitat for Humanity's work thus far, demonstrating the powerful impact of their work and the drastic increase in well-being it brings to those they serve.

Student Impact

Keely Dehn

This project had a strong positive impact on me personally and professionally. My career path includes wanting to become a medical doctor. I believe the best doctors are those who can listen and empathize with their patients. This project has allowed me to learn how different housing situations and environments can affect a person's well-being in many different aspects. My major in neurobiology with minors in psychology and human development/family studies have allowed me to learn about how the environment affects people mentally or psychologically through stress or lack of positive connections. The Habitat for Humanity house-building process has allowed so many people to get into safe, reliable housing when they were in need, which the data in this project has shown has positively affected their well-being. I see a lot of aspects of this project that would work well in my hometown where many people need help with housing due to financial stress. My hometown is very small but had one of the largest teen pregnancy rates in the state, and from this come many families that could use help from places like Habitat for Humanity. Our project shows how investing in places like Habitat for Humanity can help build up and strengthen a community or town.

Katie Figliomeni

This project required a step out of my comfort zone. Before this project I would not have had the opportunity to go inside someone's home and interview them. This allowed me to feel more comfortable doing so, taking a

step into the world of the person I am interviewing to get a full grasp of their story. Professionally, I learned how to format the research and results and analyze trends for certain topics such as well-being. Discovering and organizing trends will be crucial to how I will have to analyze medical statistics and reports, so this project helped me take a baby step in this aspect of professional growth. As for career growth in general, interviewing is always a useful skill, whether it is hiring new members on a team or taking notes on how participants successfully responded to questions so that I can be successful in my future interviews for a position at a new hospital. Another useful skill was learning to send out a message in a way that maximizes responses; we had to be strategic on the emails we sent and the follow-up emails to get people to respond to our survey. This is useful for when I may have to send a survey to coworkers or patients who attend the hospital where I work. While I have a long way to go, this project helped me formulate ideas on how to pique people's interest or make them feel compelled to respond. For continuing community work in the future, I am really passionate about nutrition and the impact it can have on individuals' holistic health, so in my future city, I want to become involved at a food pantry that not only serves normal, nonperishable food to the homeless members of the community but food that is nourishing and healthy.

Nikhil Mathur

This research project allowed me to gain an appreciation for the basic struggles that low-income individuals are burdened with. I am fortunate to be the son of financially secure parents, so I never experienced many of these struggles during my childhood. Doing in-depth research on patrons of Habitat for Humanity was an educational and insightful experience that will shape my worldview and have a profound impact on my empathetic values. Habitat for Humanity has also earned my respect for the work they do to build and revitalize communities across the world, and specifically in Lafayette.

Professionally, I feel more confident in my research and writing abilities, and I have gained valuable presentation experience. The research we conducted does not have much correlation to my field of study (aviation), but some of the theoretical knowledge that was discussed early in the semester has sparked internal thoughts about quality of life as a pilot and what types of metrics to use to quantify that. Though commercial aviation may seem like a glamorous job to a layperson, it comes with the unfortunate reality of being away from family for extended periods, poor sleep schedules, and a myriad of

other hardships. Studying the Gallup Healthways Well-Being Index and Veenhoven's Four Qualities of Life allowed me to gain a better understanding of how to evaluate my well-being and will play a role in future career decisions I make.

Hawk Pusey

When thinking about my relationship with this project, I think back to high school when I had the opportunity to spend a day working on a Habitat for Humanity job site. Although it was a mere six hours of community service, something in that experience marked me. When allowed to serve alongside Habitat for Humanity again through this project, I could not help but say yes. This project has given me a much better awareness of what the Habitat for Humanity house-building program is, who it serves, and the magnitude of its impact in an individual's life as well as in a community. As an English education major, a research project of this size seemed daunting and uncomfortable, but through this process, I have learned a lot more about the intersections of disciplines and the strength that comes from an interdisciplinary team. My background and interests have a place and are important in the field of research. This project taught me a lot about how to lead and function within a group and how to better encourage and utilize other people's strengths. In a more personal sense, this project showed me the importance of empathy and deepened my ability to relate to people who may seem different from me.

As a local, the way this project has the potential to directly affect my community is extremely exciting, and I would love to see these kinds of projects continue and spread throughout the Purdue community. As a future teacher, I would love to find more ways to engage my students with these real-world opportunities to serve and learn.

Nanditha Srinivasan

Before this class, I was aware of the work that Habitat for Humanity does but did not recognize the magnitude of its work and the impact it has had in many communities. The sweat equity program is a revolutionary way that Habitat for Humanity is helping people get the house of their dreams. Personally, this project has been really enriching for me because I got to work with the local community, which I would not have been able to do in any other class. And as an economics student, it gave me an insight into developmental economics, which is a field I would like to explore in the future. Furthermore, I learned how to conduct interviews and the appropriate formatting of surveys and questionnaires, which is an essential skill for me to develop in the

future. But most importantly, this project has given me the motivation to continue working with the local community wherever I end up in the future.

Potential for Future Research

One of the most disappointing aspects of this study was the number of responses we received. We sent the survey to 109 individuals and only received 15 responses. For future research studies, we would love to see a higher rate of response. At the beginning of this project, we set a goal of interviewing at least 10 individuals, but at this point, we have only been able to interview 3 individuals. For future studies, we would love to see a larger number of individuals to interview. During the study, we received some conflicting responses on the safety of the neighborhoods around Habitat for Humanity homes. Future studies could focus on the neighborhoods surrounding current Habitat for Humanity houses, looking at the factors that have made some neighborhoods feel safe and others unsafe. This study could also help Habitat for Humanity better identify neighborhoods in which to place future Habitat for Humanity houses. We would also

suggest performing site visits to these neighborhoods to make these studies more effective.

The last thing we would encourage for future studies would be to continually consider the emotional and personal impact of this process on participants. One of the strongest elements of this project was the focus on individuals' stories and their perceptions of their experiences. We would hope to see this same care and consideration in future studies.

REFERENCE

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