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SUMMER PROGRAMMING AND DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-CONCEPT
FOR YOUTH IN TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

By

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Abstract

Research that demonstrates the effectiveness of out-of-school time (OST) programs for at-risk youth is discussed. Participants in OST programs have demonstrated emotional, social and academic benefits as well as risk behavior reduction. Frequency of attendance and duration has a correlation with long-term outcomes. This study evaluated outcomes for formerly homeless youth participants in a summer recreational program using the Piers-Harris Self-Concept II Scale. Results did not provide a single combination of factors to reach statistical significance in *Behavioral Adjustment, Physical Appearance and Attributes, Freedom from Anxiety, Popularity, and Happiness and Satisfaction*. However, *Intellectual and School Status* reached small-to-medium effect size. Both genders demonstrated lower average scores at the end of the program, indicating that their perceived ability to do well in scholastic endeavors decreased over the duration of the program.

Keywords: Out-of-school programs, after school programming, transitional housing, at-risk youth, self-concept, positive youth development, expanded learning time

Chapter One

After school programs that provide structure, safety, and opportunities for children have demonstrated a correlation with increased academic, personal, social and recreational development for at-risk youth (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Huang et al., 2007; Huang et al.; 2010, O'Donnell & Kirkner 2014). The U.S. federal government supports after school programs through its 21st Century Community Learning Center (21stCCLC). In 2001, the 21st Century program expanded through the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (Public Law 107-110). Through NCLB, funding for the 21st CCLC program went from \$40 million to \$1 billion. The goal of 21st CCLC is to support academic achievement and to prepare students to compete on a global scale. The benefactors of these funds are Title I schools, those with greater than 40% of their families below the poverty line (James-Burdumy, Dynarksi, & Deke, 2006)

Substantial research confirms the positive impact that after school programs have on academic achievement, social skill development, and risk behavior reduction for the youth they serve (Goldschmidt, Huang, & Chinen, 2007; Huang et al., 2007; Huang et al., 2010). The term Out of School Time (*OST*) refers to both direct after-school care operating in afternoon hours as well as “more comprehensive efforts that respond to the needs of children, youth, and parents during the evenings, weekends, summers, and holidays by offering services that help youth grow, learn, and develop” (American Youth Policy Forum, 2006, p. 6). The term out-of-school time is interchangeable with “after school programs” and “expanded learning time.” Out-of-school-time programs can be present in scholastic or community settings and can have varying approaches to structure

and activities, including but not limited to the same types of activities that are present in extracurricular settings.

Although after school programs were initially developed to address children's supervision and behavioral issues, they have evolved into safe havens for youth who are at-risk for antisocial behaviors and for early dropout, and they have immediate and long-term benefits beyond what they originally provided. For example, the social environments youth experience in the afterschool programs enhance academic and socioemotional functioning (Roeser & Peck, 2003).

Extensive research has focused on the benefits of traditional after school programs that are primarily academically focused, with results indicating improved scholastic performance. One such program is LA's BEST, the largest urban-based, after-school program in Los Angeles County (Huang, Kim, Marshall, & Perez, 2005). Its mission is to provide a safe haven from gang activity, drug usage, and other antisocial behaviors. Primary goals of the program are to prevent juvenile delinquency and to promote positive school behaviors for its participants. LA's BEST's model provides academic and extracurricular activities to enhance children's development of intellectual, social, and emotional well-being so that they can reach their full potential. The program is designed to enhance academic achievement through after school time that addresses four aspects: (a) assistance with homework, (b) a learning activity that fosters additional growth in core academic skills, (c) recreational activities, and (d) assistance with health and nutritional needs. By addressing students' needs using a more holistic approach and by relying on the social capital that such a group setting provides, LA's BEST has significantly benefited its participants.

Significant research demonstrates the positive influence that out-of-school programs have on the academic performance of low-income youth (Lauer et al., 2006; Munoz, 2002; O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). A meta-analysis of 35 after school programs demonstrated significant improvement in reading and mathematics skills for youth who were at risk for early dropout (Lauer et al., 2006). In addition, participants of out-of-school programming demonstrated positive feelings and attitudes toward school, improved grades, and improved achievement test scores (Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010). The After School Corporation (TASC), an organization that works with New York public schools with high percentages of middle and high schoolers at risk for early dropout, found that children who attended TASC projects for more than one year improved achievement in math and school attendance (Reisner, White, Russell & Birmingham, 2004). O'Donnell and Kirkner (2014) investigated the effects of participating in an out-of-school community program for low-income, culturally diverse high school students and found that participants had significantly higher art and math standardized test scores and reduced absences, than students not participating. Huang et al. (2000) also reported that students demonstrated higher scores in math and language arts. As suggested by Durlak and Weissberg (2007), there might be a causal relationship between improvement in youth's feelings and attitudes towards school and behavioral adjustment and improved school performance. Both LA's BEST teachers and after-school staff perceived students to have improved self-confidence, increased participation in class, and increased self-efficacy in learning (Huang et al., 2005; Huang et al., 2010).

Another program dedicated to helping school-aged children, Citizen Schools, works with low-income communities that would benefit from additional support and

resources through academic achievement, mathematics, and helps children build social and emotional skills through hands on experiences (Fountain et al., 2016) As of 2014, 2,000 schools were implementing Citizen Schools' Extended Learning Time (ELT) program. ELT has yielded positive results for its participants, including increased math achievement and overall engagement with academics (Fountain et al., 2016)

Not only does participating in after-school programs enhance academic skills, but for some students, it will also change their academic trajectory. Participation in after-school programs is associated with outcomes such as positive attitudes toward school (McComb & Scott-Little, 2003). Academic support has also provided students with feelings of competence and self-efficacy by helping them develop their academic skills (Forrest-Bank, Nicotera, Anothonym, Gonzalez & Jenson, 2014). Regular participation in high quality after school programs is also linked with significant gains in standardized tests scores for economically disadvantaged students (Vandell, Reisner, & Pierce, 2007). Finally, another benefit is increased desire to attain higher education.

LA's BEST students have higher aspirations towards their future and indicate a desire to finish high school and to go on to college (Huang et al., 2005). Citizen Schools' participants reported experiencing enhanced understanding of advanced education and career and job skills. Despite coming from families in which they would be the first to graduate from college, the majority of Citizens Schools' participants stated that they desired to complete college based on the knowledge Citizen Schools had provided them.

Underserved students benefit significantly from additional social support provided in after school programs, with students demonstrating significant improvement in social skills and prosocial behaviors (Munoz, 2002). Involvement in extracurricular activities

predicts higher grades, higher college aspirations, higher enrollment and completion, greater self-discipline, increased self-esteem, and greater resilience (Zaff, Moore, Papillo, & Williams, 2003). Studies have demonstrated that LA's BEST participants benefit from the recreational programs, leadership training, conflict resolution class, and other activities aimed to stress the importance of effort and teamwork. Participants were also shown to have developed skills to improve relationships with adults, as well as improved skills in conflict resolution (Huang et al., 2007). Participants are benefited by the presence of and close relationships with supportive adult program staff, helping students develop resilience, as shown by Huang et al. (2007). Returning to Citizens Schools, the emotional and psychological effects of ELT included increased self-esteem and prosocial behaviors for the students who participated in the program compared to those who did not (Fountain et al., 2016) Students also reported having, positive feelings of belonging in the ELT program, positive engagements with peers, and positive relationships with staff (Fountain et al., 2016).

Out-of-school programming is a complex learning environment, with an interplay between factors such as supportive structure, staff presence, and student demographics that create an effective environment (Goldschmidt et al., 2007). The relationships that participants form with staff members might contribute to positive self-concept for participants (Keating, Foster, Foster, & Alessandri, 2002). The Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) have been a longstanding organization, providing after school support for families in low-income neighborhoods. (Hirsch et al. 2000) concluded that BGCA's programs provide a safe place to explore ideas, self-expression and identities through activities and stimulation of creativity, resulting in stronger connections with peers.

Anderson-Butcher and Cash (2010) reported that participating in BCGA was related to development of self-concept.

Participants also tend to exhibit better behavior in school, higher academic achievement, better social skills, improved self-control, and improved self-confidence through the development of positive relationships with adults and peers (Scott-Little, Hamaan, & Jurs, 2002). The lack of positive mentors contributes to the opportunity gap that disadvantaged youth experience. According to the 2011 National Survey of Children's Health, nearly 20% of low-income children reported not have any mentoring relationships in their community or at home, while 5% of middle-class children reported not having mentoring relationships (Child Health Data, 2011). The relationship between participants and after school staff might enhance educational values, high expectations of self, and commitment to stay in school (Huang et al., 2007). Huang et al. (2007) referred to this as social capital, such that staff possess the ability to influence the development of students' belief systems and to impact their scholastic and social futures. In one study of inner-city youth who resided in Chicago's most socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhoods, 20-30% developed strong relationships with after school care workers, who essentially became a second family for these youth (Halpern, 1992). In addition, participants who attend structured after-school programs that provided adult supervision demonstrated improved conduct and work habits compared to their unsupervised peers (Reisner et al., 2004). Moreover, longer exposure to mentoring might create a stronger effect. Youth at risk for antisocial behaviors and early dropout receive the greatest benefits after six months of mentoring, with increased self-concept, decreased

hopelessness, and reduction in problematic behaviors among the leading outcomes (Keating et al., 2002).

Participants in out-of-school programs have demonstrated risky behavior reduction (Catalano, Beglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Goldshmidt et al., 2007). In addition to enhancing their well-being and academic performance, students who were intensely involved in LA's BEST demonstrated reduction in undesirable behaviors, including criminal behaviors. Huang et al. (2007) attributed these findings to the provision of supervision at a time when participants would otherwise engage in deviant behaviors. Mahoney and Stattin (2000) also found that extracurricular activity positively correlates with low rates of criminal arrest for young adults. LA's BEST students also experienced a decline in drop-out rates. In line with previous research (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997), extracurricular activity correlates with low rates of dropping out of school. Durlak and Weisberg (2007) also investigated after school programs that attempt to promote social and personal skills along with supervision and academic skills. They concluded that youth who are involved in after-school programs demonstrated improved confidence, improved self-esteem, an increase in positive social behaviors, and a reduction in problematic behaviors. Vandell et al. (2007) also concluded that regular participation in high quality after school programs is linked with reduction in behavior problems in disadvantaged students. Participation in after school programs is associated with lower incidence of aggressive and other risky behaviors (McComb & Scott-Little, 2003).

Not all after-school programs are created equally. High-quality programs are identified by trained staff, structured activities, and supervision. Engagement in after-

school programming with a strong emphasis on structure is linked to low antisocial behavior, whereas participation in a low structured program is associated with high levels of antisocial behavior (Zaff et al., 2003). Developing participants into competent and successful adolescents has been shown to safeguard against problematic behaviors (Carr & Vandiver, 2001).

The Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP, 2004) perceives year-round out-of-school programs to be essential in closing the opportunity and academic achievement gaps for disadvantaged youth and collects data that evaluates after-school programs. The HFRP (2004) found that effective programs provide not only homework time but also, personal attention from caring adults, academic support, development of new friendships, exploration of new interests, a sense of belonging to a group, and the ability to build a sense of self-esteem independent of academic talent. These serve as protective factors that allow students to experience increased academic achievement, stronger self-image, positive social development, reduced risk taking behavior, improved school behavior, and fewer absences (HFRP, 2004)

According to the American Youth Policy Forum (2006), the most beneficial structured programs allow participants to learn new skills and to engage in structured activities that provide opportunities for prosocial interactions with peers and adults, allowing them to develop new skills and talents. Programs that include both academic and non-academic activities (sports, performing arts, etc.) provide greater benefit than programs that offer either academic or non-academic activities do (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002).

The amount of time spent in after school programs appears to correlate with positive results. Youth demonstrate greater benefits across social, academic, and psychological domains with greater exposure to and intensity in an after school program, as measured in the number of years and days of attendance (American Youth Policy Forum, 2006; HFRP, 2004; Mahoney, Cairns, & Farmer, 2003). Studies confirm that regular after-school program participation can improve academic achievement, and children who participate in after-school programs the longest make the biggest gains (Goldschmidt et al., 2007; Munoz, 2002; Vandell et al., 2007). Participants in high-quality after school programs receive the strongest benefits after two years of attendance (Reisner et al., 2004). High attendance has also been associated with high teacher ratings of students' self-efficacy, oral communication, and collaboration skills (Huang et al., 2010).

Research suggests that children with the biggest risk for poor developmental outcomes might receive the greatest benefits from after school programs (Allen & Phillber, 2001; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002; Posner & Vandell, 1994; Riggs & Greenberg, 2004). However, fewer opportunities exist for low-income families compared to the opportunities for their economically advantaged peers. Children who experience homelessness are at risk for developmental delays and social-emotional difficulties (Haskett, Armstrong, & Tisdale, 2016). Therefore, implementing programs that address these challenges is paramount to providing effective support services.

Gaps in cognitive skills across socioeconomic statuses grow most slowly during the school year (Downey, Von Hippel, & Broh, 2004). Thus, schools are viewed as academic equalizers across populations so youth from low socio-economic backgrounds

face their greatest academic disadvantages in the summer months. While their more affluent peers are engaged in enriching activities, they do not receive the same social development, skill development, and environmental benefits. Consequently, providing year-round opportunities can close opportunity and learning gaps for low-income and disadvantaged youth (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2007; Deschenes & Malone, 2011).

Rationale

Research has consistently demonstrated that participation in high-quality, structured OST programs provide youth who are at risk for antisocial behaviors and early dropout with social, emotional, and academic benefits while simultaneously providing safeguards against deviant behaviors. Although significant research has been conducted investigating such youth, very little is known about the effects of these programs on youth who have experienced homelessness with their families. Although we can reasonably infer from research that the same benefits should be gained or that greater benefits should be gained due the substantial opportunity gap that youth who are in transitional housing experience, little to no data exist to confirm this. It is paramount to understand the needs of this underserved population in order to serve them most effectively and efficiently. Identifying student perceptions of student academic challenges and self-concepts may provide insight into developing more effective programming.

Youth in transitional housing face many obstacles due to their life circumstances; many of them have endured a lifetime of disadvantages. Several out-of-school factors have been identified that significantly contribute to academic achievement gaps, hindering disadvantaged students from doing well academically. These include (1)

prenatal influences, including low birth weight and other non-genetic factors; (2) inadequate medical care, including dental and vision due to a lack of finances or insurance; (3) food insecurity; (4) environmental pollutants; (5) family relations/stress; (6) neighborhood characteristics; and (7) lack of extended learning opportunities (Berliner, 2009). Pre- and after-school care and summer programs reflect the singular positive out-of-school factor (extended learning opportunities) that can mitigate the harm caused by the first six (Berliner, 2009). Youth residing in transitional housing experience the first six factors in their time of being homeless, and for many of them, up to five years of their lives were spent without a place to call home. The questions remains as to how well after school programming offsets the other six factors. How much do out of school activities allow individuals to begin to identify themselves with positive self-concepts?

Researchers have found that frequency and duration of attendance correlate with long-term outcomes, so it is reasonable to suggest that daily involvement in after-school programs in the summer months would significantly enhance these children's social, psychological, and emotional well-being. It is also known that youth who live in transitional housing face many opportunity gaps, including during the summer months, when their more affluent peers are engaged in enrichment activities. Providing youth who live in transitional housing with opportunities that might further enhance their feelings of well-being and self-efficacy is critical to their emotional and psychological development during this time that would otherwise be unstructured. McKay (2011) suggests that out-of-school programming that allows autonomy, social competency, critical consciousness, and problem solving skills will promote positive outcomes for youth, resulting in a resilient community. This study explored the relationship between a

structured out-of-school program and the self-concept of youth who live in transitional housing.

To explore these factors, a recreational out-of-school time program for formerly homeless youth living with their families in transitional housing was identified. Rock the Park is a program developed by Seattle Parks and Recreation created to serve youth living at Solid Ground's transitional and low-income housing (<https://www.solid-ground.org>). This program aims to provide education through recreation and through diverse experiences with supportive staff. During the summer, participants have opportunities to engage in a range of activities, including drama, soccer, rock climbing, sailing, and tennis classes in a group setting. Field trips and various other special events are also offered. Although this programming is a significant element to the wrap-around services that families are offered through Solid Ground's transitional housing program, empirical research is lacking exploring whether these activities benefit participants.

This study is important because it might serve as a springboard for future researchers to further explore this underserved population so that services to youth in transitional housing can be more effectively and consistently delivered. In addition, data that support the use of these programs could influence policy makers and organizations to divert funding to effective programming that can more accurately address the opportunity gap youth in transitional housing experience.

The purpose of the study is to explore how participating in a supportive community activity that provides recreational opportunities, engaging explorative outings, learning activities, and social support in a group setting relates to participants' self-concept. Because this study is preliminary, the hope is to present findings that might

provide a basis for further researchers to evaluate the potential beneficial effects of out of school activities in the summer.

Research Question and Hypothesis

Is there a relationship between participating in an out-of-school community summer program and self-concept of formerly homeless youth who are currently living in transitional housing? Participants completed the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, which includes six domains—Behavior, Intellectual and School Status, Physical Appearance and Attributes, Freedom from Anxiety, Popularity, and Happiness and Satisfaction—prior to participating in the program and upon completion of the program.

Limitations

This study was conducted solely at one site located in a city in Western Washington. Therefore, the study results may not account for other contextual factors that might exist in various geographical locations. Additionally, although I did everything to ensure that participants knew that their answers to the survey were not to be made public, it is impossible to ensure that participants in a self-survey did answer each question honestly.

Chapter Two: Method

Participants

The sample consisted of 16 participants in total, equally distributed among females and males who currently reside in transitional housing at Solid Ground and who are enrolled in a summer out-of-school program (Rock the Park) facilitated by Seattle Parks and Recreation. The age of the participants spanned from 6 years to 16 years, with a mean age of 12.19 years and standard deviation of 2.99. All of the participants had experienced homelessness from a time period of 6 months to 5 years which was also recorded. On average the participants had 2.78 years as homeless with standard deviation of 1.62 years. Out of the 16 participants who were included in the study 4 (25%) declared themselves as immigrants, while only 2 (12.5%) of them reported a two-parent household, others stating they were being raised by a single parent. All of the participants were considered as coming from low income households with the highest reported monthly income being \$1,420 and lowest being \$600 per month.

All youth and families were notified of the opportunity to participate in this study through their case managers and other staff members of Solid Ground. Posters were placed throughout the facility inviting them to participate in the Rock the Park program. Each of the individuals who elected to participate in Rock the Park were given additional information to voluntarily attend an informational event regarding the research study. At the informational event hosted by the staff at Solid Ground, the researcher was introduced, provided an explanation of the research project, and was available for answering questions. Participants were provided opportunities to debrief their experience

upon completion of data collection. Participants were not compensated in any way for their participation in this study.

An exogenous event occurred within two weeks of the onset of this study, which involved an interaction with a family living in the transitional housing complex and local police that resulted in the death of one of the residents. This event caused a significant disruption in the mobility of the residents about the complex, resulting in difficulties in approaching potential participants and collecting consent forms. In addition, although historically Rock the Park has had as many as 80 participants, the current years' participation dropped dramatically, due in part to many factors including: the event with local police, other summer programming opportunities available to residents and other unknown factors. Finally, 10 additional participants completed the first questionnaire, but were not present for the final questionnaire, therefore limiting the potential sample size.

Materials and Procedures

To understand how summer programming might affect development of self-concept, the Piers Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, Second Edition (Piers-Harris 2) was administered (see Appendix A). The Piers-Harris 2 is comprised of 60 questions with six domains: Behavioral Adjustment (BEH), Intellectual and School Status (INT), Physical Appearance and Attributes (PHY), Freedom from Anxiety (FRE), Popularity (POP), and Happiness and Satisfaction (HAP). The Piers-Harris 2 includes measures sensitive to validity concerns, such as exaggeration, response bias, and random responding.

The Piers-Harris 2 presents alpha internal consistency of .91. The subscales present the following internal consistencies: BEH= .81, INT = .81, PHY = .75, FRE = .81, POP = .74, and HAP = .77.

Data collection occurred at the onset of program. Participants between the ages of 6 and 17 were provided the opportunity to fill out the questionnaire while attending their initial Rock the Park session. Subsequently, a final data collection point was taken on the last day of the program.

As needed, employees of Solid Ground and Seattle Parks and Recreation were available to assist in administering the Piers-Harris. Prior to initiating this study, a training meeting was held to educate these individuals on reliable test administration, including awareness of influencing participants, otherwise creating biased responses.

Participants' Piers-Harris 2 scores were compared. Variables of interest included family demographics; whether the participant came from a single-parent, two-parent, or guardian-caretaker home; whether or not the participant had refugee or immigrant status; and how much time the participant spent being homeless prior to receiving services at Solid Ground.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the effect of summer programming on the self-concept of youth currently residing in transitional housing. All residents of Solid Ground who are already enrolled in Rock the Park were invited to participate. The Piers-Harris 2 was administered to explore self-concept, with six specific domains to provide further insight. Data collection occurred at the onset of the program and upon completion of the program in the summer of 2017. Demographic data was provided by Solid Ground

to allow further insights into who benefits the most by engaging in supportive recreational programming.

Chapter Three: Main Results

To examine factors that were related to change in participants' self-concept, a mixed design ANOVA was carried out with gender as the between-subjects factor and time as the within-subjects factor.

Factors Related to Self-Concept

The first analysis explored *Behavioral Adjustment* and its change as related to enrollment in the Rock the Park program with gender as the between-subjects factor. Although not a single combination of factors reached statistical significance, it is not an unexpected result, having in mind the small sample size. Group means, standard deviations and counts are reported in Table 1. Comparisons of the means show that scores were somewhat lower at the end of this program for males, with male participants' scores being lower than female participants' scores after the program, despite the opposite pattern before enrollment. Females' scores remained the same before and after participation with the program. The results did not show a relationship between changes in participants' scores on *Behavioral Adjustment* and participation in the Rock the Park program.

Table 1

Group Statistics for Behavioral Adjustment Score as Dependent Variable

Time point	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Before	Female	10.38	1.92	8
	Male	10.63	2.45	8
After	Female	10.38	2.67	8
	Male	9.88	3.52	8

All main and interaction effects that were included in this analysis were not statistically significant ($p > .05$). Table 2 shows the tested factors, *F ratios*, degrees of freedom and *p-values*. As a measure of effect size, partial eta squared (η_p^2) for both main effects and interaction failed to meet the lower-limit for Cohen's suggestion of a small effect size (.10) (Cohen, 1988).

Table 2

Results of the Repeated Measures ANOVA with Behavioral Adjustment as Dependent Variable

Factor combination	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>	η_p^2
Enrollment ^a	.512	1	.486	.035
Enrollment ^a *Gender	.512	1	.486	.035
Gender	.010	1	.921	.001

Notes. Error degrees of freedom is 14. ^a Within-subjects factor.

Scales on *Intellectual and School Status* were also analyzed using a mixed ANOVA with gender as a between-subjects factor, and time as a within-subjects factor. It can also be seen that the scores for males and females became more similar after participation in the program. Overall mean scores were lower at the end of the program for this facet, a result of which is mostly due the change in the scores of males. Group statistics are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Group Statistics for Intellectual and School Status Score as Dependent Variable

Time point	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Before	Female	9.75	2.25	8
	Male	11.63	1.69	8
After	Female	10.63	2.07	8
	Male	10.13	3.36	8

Table 4 presents *F statistics*, degrees of freedom, *p*-values and estimates of effect sizes. There were no statistically significant changes in *Intellectual and School Status* before and after their participation in summer out-of-school program ($p = .645$). There was also no significant difference between males and females ($p = .508 > .05$). The interaction between gender and the within effect of participation in the program was not significant ($p = .096 > .05$). The interaction between gender and participation in the program has a small-to-medium effect size (.186) on the dependent variable associated with the combination of gender and participation. The interaction was not statistically significant, but could be important to consider in studies with larger number of participants.

Table 4

Results of the Repeated Measures ANOVA with Intellectual and School Status as Dependent Variable

Factor combination	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>	η_p^2
Enrollment ^a	.221	1	.645	.016
Enrollment ^a *Gender	3.195	1	.096	.186
Gender	.462	1	.508	.032

Notes. Error degrees of freedom is 14. ^a Within-subjects factor.

Scores for *Physical Appearance and Attributes* were analyzed and the results are presented in Tables 5 and 6.

Though not statistically significant, it can be seen that *Physical Appearance and Attributes* scores for females are lower than males at both before and after enrolment in Rock the Park program (Table 5). It is also worth noting that females increased their *Physical Appearance and Attributes* scores after participation in Rock the Park program while the scores for males decreased after participation in the program. Relevant descriptive statistics for each group are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Group Statistics for Physical Appearance and Attributes Score as Dependent Variable

Time point	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Before	Female	7.50	2.45	8
	Male	9.00	1.85	8
After	Female	7.75	1.67	8
	Male	8.63	2.07	8

Table 6 provides the relevant statistics describing the model that was carried out. As it can be seen from the table, none of the factors were statistically significant.

Table 6

Results of the Repeated Measures ANOVA with Physical Appearance and Attributes as Dependent Variable

Factor combination	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>	η_p^2
Enrollment ^a	.013	1	.910	.001
Enrollment ^a *Gender	.781	1	.572	.023
Gender	1.910	1	.189	.120

Notes. Error degrees of freedom is 14. ^a Within-subjects factor.

Scores on *Freedom from Anxiety* indicated that females have somewhat lower scores than males do, and that participation in Rock the Park program may have an association to lowering of participants scores for both males and females (Table 7). This

finding, if replicated with a larger representative sample, would be unusual and contrary to some existing conclusions (Fountain et al., 2016; Zaff et al., 2003). Detailed group descriptions can be found in Table 7.

Table 7

Group Statistics for Freedom from Anxiety Score as Dependent Variable

Time point	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Before	Female	7.88	4.73	8
	Male	11.25	1.28	8
After	Female	6.75	3.69	8
	Male	10.13	3.68	8

The *Freedom from Anxiety* scale was also examined using a mixed ANOVA with gender as a between-subjects factor, and time as a within-subjects factor. The results are presented in Table 8. None of the factor combinations reached significance, but gender had very marginal *p* value of .051. Both independent variables, enrollment in the program and gender, had non-negligible small-to-moderate effect sizes. The effect of gender on *Freedom from Anxiety* scores is more likely to generate small-to-moderate results than any of the previously discussed ones, as it has marginal significance.

Popularity is an aspect of self-concept and it was explored using a mixed measures ANOVA. In order to provide better understanding of results, group means, standard deviations and sample size are shown in Table 9. Female participants had lower scores at both before and after the program than male participants, and there was a slight

increase in popularity score for both males and females after the Rock the Park program, but all recorded differences were small and statistically nonsignificant.

Table 8

Results of the Repeated Measures ANOVA with Freedom from Anxiety as Dependent Variable

Factor combination	<i>F</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>P</i>	η_p^2
Enrollment ^a	1.797	1	.201	.114
Enrollment ^a *Gender	.000	1	1.000	.000
Gender	4.558	1	.051	.246

Notes. Error degrees of freedom is 14. ^a Within-subjects factor.

Table 9

Group Statistics for Popularity Score

Time point	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Before	Female	8.13	3.36	8
	Male	8.63	1.92	8
After	Female	8.38	2.13	8
	Male	9.00	2.07	8

Statistics, degrees of freedom, *p*-values and partial eta-squared are provided in Table 10. There were no significant effects, nor were there any factor combinations whose effect size would be considered substantial. It can be concluded that this study did

not manage to detect a connection between participation in summer out-of-school program, gender, and scores on *Popularity*.

Table 10

Results of the Repeated Measures ANOVA with Popularity as Dependent Variable

Factor combination	F statistic	Df	p-value	η_p^2
Enrollment ^a	.250	1	.625	.018
Enrollment ^a *Gender	.010	1	.922	.001
Gender	.288	1	.600	.020

Notes. Error degrees of freedom is 14. ^a Within-subjects factor.

Table 11 presents estimates of group differences for *Happiness and Satisfaction scale*. Scores for this scale remained unchanged when analyzed for the whole sample taken together, but showed different patterns for each gender: male participants decreased their scores after participation in the program, while female participants increased their scores. The direction of differences is opposite at the beginning and the end of the study – while female participants have lower scores before participating in this out-of-school program they had lower scores than male counterparts, but by the end of this summer program they had a higher group mean.

Table 11

Group Statistics for Freedom from Anxiety Score as Dependent Variable

Time point	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Before	Female	8.50	1.31	8
	Male	8.88	1.25	8
After	Female	8.75	1.49	8
	Male	8.63	1.06	8

Happiness and Satisfaction scores were examined with the same method previously used for the other scales. Table 12 shows results from this analysis. Results from this scale indicate a pattern similar to those calculated for *Popularity*, with no factor combinations reaching statistical significance or demonstrating effect sizes that would justify further statistical interpretations.

Table 12

Results of the Repeated Measures ANOVA with Happiness and Satisfaction as Dependent Variable

Factor combination	F statistic	<i>Df</i>	p-value	η_p^2
Enrollment ^a	.000	1	1.000	.000
Enrollment ^a *Gender	.560	1	.467	.038
Gender	.052	1	.823	.004

Notes. Error degrees of freedom 14. ^a Within-subjects factor.

Chapter Four: Interpretation

Not a single combination of factors reached statistical significance in *Behavioral Adjustment, Physical Appearance and Attributes, Freedom from Anxiety, Popularity, and Happiness and Satisfaction*. However, *Intellectual and School Status* reached small-to-medium effect size, suggesting a larger sample size may provide for statistical significance. Both genders demonstrated average scores lower at the end of the program, indicating that their perceived ability to do well in scholastic endeavors decreased over the duration of the program.

Integration

Due to the small sample size and statistically non-significant results it is difficult to compare these findings to previous research. Scores on *Intellectual and School Statuses* led to lowering of participants scores for both males and females. This finding, if replicated with a larger representative sample, would be unusual and contrary to some existing conclusions (Fountain et al., 2016; Zaff et al., 2003).

Exploration

The most likely cause of the lack of statistically significant results in this study was the small sample size. While unforeseen circumstances, such as the traumatic event that occurred just prior to study, cannot be avoided some remedies could potentially improve upon the weakness of this study. It is likely that approaching participants over a lengthier period of time prior to onset of study would allow for more opportunities to identify participants. In addition, due to the fact that these families live in the same complex, providing an informational night on more than one occasion to educate parents on the value of OST programs and the importance of their child's participation in further

understanding how the program may benefit their children. The most significant factor contributing to potentially increasing sample size is that more time interacting with the families may have provided for less of an impact of unforeseen circumstances.

It is possible that the Piers-Harris scale was not the most effective means to measure changes in self-concept for this particular population. It may be that a Likert-type scale may not be sensitive enough to accurately reveal the nuances of change that occurred for participants. A mixed methods study or a qualitative study may provide more valuable insights into the participants' experience and development of self-concept, as discussed below.

Future Directions and Recommendations

As noted, the population examined is one that is highly at-risk for adverse incidences within their social environment. External factors that may have affected participation in this study include the exogenous event with the local police.

Less than three weeks prior to the onset of this study, an African American female resident of the housing facility contacted police to report items had been stolen from her apartment. This resident had reportedly been known to have mental health issues as well. Upon arrival to the residents' apartment the woman threatened the police with a knife, and was shot and killed by one of the responding officers. She was reportedly pregnant and her other children were present in the apartment when this occurred. This incident had a tremendous impact socially on the city of Seattle, with controversial perspectives on police brutality, racial injustice, mental health treatment as well as the rights of police to protect themselves when their lives may be in danger. Within the residential community individuals were also distraught, with families decreasing mobility about the

complex in response to the trauma. For many it may have triggered their own social vulnerabilities and personal traumatic histories. Vigils and protests were held throughout the city at large and as well on the transitional housing residential grounds. For this researcher, it proved difficult to identify participants and complete consent forms due these responses. This incident demonstrated the realities of marginalized populations that impact the ability to effectively evaluate individual growth through research opportunities such as this one.

Future research should focus on allowing for less impact from outside variables and taking measures to encourage larger numbers of participants. This population would benefit from multiple opportunities to meet with the researcher(s), to establish rapport as well as provide information regarding the beneficial nature of participating in programs such as Rock the Park. Allowing a broad time span to collect consent forms would allow for higher participation rates.

It was noted by this researcher through dialogue with participants that there were incidences of spontaneous reflection regarding their development of self-efficacy through their participation in the program. One 14-year-old girl replied when asked, “How did you enjoy Rock the Park?” with, “I learned I can do all kinds of things I didn’t know before, it makes me believe in myself and I am more excited to try new things now”. Such anecdotal incidents lead this researcher to conclude that integrating a qualitative approach to future studies could reveal more accurately how programs like Rock the Park benefit their participants, at least in possibility suggesting new directions in research.

Finally, a longitudinal study would allow for a more in-depth understanding of the benefits of programs provided for such marginalized youth. Many of the individuals in

this study had participated in Rock the Park in previous years, as well as participate in other beneficial programs throughout the year. The impact of the length of time spent homeless and the potential carryover effect of multiple enrichment programs over time may reveal significant insight to enhance the recovery and support for youth who have experienced trauma, loss, lack of safety and security in their young lives.

Conclusions

Research has consistently supported the benefits of out-of-school programs for at-risk youth. This study aimed to further contribute to that knowledge base for this particularly vulnerable population. As noted, due to the small sample size results did not reach statistical significance. As little to no research exists on the benefits of out-of-school programs for formerly homeless children, future research is needed and may draw upon the insights gained through this study attempt.

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Appendix

Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale 2nd Ed (Piers-Harris 2)

Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale – 2nd Ed (Piers-Harris 2)

1. My classmates make fun of me	yes	no
2. I am a happy person	yes	no
3. It is hard for me to make friends	yes	no
4. I am often sad	yes	no
5. I am smart	yes	no
6. I am shy	yes	no
7. I get nervous when the teacher calls on me	yes	no
8. My looks bother me	yes	no
9. I am a leader in games and sports	yes	no
10. I get worried when we have tests in school	yes	no
11. I am unpopular	yes	no
12. I am well behaved in school	yes	no
13. It is usually my fault when something goes wrong	yes	no
14. I cause trouble to my family	yes	no
15. I am strong	yes	no
16. I am an important member of my family	yes	no
17. I give up easily	yes	no
18. I am good in my schoolwork	yes	no
19. I do many bad things	yes	no
20. I behave badly at home	yes	no
21. I am slow at finishing my schoolwork	yes	no
22. I am an important member of my class	yes	no
23. I am nervous	yes	no
24. I can give a good report in front of the class	yes	no
25. In school I am a dreamer	yes	no
26. My friends like my ideas	yes	no
27. I often get into trouble	yes	no
28. I am lucky	yes	no
29. I worry a lot	yes	no
30. My parents expect too much of me	yes	no
31. I like being the way I am	yes	no
32. I feel left out of things	yes	no
33. I have nice hair	yes	no
34. I often volunteer in school	yes	no
35. I wish I were different	yes	no
36. I hate school	yes	no
37. I am among the last to be chosen for games and sports	yes	no
38. I am often mean to other people	yes	no
39. My classmates in school think I have good ideas	yes	no
40. I am unhappy	yes	no
41. I have many friends	yes	no
42. I am cheerful	yes	no

43. I am dumb about most things	yes	no
44. I am good-looking	yes	no
45. I get into a lot of fights	yes	no
46. I am popular with boys	yes	no
47. People pick on me	yes	no
48. My family is disappointed in me	yes	no
49. I have a pleasant face	yes	no
50. When I grow up I will be an important person	yes	no
51. In games and sports, I watch instead of play	yes	no
52. I forget what I learn	yes	no
53. I am easy to get along with	yes	no
54. I am popular with girls	yes	no
55. I am a good reader	yes	no
56. I am often afraid	yes	no
57. I am different from other people	yes	no
58. I think bad thoughts	yes	no
59. I cry easily	yes	no
60. I am a good person	yes	no