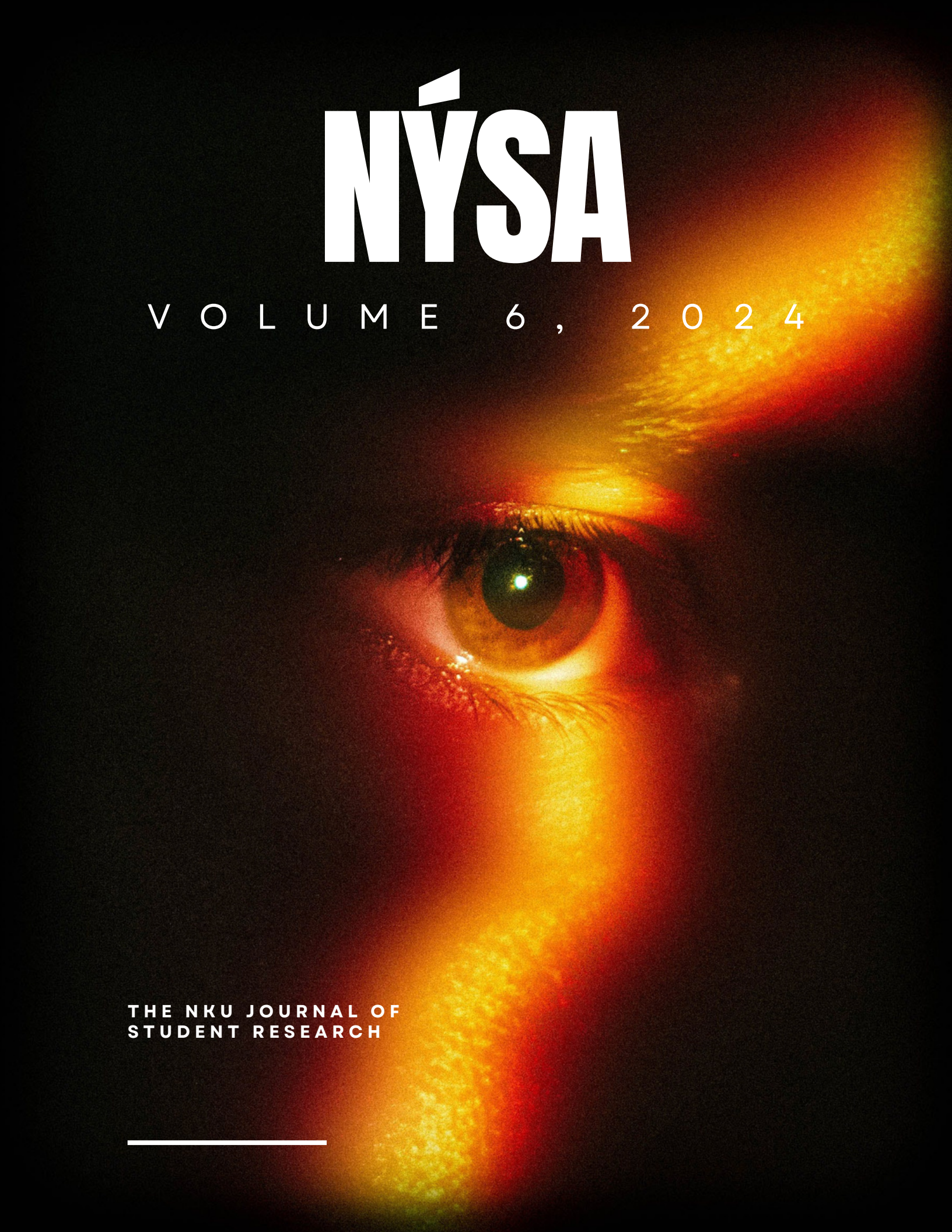
NÝSA

VOLUME 6, 2024



THE NKU JOURNAL OF
STUDENT RESEARCH

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NÝSA, THE NKU JOURNAL OF STUDENT RESEARCH

Nýsa publishes research from students at NKU and across the commonwealth. It is published by NKU's Institute for Student Research and Creative Activity. All submissions are peer-reviewed by NKU faculty and students.

About The Title

Names are tricky things. Journals of student research are relatively common, and in looking for a name, it was important to find something evocative of the intellectual effort and exhilaration that accompany any research endeavor. If it could relate to our identiy as The Norse, all the better. "Nýsa" worked perfectly. In the words of David Kime, Adivising Coordinator for NKU's Honors College, who suggested it:

"The Viking raids were only one aspect of Norse society. The Norse were shipbuilders, farmers, philosophers, poets, artists, and merchants. The Norse were explorers who engineered new shipbuilding technology and navigation tech- niques. They sought new knowledge in the stars and from distant lands and cultures. In Old Norse, "nýsa" is a verb meaning to search or investigate; to peer into the unknown. The idea of "nýsa" applies to today's NKU students as much as it did to the Norse a thousand years ago as they peer into the unknown and produce new and exciting examples of research, scholarship, and creativity."

About The Cover

The cover and interior for this issue of Nýsa, The NKU Journal of Student Research was designed by Karana Lingaesh Suresh Kumar, an MBA student in his last year at the Haile College of Business at NKU. When designing the cover, Karana Lingaesh was guided by an idea that "research gives something insightful, [an] eye for a living being which never lies and always sees the best," matching this idea of research with eyes to identify an appropriate cover.

From The Editor

This volume of Nýsa is a little thinner than previous years, but I don't for a minute believe that it reflects a lack of outstanding scholarship at NKU. The articles that are in the issue are fantastic examples of what our students and their dedicated faculty mentors are producing every day in fields as diverse as psychology, business management, and social work. Perhaps our increasingly busy lives are making it harder to find the outlets like *Nýsa* that celebrate scholarship or it is more challenging to find the time needed to pilot one's work through the publication process. Possibly it is just a natural ebb and flow of publishing. Perhaps we at *Nýsa* need put some more effort into living up to our title and peer all the harder to find and lift up NKU scholarship. It's out there. As you read through the articles in this 6th volume, I hope you can take time not only to appreciate the dedication and talent of our authors, mentors, reviewers, and editors, but also to think of these articles as a first glimpse of the plentiful scholarship that is out there waiting to be found.

Patrick M. Hare

Editorial Board

Parental Status in Correlation to Undergraduate Students' Self-Reported Anxiety Ratings

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Faculty mentor: Brittney Smith
Psychological Sciences

KEYWORDS:
anxiety, parental divorce, parental separation, self-report, HAM-A scores, mental health, undergraduate students

Rachel Shepherd

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Abstract

The prevalence of anxiety in undergraduate students has increased in recent years and is widely acknowledged by faculty and students. A variety of factors have been found to be correlated to college students' anxiety, including academic difficulties, home/work setting, social pressure, and traumatic life events. Additionally, the prevalence of parental divorce has also increased. While previous research provides information on the effects that parental divorce has on children and adolescents, no research has been conducted on if these mental health difficulties persist into early adulthood. Furthermore, no distinctions have been made between parental divorce and parental separation. In the present study, the researcher examined parental divorce and separation rates in correlation to undergraduate students' self-reported anxiety ratings. Undergraduate students who are enrolled at Northern Kentucky University (n = 70) participated in an online self-reported posttest-only study, where they were asked a series of questions regarding their family history and then were asked to complete the Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A). The results showed that students who reported witnessing at least one parental separation during childhood had significantly higher anxiety ratings than students who reported not witnessing a parental separation; and students who reported witnessing a parental separation, but not a divorce, had significantly higher anxiety ratings than students who reported witnessing neither. These results suggest that parental separation has a similar correlation to anxiety symptoms in the same way that parental divorce does.

Introduction

In recent decades, parental divorce is becoming recognized as a traumatic event that can cause pressure on children (Shafer et al., 2017). An estimated 50% of all children in the United States will witness the end of a parent's marriage (Owenby, 2018). Pressure and/or stress resulting from family separation may contribute to the development of mental health issues in children. Parental divorce is a common event that happens during one's childhood. In parallel, anxiety is a normal human emotion that many people face, some more than others. Recent studies show that generalized anxiety disorder affects 6.8 million adults, or 3.1% of the U.S. population, yet only 43.2% of those diagnosed are receiving adequate treatment (ADAA, 2022). Even worse, social anxiety disorder affects approximately 15 million adults, or 7.1% of the U.S. population (ADAA, 2022). Approximately 36% of people with social anxiety disorder report-experiencing symptoms for 10 or more years before seeking help (ADAA, 2022). Furthermore, studies show that 44% of college students experience moderate to severe anxiety (Lee, 2021). In particular, female, rural, low-income, and academically underperforming students are more vulnerable to suffering a form of anxiety (Lee, 2021).

Parental Divorce

Parental divorce can change children's lives in many ways, such as introducing sudden confusion and chaos during sensitive developmental stages. A child that comes from a divorced family is exposed to more stressors compared to those that come from a complete family (Amato & Cheadle, 2005). Beyond childhood, parental divorce can negatively affect individuals throughout the rest of their lives regardless of age (Ross & Miller, 2009). Negative effects of parental divorce that emerge in childhood can last into adulthood (Huurre et al., 2006). According to several studies, children and adolescents with divorced parents have a higher risk of experiencing emotional and behavioral problems and decreased academic performance, measured in children until the age of 18 (Tebeka et al., 2016). This suggests that the emotional and behavioral problems one faces in childhood could possibly last into early or late adulthood.

Anxiety

Anxiety is a subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with arousal of the nervous system (Spielberger, 1983). Anxiety is among the normal emotions that humans face. Anxiety rates have significantly increased since 2016, specifically in post-secondary student populations (Marcotte & Lévesque, 2018). The emerging adulthood stage of life, proposed by Jeffery Arnett, is when most students pursue post-secondary education, is correlated with the age of peak onset for mental health problems, including anxiety (Reavley & Jorm, 2010). Students and educators readily acknowledge the prevalence of anxiety among university students. Students with anxiety are more likely to exhibit a passive attitude in their studies, such as lack of interest in learning and poor performance on assignments and exams (Ruffins, 2007). Anxiety is a mental health issue that many college students struggle with. There are many recognizing factors that can contribute to students' anxiety, such as academic pressure, home and/or work setting, and new social settings. Issues such as parental status that are developed in early childhood and adolescence can be contributing factors that persist into early adulthood, and are correlated with college students' anxiety.

Proposing a new angle

Previous research has suggested that the effects of parental divorce may be long-lasting into adulthood, but not much is known about what emotional disturbances this consists of. Furthermore, no research has discussed if these emotional disturbances differ between the children of divorced parents and the children of separated parents. This calls for speculation: Does witnessing one or more parental separations affect children the same way parental divorce does? Are such effects also long-lasting? Does one of the emotional disturbances include anxiety symptoms in college students?

This study aimed to investigate whether parental divorce or parental separation is correlated with college students' anxiety levels. Additionally, this study helped gain insight on if parental separation has a similar relationship to mental health issues as parental divorce does, and if this is observable in early adulthood. With parental divorce being associated with negative behavioral and emotional outcomes in young adults and anxiety increasing along with divorce rates, My goal was to determine whether parental divorce and separation are correlated to undergraduates' self-reported anxiety ratings. This study tested the hypothesis that parental divorce and separation are correlated to one's anxiety, measured with the Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale.

Methods

The two conceptual variables in this observational, posttest-only study, were parental relationship status and anxiety. Both variables were measured through a self-reported survey. There were no independent variables in this study. Parental divorce was operationalized by having participants answer questions about their family history. Some of the questions include: If their parents are (or have been) divorced, if they have witnessed a separation between their parents before, age at which their parents got divorced and/or separated, etc. Parental separation

and divorce were distinguished by defining separation as witnessing a parent leave the household for periods of time, versus defining divorce as a legal separation by court of law. Anxiety was operationalized by having participants complete the Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (a five point Likert scale used to measure the severity of one's anxiety).

Participants

The participant population for this study was undergraduate students attending Northern Kentucky University, between the ages 18-26. Participants had between March 13th-April 17th to participate and were allowed to partake in this study at any given location. The age requirement was between 18-30 years old because the goal of this study was to observe how parental divorce/separated might have long-lasting effects from early childhood to young adulthood. Out of the 78 participants, 70 completed the survey all the way through and were used for the data analysis. The overall participant demographics for this study consisted of 17 males, 45 females, and 8 who identified as other; the mean age of participants was 20 (*SD* = 1.8); 53 were White, 4 Black, 2 Asian, 5 Latinx, 1 Pacific Islander/ Hawaiian Native, and 5 other.

Materials

The survey questions used to measure parental divorce and separation rates were created with consideration for participants that may still live with their family or were being raised by both parents despite being divorced/separation, age at which participants' parents were divorced, and how many divorces or separations they have witnessed (if any). To ensure the reliability and validity of the questions, any participants' answers that were inconsistent were deleted prior to data analysis. To decide what answers were inaccurate, the researcher evaluated multiple levels of one specific question. If the answer for one level did not align with another level of the same question, then the data for that participant was invalid, and therefore deleted prior to the analysis.

The survey questions used to measure the severity of one's anxiety symptoms were based on the Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale. This well-known scale has been used by many practitioners in the process of psychological evaluations, and contains 14 individual items, each containing a five-point Likert scale. It was used to measure the severity of participants' anxiety, rather than the diagnosis of anxiety. In this study, the scale was given in self-reported form. The Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale has shown to be reliable throughout numerous evaluations done by various clinicians (Clark, 1994).

Procedures

This study took place as an online external study via SONA, which is an online system in which many institutional research studies are conducted. Once in SONA, if participants chose to take the survey they were redirected to a platform called Qualtrics to access it. Participants were not asked to partake in this study and were gathered from completely voluntary participation. All participants who chose to partake in this study were SONA account holders. If participants chose to participate in this study, they were initially provided with an informed consent online document. The informed consent document gave a brief description of what the study was going to be asking. If participants chose not to consent to participate, they were redirected to the end of the survey. If participants consented to the study, they were next presented with the demographics portion of the survey. The questions concerning demographics included age, gender identity, and race. Next, they were asked a series of questions regarding their family history. Finally, participants were asked to rank (0-5; 0 being non-existent and 5 being extremely severe) their various feelings related to the severity of their anxiety levels. All participants and their answers remained anonymous. After completing the questions, they were directed to the debriefing page that provided a more detailed description of the study goals and how the researcher measured the two conceptual variables. This study was exempt from Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval via exemption #1, conducted in an educational setting.

Table I. Descrpitive Statistics for HAM-A Scores in Undergraduate Students Based on Parental Status

Parental Status	N	Mean	Standard deviation
Witnessed Divorce	26	22	10
No Divorce	44	17	12
Witnessed Separation	29	23	11
No Separation	41	16	10

Total *N* = 70; some participants overlapped in parental status groups. Anxiety scores were totaled for analysis; each of the 14 items were scored 0 (not present) to 5 (very severe).

Analytic Strategy

For the primary research hypothesis, the association between parental divorce/separation rates and anxiety ratings in undergraduate students, the researcher measured the association by using two separate independent sample t-tests. These tests were run independently from one another. For the first test, parental divorce was the categorical variable, with two levels, and anxiety levels were quantitative. For the second test, parental separation was the categorical variable, with two levels, and anxiety levels were quantitative. The threshold for statistical significance was $p < 0.05$. The data depicted from both tests are displayed as the mean and standard deviation; parental divorce (yes or no) compared to anxiety rates and parental separation (yes or no) compared to anxiety rates. For the exploratory hypothesis, examining the difference in HAM-A scores of all four groups (participants who reported witnessing a parental divorce and separation; participants who reported witnessing a divorce, but no separation; participants who reported witnessing a separation, but no divorce; and participants who reported witnessing neither), the researcher measured this comparison by running a two-way ANOVA test. The threshold for statistical significance and the data depicted from this test are the same as mentioned above. Microsoft Excel® and Graph Pad Prism® were used to analyze all data.

Results

To decide what answers were accurate and which were inaccurate, the researcher evaluated multiple levels of one specific question. If the answers for one level did not align with another level of the same question, then the data for the participant was invalid. For example, one participant answered that they had never witnessed parental separation in their household, but then answered that they were four years old when they witnessed the separation. This participant's answers were considered inaccurate and were deleted. A total of eight participants' (10.2%) answers were removed prior to analyzing the data. Three were due to leaving too many answers blank. The other five participant's answers were removed from the data due to filling in inappropriate answers that did not align with what the questions were asking. The data was cleaned up prior to analysis using Excel®. Total HAM-A scores were evaluated based on the grouping variables of parental divorce and parental separation. See Table 1 for the descriptive statistics for HAM-A scores based on each four categories of parental status that were analyzed.

First, we analyzed the anxiety ratings of students who reported having witnessed a divorce within their household, compared to the anxiety ratings of students who reported not having witnessed a divorce within their household (independent of witnessing a separation). These data were analyzed by looking at descriptive statistics and an independent samples t-test. The data were normally distributed according to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (a normality test used for sample sizes larger than 50). The results showed no significant difference between anxiety ratings of students who have witnessed a divorce (M = 22, SD = 10) compared to students who have not witnessed a divorce (M = 17, SD = 12. $t(68) = 1.64$, $p = 0.1065$; see Fig. 1).

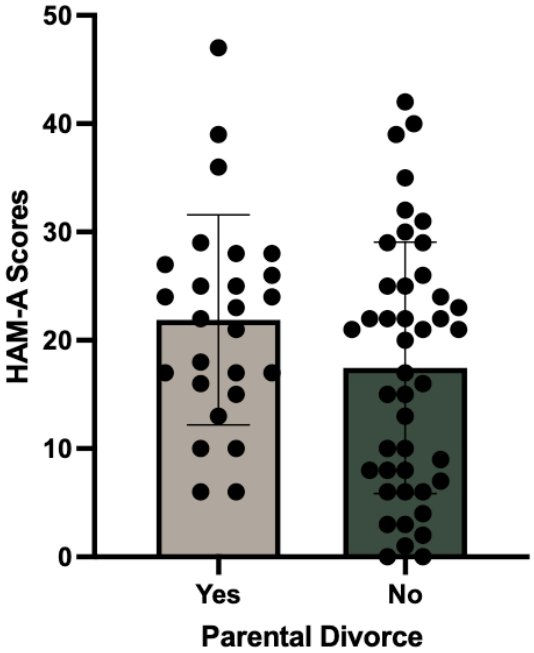

Figure 1. Students' anxiety ratings in comparison to parental divorce. Students who have witnessed a divorce (M = 22, SD = 10), compared to students who have not witnessed a divorce (M = 17, SD = 12). $t(68) = 1.64$, $p = 0.1065$.

Next, we analyzed the anxiety ratings of students who reported having witnessed a parental separation within their household, compared to students who reported not having witnessed a parental separation in their household (independent of witnessing a divorce). We analyzed this data the same way as the data above, using descriptive statistics and an independent samples t-test. These data were normally distributed according to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The results showed a significant difference between the anxiety rates of students who have witnessed a parental separation (M = 23, SD = 11), compared to students who have not witnessed a parental separation (M = 16, SD = 10, $t(68) = 2.83$, $p = 0.0061$; see Fig. 2).

Lastly, the researcher tested an exploratory hypothesis to determine if anxiety ratings varied based on main effect for parental divorce, parental separation, or an interaction between the two (see Table 2 for descriptive statistics of the four groups). To analyze these data, a two-way ANOVA test was run. There was no significant main effect for parental divorce ($F_{(1, 17)} = 0.3366$, $p = 0.5694$) and no significant main effect for

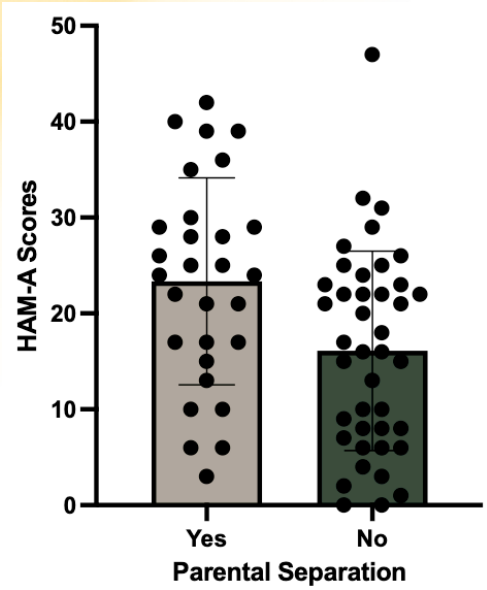

Figure 2. Students' anxiety ratings in comparison to parental separations. Students who have witnessed a parental separation (M = 23, SD = 11), compared to students who have not witnessed a parental separation (M = 16, SD = 10). $t(68)$ = 2.83, p = 0.0061.

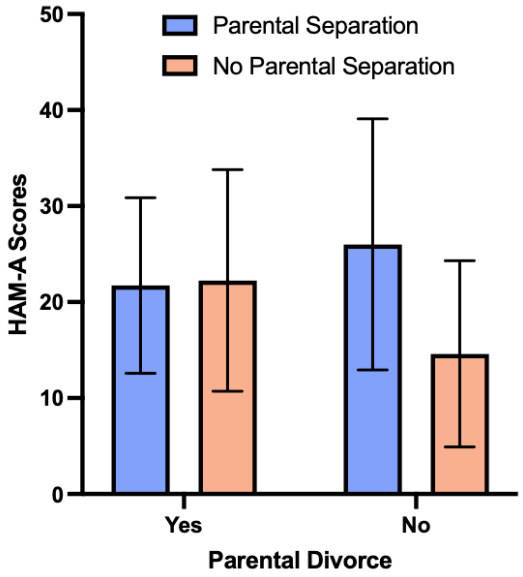

Figure 3. Students' anxiety ratings in comparison to both parental divorce and separation. Students who had reported witnessing a parental separation, but not a parental divorce (M = 26, SD = 13) had significantly higher anxiety ratings than students who had reported not witnessing a parental separation, nor parental divorce (M = 15, SD = 10), $p < 0.05$.

parental separation ($F_{(1, 49)} = 3.672$, $p = 0.0612$). However, there was a significant interaction between the two ($F_{(1, 17)} = 4.451$, $p = 0.05$). With results showing a significant interaction, a post hoc Sidak test was run for further analysis. The Sidak test found that students who had reported witnessing a parental separation, but not a parental divorce (M = 26, SD = 13) had significantly higher anxiety ratings than students who had reported not witnessing a parental separation, nor parental divorce (M = 15, SD = 10, $p < 0.05$, see Fig. 3). This effect was not significant for students who had witnessed a parental divorce.

Discussion

In the present study, it was predicted that there would be a correlation between students' self-reported anxiety levels and parental divorce/separation rates. The results showed that there was a significant difference between the anxiety ratings of students who had witnessed a parental separation, compared to the students who had not. Students who had reported witnessing a parental separation had significantly higher anxiety ratings than students who reported not witnessing a separation. Furthermore, the results showed that there was a significant interaction between parental divorce and parental separation. Students who had witnessed a separation, but not a divorce, had significantly higher anxiety levels than students who had witnessed neither. These results support the hypothesis that parental separation is correlated with students' anxiety ratings and the exploratory hypothesis that parental separation and divorce have an interaction effect in how they relate to students' anxiety ratings.

This study aligns with previous research on parental divorce and individuals' mental health outcomes throughout the years, and goes a step further by accounting for how parental separation relates to participants' anxiety ratings. It specifically focused on students ranging from 18-26 years of age to look at how parental status relates to anxiety throughout early adulthood. Previous studies revealed that parental divorce is associated with negative behavioral outcomes in individuals that can last throughout the rest of their lives regardless of age (Ross & Miller, 2009). Even the negative outcomes felt in childhood that likely relate to parental divorce can last into adulthood (Huurre et al., 2006). Although little to no research has been conducted on if there are any mental health outcomes that are related to parental separation, many individuals witness their parents and/or guardians separate one or more times within their childhood years. This study's results proposed an idea that parental separation may be more difficult on the children, and the mental health outcomes that one faces in childhood could be long-lasting into early adulthood.

A limitation to this study was the lack of resources resulting in participants having to perform a self-reported anxiety rating,

Table2. Descrpitive Statistics for HAM-A Scores in Undergraduate Students Based on Parental Status

Parental Status	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Witnessed Divorce and Separation	18	22	9
Witnessed Divorce but no Separation	8	22	12
Witnessed Separation but no Divorce	11	26	13
Witnessed Neither	33	15	10

Total *N* = 70; no participants overlapped in parental status groups. Anxiety scores were totaled for analysis; each of the 14 items were scored 0 (not present) to 5 (very severe).

leading to a possibility of bias in their answers, which could have possibly affected some of the results. Another limitation is that 44 of the participants who volunteered to partake in this study did not witness a parental divorce, compared to the 26 participants who did witness a parental divorce. This largely uneven number of students could have possibly altered the results due to a large skew in means. For future studies, an increase in the measurement precision of the divorce group is recommended by gathering the same number of participants for both groups of parental status, and then examining their anxiety levels.

The large sample size strengthened statistical validity and allowed us to make a valuable comparison between groups. The statistical tests that were used were appropriate for these comparisons, and we were able to detect differences between groups. For future studies, statistical validity could possibly be improved by recruiting an equal number of participants for each parental status group.

As for external validity, these results may generalize to a larger student or early adult population. However, this could be limited by the geographical location of participants, since all participants are from around the same general area. Despite participants being raised in a variety of locations, all participants are (or have been) students at Northern Kentucky University which could possibly have an effect on their anxiety levels.

Construct validity was enhanced by using the Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale, but could be improved by having a professional evaluate the participants in person, instead of having the participants evaluate themselves. It would be interesting to do an in-person observational study of anxiety based on parental status and evaluate how those results align with the online self-report data obtained in the present study. Going a step further, one could study individuals who have been diagnosed with one or more anxiety disorders, and then evaluate their anxiety levels in relation to their parents' marital status throughout the years.

Internal validity in this posttest-only, observational study can be questioned with reasonable concern because there was no process in which confounds were eliminated. Despite the results suggesting that parental status is correlated to students' anxiety levels, there are many possible confounds that could alter one's anxiety ratings. All the participants are active college students who are in the midst of their spring semester of classes. Stress from classes, home/work life, or even complicated versus easy divorces/separations could be possible confounds in this study. For future research, reporting participants' stress levels in relation to their anxiety ratings could improve internal validity. Finally, other aspects of parenting styles within parental relationships that ultimately fail could explain the results beyond witnessing the separation.

This study was meant to determine if there was a correlation between parental status and anxiety ratings in young adults, but for a more detailed inspection, one should consider replicating the study under closed observation. This could possibly account for factors other than parental status that may relate to individuals' anxiety levels. With a more structured observational study, one can eliminate, or even study, a number of confounds that might possibly have an effect on the anxiety levels of participants. For example, a case study on a specific individual, or a longitudinal study on a group of people who suffer from one or more anxiety disorders, could allow for a more detailed insight into the factor that parental status plays in relation to anxiety. This could help us evaluate whether the separation is the primary factor, or if there are other parental or personal attributes that are playing a larger role.

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Raising Education Higher: Exploring the Implementation of Business Ethics in Higher Education Administration to Improve Leadership, Reduce Turnover, and Increase Employee Satisfaction

Alexandra Shugart
Faculty mentor: Teressa Elliott
Business Management

KEYWORDS:
Higher education, business ethics, employee satisfaction

Alexandra Shugart

Alexandra Shugart graduate from Northern Kentucky University in May 2023 with a Bachelor's Degree in Human Resources Management and Business Management. This research was conducted under the guidance of Teressa Elliot for the Honors College. Since graduation, Alexandra works as a Program Coordinator of Events for UC admissions and is pursuing a Masters in Educational Studies.

Abstract

Higher education institutions are responsible for shaping the future of young individuals and preparing them for successful careers. However, high turnover rates among faculty and staff can negatively impact organizational culture, student learning outcomes, and institutional reputation. One of the top reasons employees leave their position is because of poor management at the top. Many college administrators feel overworked, underpaid, and it is clear many places have a broken organizational culture. This paper will explore how the application of behavioral and organizational theories studied in business ethics can reduce turnover and increase employee satisfaction. The intention of this paper is not to suggest that universities should be run like a business, but to advocate that there is something to be learned from interdepartmental collaboration. The purpose of this essay is to explore how business ethics and leadership styles can reduce turnover and improve organizational culture in higher education.

Introduction

Business ethics involves promoting values that encourage ethical behavior within an organization. This concept is becoming increasingly relevant in higher education institutions, which must use ethical principles when making decisions regarding personnel management practices. There are many comparisons that can be drawn between higher education and business. Both consist of employees who work together to achieve a goal, provide a service to targeted demographics in exchange for compensation, and include resources and programs designed to advance and aid the individual. Businesses and universities invest in each other (career fairs, internships, creating an early talent pipeline) for opportunities. Both must also work to retain, engage, and develop employees.

Trying to navigate the devastation of COVID-19, higher education institutions in particular have been greatly challenged with reducing turnover, maintaining retention, and increasing enrollment. In a survey conducted by the College and Universities Professional Association, 3,815 higher education employees were questioned, and it was found that 68% were looking or willing to leave their institution (Fuesting et al., 2022). Most of the respondents indicated that they would leave for another college, suggesting dissatisfaction with management, code, or another factor unique to their place of work.

Leadership at the top can be a main contributor to the success of an organization because it directly impacts leadership at the bottom. This is true for both businesses and higher education institutions. Employees feel unsupported, undervalued, and underpaid, resulting in a less-than-ideal work environment. Indeed (2022) defines a bad manager as "an individual in a position of authority whose attitude or work ethic negatively impacts the workplace...they can cause higher than average employee turnover, cost the company money, and establish a less than desirable reputation." Reflecting this statement, in Forbes, Robinson (2022) lists poor management as one of the top five reasons employees leave their position (56%). With poor authority at the top, colleges are losing personnel at an alarming rate, leaving other administrators to pick up the slack. The disproportionate overload of work placed on college administrators, coupled with the tremendous lack of support and pay, should be seen as unethical.

Hypothesis

A large, mismanaged workload is being placed on higher education departments with limited staff and resources, leaving many unable to cope with the additional responsibilities. This dissatisfaction will only lead to more vacant offices and an unsupported student body.

NBC News reported that "there are 4 million fewer students in college now than there were 10 years ago" (Marcus, 2022). While COVID can be blamed for contributing to this drop, many young adults are going straight into the workplace after high school. The Federal Reserve Economic Well-Being of U.S. Households in 2021 report shows that 4 out of 10 recent college graduates are unhappy with the quality of their degree, and believe it was not worth the cost. When universities are unable to devote proper time and resources to students and offices, the quality of their education goes down and offers little to prospective or current students. Given that we are producing fewer children as a society is another factor in this decline. As a result, there will not be enough people in the next ten years to support universities. In an independent article posted through the College and Universities Professional Association website, it is also cited that "many higher ed institutions will face declining or stagnant student enrollment beginning in about six years" (Kline, 2019).The issue is obvious: Higher education institutions are facing retention, enrollment, and satisfaction deficits among students and employees, and it must be addressed. These facts display poor organizational culture and leadership, showcasing a need for change and posing the question: *How can the application of business ethics and different leadership styles help reduce turnover and improve the organizational culture of higher education institutions?*

Methods

The attitude of management at the top creates a trickle-down effect for the rest of the organization. Implementing ethics into colleges and businesses may improve the conduct of students. People's ethics can be complicated to monitor, because they can often be situational; however, there is a direct connection between culture and conduct. Leadership at the top impacts leadership at the bottom, including student leaders. Administrations must create a healthy organizational culture, as it improves the ethics of its people. When top management displays good morals, this will reflect on the rest of the university.

There are four types of organizational cultures: *exacting* (low concern for people, high concern for performance), *apathetic* (low concern for people and performance), *caring* (high concern for people, low concern for performance), and *integrative* (high concern for people and performance). An ideal organizational culture is an integrative one, because the people and their work are equally cared for and valued highly. There is a high percentage of college administrators (40%) who feel they are not provided with opportunities for growth, recognized for their work, or generally invested in (Heffernan and Heffernan, 2019). This creates a culture that shows a great lack of care for the employees. Cultures like apathetic and exacting can especially lead to dissatisfaction and turnover. When performance is valued more than people, there is a longer distance between managers and those they supervise.

While organizational culture is heavily involved with business ethics, there are additional tools that can be implemented into institutions. As taught in business ethics classes here at Northern Kentucky University, there are six steps to solving an ethical dilemma in business case studies (Jennings, 2018). These steps are used to determine if a situation is ethical or not, and to devise a plan of action. There are different ethical theories used to analyze these cases, and resolution steps include:

1. Collect all of the facts of the case and be familiar with them.
2. List any information needed to aid in solving the issue.
3. Consider the primary and secondary people involved and their impact.
4. Create a list of resolutions and analyze them using different ethical models and theories.
5. Analyze the costs, legalities, and impacts of the resolutions to view how each party will be affected by the outcome.
6. Recommend a resolution.

While all these steps might not be directly applicable to any situation, they can be altered to fit all ethical dilemmas. Teaching topics like this can create ethical standards for the organization to use. These steps are taught in universities across the nation and have proven beneficial for companies, as many sites list these steps (Indeed, LinkedIn, university websites, etc.). This method is so widely used, it is difficult to attribute one original owner to it. Carleton College references a 7-step guide (the extra step simply suggests reviewing the others) for their ethical decision-making template that was developed in 1999 (Davis, 1999). College administrators can use these steps for decision making, promoting a more principled and streamlined establishment. This method allows higher ups to consider the entirety of the impact of their decision and act within the best interest of everyone.

Discussion

Higher education institutions have long been impacted by the changing values of our society. With today's increased media and culture, colleges face heavy social pressure. Social responsibility refers to the duty of businesses to behave ethically. Higher education administrators are challenged to make frequent, difficult decisions while navigating today's society, and these decisions often involve implicit ethical dilemmas. In times of crisis, people look to top leadership to guide them. They trust their supervisor to act morally with the best interest in mind because "leadership is inextricably bound to ethics. Most everything a leader does has a moral component […] There is substantial evidence to suggest that ethical leadership is closely linked to positive employee outcomes in terms of well-being and job satisfaction" (Torrisi-Steele, 2020). Because there is an expectation placed on our institutions to act ethically, the practices to ensure morality must be implemented in the classroom, as well as in administration. This once again demonstrates the significance of leadership at the top, impacting the organization as a whole. Companies avoid lawsuits, profit loss, and backlash by using business ethics to practice social responsibility. Today, the same social responsibility the corporate world faces is brought to our colleges and universities as students rightfully expect their educators to operate morally. If head administrators apply better ethical standards and leaderships styles, will they see better management, decreased turnover, and increased employee satisfaction? There is an expectation that universities must live up to, and many may not feel equipped with the right tools. The same tools provided to companies to aid in solving ethical dilemmas can be translated into higher education. This new level of social responsibility may be the root cause of turnover in higher education and suggests there could be a benefit from a change in code.

COVID-19 has and continues to greatly impact colleges and universities. Enrollment, satisfaction, and retention have taken bigger hits since 2020. Younger institutions like Northern Kentucky University have especially suffered the consequences of COVID because they lack the experience and infrastructure of older universities. This means their recovery is longer and more challenging.

Online and hybrid environments have disrupted work-life balance and blurred lines for many. Navigating this muddied water has led to increased turnover due to burnout. Previous studies suggest that higher education institutions face high levels of employee turnover due to various reasons such as burnout, job dissatisfaction, lack of support from management, and low compensation packages (Zhang et al. 2022). These factors not only affect employee morale, but also student engagement levels, academic credibility, and student support. Therefore, it is imperative to investigate ways to address these challenges. To stay at an institution, employees must be satisfied with their amount and level of work: "Data suggest that work-life interference significantly increases burnout which contributes to both higher turnover intentions and lower career satisfaction. […] The more individuals experience job demands, such as work overload and time pressure, the more work-life conflict they experience" (Boamah, et al., 2022). An improper work-life balance, mixed with an understaffed office, leads to massive burnout and dissatisfaction. Many universities did not have the tools to properly handle a quick and large online transition. This is a major factor that has led to the decline of higher education.

Many businesses were also forced to make the work-from-home transition. While a struggle at first, a lot of companies came to adapt these models into their organization (Lufkin 2022). These hybrid/remote work models we still see today may now be used as recruiting tactics or in the company strategy. Companies sometimes provide scheduled breaks in the day for employees, clearer work hours, and more flexibility to create a culture that helps alleviate any work-life imbalances. The virtual/hybrid dynamic proved much more challenging for higher education. Online classes were adopted, but there has since been a massive push to return to campus, potentially limiting students and future enrollment. Since hybrid and remote were never truly considered a long-term option, the establishment of the models were not intended to last. This has led to a struggle with work-life balance among college administrators. In a 2022 opinion piece for the higher education company Fierce Education, it is revealed that many businesses were able to embrace hybrid work and implement it into their strategy, displaying the need for change (Fourtané, 2022). Higher education employees are feeling a disrupt of work life balance and their work is impacted. If universities wish to change these struggles into strategy like some companies, must embrace virtual models. Providing more options to students and personnel will increase enrollment and retention. The employee shortage in higher education is impacting individuals deeply on multiple levels and only leads to more deficits. This is a vicious cycle of burnout and turnover that can be prevented.

Burnout is bad for the individual and the administration as a whole, as it can greatly affect operations if it spirals. Faculty are working more now than ever before. While a study by Boamah and colleagues (2022) focused on nursing faculty who may have more pressures than other faculty, it is clear this is a universal institution issue, given that "the main causes of burnout are deeply rooted within the work environment." (Boamah et al., 2022). With the limited staff and resources some universities are facing, campus needs may be addressed with cynicism and emotional exhaustion. These shortages mean it is imperative for administrators to see the warning signs of burnout and create the most supportive work environment possible. When performance is valued higher than concern for people, it is felt throughout the entire organization and can have dire consequences. An apathetic or exacting culture is created when employees are undervalued and overworked. By promoting a work life balance and a healthy workplace, institutions may actually see turnover and burnout decrease, and career satisfaction increase, as they are all direct factors within one another. Their organizational culture can shift to care for people and performance highly. The adoption of such culture is practiced by many companies and can be brought to higher education.

Corporations and higher education are intertwined in a unique way. Higher education institutions are often directly connected with the government and corporations. Businesses invest in colleges in order to hire top talent after graduation. Since they are intertwined, business ethics has reason to be applied to higher education. These two entities can learn from each other's principles. Collaboration between departments is important for reducing turnover and improving organizational culture as it encourages a sense of community within an institution, which leads to increased productivity, accountability, and support amongst employees. By providing opportunities for cross-departmental communication in universities or colleges through team-building exercises or collaboration initiatives, trust among staff will be fostered. Higher education institutions should learn best practices from these examples in order to reduce turnover rates effectively.

Both business and education are subject to public scrutiny and are expected to act ethically. Many struggle to trust large institutions such as colleges and universities and believe ethics should be taught and normalized in curriculum. By allowing inter-organizational learning, both entities can learn and grow from each other: "The three processes for organizational learning and respective inter-organizational engagement include understanding, revaluation, and adjustment" (Clevenger and MacGregor, 2019). This once again furthers the argument that adaptability is purely positive for organizations. Any good business knows how to analyze operations and adjust when things aren't working. The best practices incorporate acting with understanding and morals. These behaviors will reflect the rest of the establishment and improve retention. Being able to reevaluate and adjust is imperative to creating a stronger organization and overcoming adversity.

Turnover is an issue everyone faces, but colleges are losing valuable employees who have important roles in the university. There is a connection between supervisor leadership and turnover. To be an ethical leader, people must know *how* to lead. In *Higher Education Administrator Turnover: An Examination of Situational Leadership Styles*, the authors focus on the Situational Leadership Model and applying it to higher education to help reduce turnover (Reed, 2021). This model includes a relationship between leadership styles and performance readiness amongst employees and supervisors. It operates with the idea that leaders should change their style to adapt to the personalities and skills of those they lead. Including a specific leadership model within an organization can help reduce turnover because it adapts to the needs of the people and promotes flexibility and understanding amongst employees and their supervisors. It is clear that there is dissatisfaction in these establishments: "The Staff in Higher Education Survey indicates that U.S. higher education institutions in 2019 experienced a 13.3 percent employee turnover rate for exempt full-time staff and a 15.1 percent

turnover rate for non-exempt full- time staff. These numbers are in stark contrast to the 5.8 percent turnover rate reported for tenure-track and 10.4 percent for non-tenure-track faculty" (Reed, 2021). Low employee retention is costly and bad for morale. A cohesive and well-run organization displays quality and consistency, something lost with high turnover. Constant inconsistency in leadership and full-time roles hurts and confuses the organization. If leadership at the top can adopt a model like Situational Leadership, turnover rates may reduce.

Reed (2021) explains the findings of the effectiveness of the Situational Leadership Model. This model requires the leader to change their style to accommodate the situation based on an analysis of what happened and who is involved. They found that the application of the Situational Leadership Model did not exactly equate to lower turnover: "The correlation coefficient between leadership adaptability and leadership effectiveness was a weak positive association, however. The study found no statistically significant relationship between employees' turnover intentions and their supervisors' adaptability. […] This correlation indicates that as leadership adaptability increases, leadership effectiveness tends to increase. So, while leadership adaptability does not directly influence the decision to leave, it may influence the ability to be effective" (Reed, 2021). While one can argue this means the supervisor's actions do not impact turnover, the other results of the study show otherwise. The correlation, despite being small, between leaders' adaptability and their effectiveness is evident. It may not have a direct relationship with turnover, but if a manager can lead effectively, the impacts will be shown. To combat losing employees, adaptability should be emphasized in the workplace.

Showcasing qualities that center around understanding and compassion will aid in the ethical and cultural growth of universities. Zhang, et al. (2022) found that transformational leadership style was linked to lower turnover intentions among higher education faculty members, while autocratic leadership caused low job satisfaction. The transformational leadership style focuses on working together towards a goal and positively influencing team members, while the autocratic (also known as authoritarian) style gives all control and decision-making powers to the top. Therefore, implementing the correct leadership styles can improve employee job satisfaction and encourage retention. If higher-ups in college administration could apply an adaptable leadership model to their organization, it may provide them with more influence and effective guidance over their employees.

The turnover issue in higher education is something that cannot be ignored. It is extremely costly to hire and train new employees constantly and leaves many departments with little to no depth of experience. The decisions and behavior from higher up impact every part of the institution, not just administrative departments. Leadership at the top affects leadership at the bottom. This means the staff that work the closest with students can be impacted by decisions at the top, and in turn, disrupt students. Troy Heffernan and Amanda Heffernan (2019) shockingly revealed that "Recent studies argue that in the next five years, the higher education sector will see half to two-thirds of its academic workforce leave the academy due to retirement, career burnout, or job dissatisfaction." It is theorized in this paper that these dissatisfactions may be the result of poor management from the top. They also found that "40% of academics felt they were not supported" by their institutions for their development or professional goals (Heffernan and Heffernan, 2019). The lack of support from supervisors in college administration directly impacts employee morale. Unsupportive leadership, coupled with low morale, leads to higher turnover and more turbulence in an organization. Especially at higher education institutions, this impacts the organization as a whole, even the students. Higher education leadership and student experience are not independent from one another. It is the duty of administrative level staff to create a healthy organizational culture so both staff and students can thrive.

Peter Drucker, a famous business ethics philosopher, held the idea to "above all, do no harm." He believed in having the same ethical code at both work and home. He also believed that business ethics is ethics—there is no difference, nor should there be. His belief allows for a more seamless application of business ethics practices be used in higher education institutions. When faced with ethical dilemmas, it has been well established that higher education institutions can employ theories and strategies frequently taught and used in business ethics. Think back to the six steps of solving an ethical dilemma. While taught in specific areas, it can be applied to universities. A hypothetical application of these steps can aid in better understanding.

Hypothetical

Take, for example, a situation in which an assistant director of an office asks for a raise to return for the next semester because he is expecting a baby. The assistant director, Ben, is great at his role and valuable to the university. However, to make this happen, the director of the office, Rita, would have to let go of a student worker, John. John is passionate about his position and uses the money to pay for college. How can Rita resolve this situation? How is this situation analyzed using the six steps to solving a business ethics dilemma? Do these outcomes impact the university as a whole, and if so, how?

Using the first two steps in solving an ethical dilemma, all the facts must be gathered, and assumptions listed out. It is known that Ben requires a raise to return for the next semester for his incoming baby. However, it is indicated that there is not enough room in the budget to give Ben a raise and keep the student worker. It can be assumed that Rita would have to

take on extra work with Ben gone. The third step considers those involved and their impact. John, Ben, and Rita are all of the major players in this hypothetical. It is known that Ben is an asset to the office and him leaving could cause a deficit. However, this would require letting John go, which could result in him dropping out. Rita must manage the office and face the impact of the decision afterwards.

Next, a list of resolutions must be created and analyzed using different ethical models or theories. They must also be analyzed for cost, legalities, and impacts to the organization. The first resolution would be to let go of John and give Ben a raise. Ethical egoism is the belief that acting in one's self interest is acting ethically. It can be assumed that Rita would want Ben to stay because she would have to deal with greater repercussions of him leaving. Applying the ethical egoism theory, Rita is acting ethically because she is acting for herself. Regarding costs, Rita risks her relationship with John, as well as his education. If deemed unethical in John's eyes, he will have a more negative experience. However, she will save enough money to cover Ben's raise. Legally, there are not many issues that can arise, since John is in an employment-at-will contract. The impact, however, can be monumental for John. Without his student worker job, he may struggle to afford school, resulting in an undesirable outcome. However, with Ben's new raise, he will be able to comfortably support his new family, which can be seen as a pro. Rita will also not have to worry about filling Ben's role.

The second resolution would be to not give Ben the raise. The Contractarians and Justice theory is centered around making decisions that are the most fair and equitable. This theory looks at the problem objectively and asks if one's role was in the conflict, but the side was unknown, what choice would be made? In the resolution to deny Ben the raise, no action is taken to either party's salary. It can be assumed Ben may still stay without the raise, but unlikely. Regarding costs, Rita may lose Ben and must fill his position, ensuing a long and possibly difficult search that will require additional new hire costs. Rita would also lose a higher up in the office and potentially take on more work. This could lead to their office falling behind and impact their services to the students, ultimately impacting the students as well. For legalities, the university may have certain rules and standards surrounding pay that can be violated. Rita is not required to give Ben a raise. The impact, however, may be great. The office may experience a dramatic shift with Ben leaving. John can benefit from this resolution, keeping his job and place in school.

The final resolution would be to give Ben a raise, but not the full amount. The Moral Relativists theory claims ethics are subjective and decisions will change with the people and situations. Using this theory, Rita finds it may be best to give Ben what she can. However, this could cost part of John's salary. Normally, Rita may not have done this, but since she would like to keep Ben, her ethics changed. This would also cause problems for John, but he would still have his job. She also risks Ben denying the compromise and leaving anyway. Legally, Rita is allowed to dock John's pay, but he could also disagree with the resolution and leave. She runs no risk if the decrease is not being used as a punishment. This could impact John's budget, as well as his relationship with the office and possibly the university.

Finally, after analyzing resolutions using different theories, a final recommendation can be made. Rita decides to go with the second solution. She openly explains to Ben there is no room in the budget for a raise, but things may change. She assures him if they do, he will be compensated, but this may not be enough for Ben to say. John is able to keep his position. As one can see, the use of theories and steps in the business ethics world could be easily applied to a situation that could arise in higher education. With many unavoidable outside forces organizations can face, this model can help universities make the most ethical decisions. While colleges cannot employ all strategies used by business, the 6 steps demonstrate the easy application of business ethics to higher education.

Conclusion

As stated earlier, companies tend to prioritize profit, while universities focus on reputation when strategizing. The desire for profit over quality/reputation for businesses is exactly why running a university like a business does not work and causes many issues to be overlooked. Universities cannot have a strictly-business mindset but can gain valuable insight on how to navigate social responsibility, relationships, and create an integrative organizational culture. Value placed in the students and employees over profit will actually lead to a more successful establishment and create a better reputation for the college. The implementation of these changes may face some challenges like resistance from management, which might be resistant towards change because of the viewpoint that this is intruding into their autonomy, lack of funding/resources, etc. However, institutions can overcome these obstacles through strategic planning with active involvement at all levels, thereby overcoming any potential misunderstandings or resistance. By instead learning and applying practices from other establishments, like business ethics, universities can work to avoid sacrificing quality of education for the bottom line.

While business has a main goal of profit, higher education focuses on reputation. Businesses utilize reputation as a tool to drive profit. Higher education institutions can learn from this and apply different strategies based on the discussed theoretical frameworks such as behavioral theories, organizational theories, business ethics, different leadership styles, or interdepartmental collaboration. These strategies can help reduce turnover rates and improve organizational culture without necessarily running institutions like businesses. There

is ample evidence that suggests applying business ethics and leadership to college administration can prove beneficial. For high-level administration to be successful, they must know how to lead effectively and ethically. Understanding methods and styles behind leadership is just as important as applying them.

Higher education institutions shape future doctors, engineers, businesspeople, entertainers, etc. Increased turnover and low retention are impacting many colleges and universities and posing a threat to their future. Attention must be drawn to the turnover issue so these establishments can continue to thrive and mold the upcoming generations. Business ethics alone will not solve the issues our institutions are facing, but with better leadership styles, administrators can potentially better connect with their employees and embrace change. It is in the opinion of the author that universities introduce ethical decision-making tactics through seminars, policies, etc. and incorporate it as part of their overall strategy. By emphasizing ethical decision-making learned in business ethics, adaptable leadership styles, and better management, higher education institutions can experience a revival.

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Enhancing Human Trafficking Education on University Campuses

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KEYWORDS:
Curricular enhancement, Global Issue, Gaps, Human Trafficking, Higher Education

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Abstract

Human trafficking is a global issue with severe implications for individuals forced into labor or sex exploitation. Educational institutions, including universities, play a critical role in combating this crime by providing comprehensive training and education to professionals. However, there are significant gaps in human trafficking education on university campuses, necessitating a closer examination of existing curricula and the development of standardized approaches across disciplines. This paper explores the current state of human trafficking education, identifies key gaps, and proposes strategies for enhancing curricula on university campuses.

Introduction

Human trafficking remains a pervasive and complex crime that affects millions of people worldwide. In the United States, the scope of this issue is staggering, with an estimated $150 billion industry and millions of victims identified annually (U.S. Department of State, 2023). Despite increased awareness and efforts to combat trafficking, gaps in education persist, particularly within educational institutions like universities. This paper aims to analyze the existing human trafficking curriculum on university campuses, identify gaps, and propose strategies for improvement.

Role of Educational Institutions

Educational institutions, including universities, play a crucial role in addressing human trafficking by equipping professionals with the knowledge and skills to identify, prevent, and respond to trafficking incidents. Research has shown that educators, healthcare professionals, law enforcement officers, and social workers are among those in regular contact with potential trafficking victims (Reed et al., 2019; Salas & Didier, 2020). Therefore, universities have a unique opportunity and responsibility to incorporate human trafficking education into their curricula across various disciplines.

However, current training and education efforts often fall short, with many professionals lacking adequate knowledge and resources to effectively address trafficking issues. For example, studies have highlighted deficiencies in healthcare professionals' training, leading to challenges in identifying and assisting trafficking victims within healthcare settings (McAmis et al., 2022; Peck, 2018; Lutz, 2018). This underscores the need for universities to prioritize and enhance human trafficking education on their campuses.

Importance of University Curricula

The importance of comprehensive and standardized human trafficking curricula on university campuses cannot be overstated. Victims of trafficking may be enrolled in higher education programs, making it essential for universities to provide education, prevention, and support services. Additionally, universities serve as key community hubs, influencing societal perceptions and responses to trafficking issues (Ahn et al., 2013). Therefore, integrating human trafficking education into university curricula not only benefits students but also contributes to broader community awareness and action.

Definition and Scope of the Human Trafficking Problem

Human trafficking refers to the illegal trade of humans for the purposes of forced labor, sexual exploitation, or other forms of exploitation. It involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons through force, fraud, coercion, deception, or other means for the purpose of exploitation (National Human Trafficking Hotline, 2024). The scope of human trafficking is vast and multifaceted. It can include various forms of exploitation such as:

- Sex Trafficking: Involving the coercion or exploitation of individuals, often women and children, for commercial sex acts. This can occur through brothels, escort services, pornography, or other venues.
- Labor Trafficking: Involving the exploitation of individuals for forced labor or services, often in industries such as agriculture, construction, domestic work, manufacturing, or hospitality. Workers may be deceived, coerced, or forced into labor through threats or violence.
- Child Trafficking: Children are particularly vulnerable to trafficking for various purposes, including sexual exploitation, forced labor, fighting as child soldiers, forced begging, and adoption scams.

The scope of human trafficking is global, affecting individuals of all ages, genders, and backgrounds. It is a complex issue with economic, social, cultural, and political dimensions, requiring comprehensive approaches involving prevention, protection of victims, prosecution of perpetrators, and partnerships across sectors and countries to address effectively.

Importance of Educational Institutions in the Fight Against Human Trafficking

Over the years, it has become clear that individuals who are in regular contact with trafficking victims, such as teachers, counselors, medical practitioners, and school administrators, can help identify victims and also proactively prevent trafficking before it occurs (Albert, 2022; Reed et al., 2019; Salas & Didier, 2020). However, many of these individuals have not had the proper training and feel ill-equipped to identify and help victims (McAmis et al., 2022; Peck, 2018; Stoklosa et al., 2015; Titchen et al., 2017). In fact, in a 2018 study, 94.5% of nursing participants indicated having received no education in human trafficking (Lutz, 2018). Recently, public policy has started to address the unique opportunities for educators to be on the frontlines in combating human trafficking problems in the United States (U.S. Department of State, 2023; Lemke, 2019). They can provide prevention and victim identification education to those in the best positions to recognize and report it.

In addition, some lawmakers and stakeholders argue that higher education institutions bear the responsibility of educating and advancing the well-being of their community

and students (Ahn et al., 2013). Therefore, it is increasingly essential for colleges and universities not only to learn how to identify and respond to suspicions of trafficking on their campuses and support victims but also to provide appropriate curricula across different educational disciplines (Ahn et al., 2013). Studies reveal that many victims and survivors are likely enrolled in higher education programs at any given time, and students often exhibit numerous risk factors for becoming victims (Ahn et al., 2013; Preble et al., 2019).

Research Aims and Methodology

This study aims to identify gaps in existing curricula on U.S. university campuses concerning human trafficking education, teaching, and prevention. A systematic literature review was conducted, focusing on peer-reviewed articles published between January 2012 and January 2023. The search included databases relevant to education, social work, healthcare, law enforcement, and related fields, resulting in the identification of twenty-one relevant articles for analysis.

Findings

The review of existing curricula revealed disparities in development and implementation across disciplines. While some fields, such as healthcare, education, and business, have made progress in integrating human trafficking education, others lag behind. For instance, medical training often covers topics like identification, treatment, and prevention of human trafficking, while education curricula focus on strategies for educators to recognize and respond to trafficking in educational settings (Bauer, 2019; Birks & Ridley, 2021; Grace et al., 2014; Talbott et al., 2020). However, gaps persist in standardized curricula across all disciplines, with inconsistencies in content, delivery, and effectiveness.

Types of Curricula

The analysis of literature regarding curricula utilized for medical providers highlights a range of standard topics essential for addressing human trafficking effectively. These topics include:

1. Definition and Scope: Understanding the definition of human trafficking and the various forms of exploitation involved.
2. Health Consequences: Exploring the physical and mental health impacts experienced by trafficking victims.
3. Identification of Possible Victims: Training healthcare professionals to recognize potential signs of trafficking among patients.
4. Medical Treatments: Equipping providers with knowledge and skills to provide appropriate medical care to trafficking survivors.
5. Service Referrals: Facilitating connections to support services such as counseling, housing assistance, and legal aid.
6. Legal Requirements and Issues: Familiarizing providers with relevant laws, reporting requirements, and ethical considerations.
7. Security: Ensuring the safety and confidentiality of both patients and healthcare professionals involved in trafficking cases.
8. Prevention: Educating providers on strategies for preventing human trafficking and advocating for policy changes to address systemic issues (Ahn et al., 2013; Powell et al., 2017; Talbott et al., 2020).

These curricular components are crucial for empowering medical professionals to effectively respond to human trafficking cases and provide comprehensive care to victims.

Effectiveness of Curricula

Evidence from studies evaluating the effectiveness of implemented curricula in addressing human trafficking indicates promising outcomes. Educators and healthcare professionals who underwent training specifically focused on human trafficking reported significant improvements in several key areas (Salas & Didier, 2020). These include heightened awareness about human trafficking issues, enhanced skills in identifying potential victims, and a more robust capacity to provide comprehensive support to individuals affected by trafficking (Birks & Ridley, 2021; Lutz, 2018). These positive outcomes underscore the value of structured curricula in equipping professionals with the knowledge and skills necessary to address this complex issue effectively.

However, despite these successes, challenges persist within the realm of human trafficking education. Continuous education and training are essential to ensure that professionals stay updated with evolving trends and strategies in combating trafficking. Interdisciplinary collaboration is also critical, as human trafficking intersects with various fields such as law enforcement, social services, and public health. By fostering collaboration across disciplines, professionals can create a more comprehensive and coordinated response to human trafficking cases. Additionally, ongoing evaluation of curricular impact is crucial to assess the effectiveness of educational initiatives and identify areas for improvement (Birks & Ridley, 2021; Lutz, 2018).

While studies demonstrate the positive impact of curricula on addressing human trafficking, ongoing efforts are needed to enhance education, promote interdisciplinary collaboration, and evaluate the effectiveness of educational interventions.

Opportunity and Education Gaps

The landscape of human trafficking education on university campuses reveals missed opportunities and gaps in prevention and education efforts. While many universities acknowledge the importance of addressing human trafficking, the absence of standardized curriculum options is surprising and concerning. A review of the literature revealed a lack of standardized curricula across all fields of study and disciplines, with no universities integrating human trafficking education into the mandatory learning for their entire student population.

Moreover, certain disciplines that are particularly relevant for understanding and addressing human trafficking appear to be underrepresented in the literature. For instance, social work degree programs, which play a crucial role in supporting and advocating for vulnerable populations, often lack specific curricula dedicated to human trafficking within their core coursework (Okech et al., 2018; Welch-Brewer et al., 2021). While some programs may offer classes or assignments related to human trafficking, these are not consistently integrated into the core curriculum (Lynch et al., 2021; Welch-Brewer et al., 2021).

Similarly, mandatory university curricula in criminal justice, a field directly connected to combating trafficking through law enforcement and legal avenues, were not found in the reviewed literature. This absence highlights a significant gap in preparing future professionals who may encounter human trafficking cases in their careers.

The lack of standardized curricula and integrated education on human trafficking across disciplines underscores the need for universities to prioritize comprehensive and interdisciplinary approaches to education. By incorporating human trafficking education into core curricula, universities can better equip students across various fields to understand, identify, and respond effectively to human trafficking issues.

Limitations

While this literature review provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its notable limitations. Firstly, this study is confined to English-language, peer-reviewed publications from the past decade, available in both print and online formats. As a result, there is a possibility that relevant resources from non-English sources or publications outside the specified timeframe were not included in the analysis, despite thorough searches across databases.

Additionally, the search process might have missed potential resources due to the limitation of search terms or databases utilized. Alternative databases or additional search terms not explored in this study could potentially have yielded further relevant information for review. Therefore, a more comprehensive search strategy involving a broader range of databases, varied search terms, and inclusion of non-English publications could enhance the depth and breadth of future literature reviews on this topic.

Furthermore, the dynamic nature of human trafficking research and evolving discourse around the subject suggest that ongoing updates and revisions to the search strategy are necessary to capture the latest developments and insights in the field.

In conclusion, while this literature review provides a valuable foundation, future research endeavors should aim for a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to ensure a thorough examination of available resources and a nuanced understanding of the topic.

Implications

The literature review underscores the critical need for robust policies and research initiatives aimed at developing, standardizing, and disseminating human trafficking education and resources across university campuses in the United States. As the prevalence and complexity of human trafficking persistently grow, higher education institutions must play a proactive role in equipping their communities with the necessary tools and knowledge to effectively combat this pervasive issue.

To address these challenges effectively, it is imperative to establish comprehensive policies that mandate the integration of human trafficking education into the curricula of various disciplines across universities. Standardizing the content, delivery methods, and assessment measures of such education ensures consistency and effectiveness in educating students and faculty members alike. Moreover, investing in research efforts focused on evaluating the efficacy of current educational initiatives, identifying best practices, and exploring innovative approaches to human trafficking prevention and intervention is paramount. This research-driven approach enables universities to continuously improve their educational strategies and adapt to evolving trends and challenges in combating human trafficking.

Furthermore, the dissemination of research findings, educational materials, and resources should be prioritized to ensure widespread access and utilization within university communities. Collaborative efforts involving academia, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and community stakeholders are essential in fostering a

coordinated and holistic response to human trafficking on university campuses. As the human trafficking problem persists and evolves, the imperative for higher education institutions to provide comprehensive resources and education will only continue to grow. By embracing proactive policies, robust research initiatives, and collaborative partnerships, universities can effectively empower their communities to combat human trafficking and contribute to a safer and more informed society.

Conclusion

The review findings underscore the effectiveness of implemented curricula in addressing human trafficking, highlighting promising outcomes. However, further research is warranted to elucidate the future trajectory of human trafficking curricula within higher education settings. This necessitates a multifaceted approach to research and development aimed at optimizing educational strategies and enhancing the impact of curricular interventions.

Firstly, future research endeavors should focus on identifying the most effective pedagogical approaches for teaching students and the broader community to effectively combat the escalating problem of human trafficking within each education discipline. Tailoring educational methods to align with disciplinary nuances and student learning styles can enhance engagement and knowledge retention, ultimately fostering a more informed and proactive response to human trafficking.

Secondly, there is a critical need to develop consistent and standardized content for human trafficking curricula, irrespective of institutional variations. This entails establishing core learning objectives, essential content areas, and uniform delivery methods to ensure coherence and efficacy across diverse educational settings.

Thirdly, additional research efforts should be directed towards assessing the impact of human trafficking education on different disciplines and evaluating the feasibility and appropriateness of mandating such education for all students (Dragiewicz, 2008). Understanding which disciplines are most affected by trafficking education and exploring potential requirements for broader student populations can inform policy decisions and curriculum development initiatives.

Lastly, further research is essential to identify and implement optimal curriculum delivery methods that maximize effectiveness for universities in the United States (Ahn et al., 2013; Albert, 2021; McAmis et al., 2021). This includes evaluating various instructional formats, technology-enhanced learning tools, experiential learning opportunities, and community engagement strategies to determine the most impactful and sustainable approaches.

In conclusion, advancing research in these areas is pivotal for shaping the future direction of human trafficking curricula in higher education, enhancing educational outcomes, and empowering individuals and communities to combat human trafficking effectively.

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Nýsa, The NKU Journal of Student Research
Volume 6
2024
Northern Kentucky University