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Ethnographic Case Study of International Baccalaureate (IB) Seniors' Self-Esteem and Perception of Labels in a Title I School

Denis Serrano Cruz
University of Central Florida

ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE (IB)

SENIORS' SELF-ESTEEM AND PERCEPTION OF LABELS IN A TITLE I SCHOOL

By

DENIS SERRANO CRUZ
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ABSTRACT

This ethnographic case study explored the effects labels had on senior students who were enrolled in the International Baccalaureate program at a Title I school. This qualitative study explored the culture, assumed identities, and self-perceptions of the students. More specifically, the researcher aimed to find the impact the two formal labels "IB student" and "Title I student," as well as any informal labels associated with the two. The study had each participant complete one interview that asked them forty-two questions. Each interview lasted approximately forty-five minutes. Data was gathered from the interview responses, field observations made during the research, and the reflective journaling of the researcher. Recruitment and interviews were limited to a virtual format due to the global pandemic, COVID-19. Two research questions were explored in this study: How are senior IB students' self-esteem influenced by perceived labels in a Title I School? To what extent do IB students express any dissociation or association with ascribed labels they perceive during their senior year? Findings suggested that students dissociated themselves and their school with the informal labels carried by Title I schools. Additionally, while the students associated themselves with the IB program in a manner that brought them pride, they ultimately viewed themselves as the same as non-IB students.

For those who were not afforded the same privileges as me. For those whose aspirations and

goals never had the chance of blooming into fruition due to circumstance.

I do this so that every child can one day be unencumbered in their pursuits.

For my parents who gave me the world and more. Espero que esten orgullos de mi. Los quiero.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is difficult to make a section like this. There are so many people that helped shape me and by extension this writing. This work carries a part of my identity with it. It is the culmination of twenty-four years of experience amalgamating into this small piece of work that may be of little use to anyone but myself. Nonetheless, this paper and the experiences tied to it are my pride and joy.

I start by looking back at my roots. I thank my family and most of all my parents. My mother, Denis Amalia Cruz Chiapas. My father, Tony Alexander Serrano Gutierrez. They left Guatemala and came to the U.S., leaving behind their culture, their loved ones, the home they had known for all their lives. Because of them, I know sacrifice. I thank the people in the community I was raised. Friends, mentors, teachers, counselors. They gave me a home. They gave me the love and support a child needs to flourish into an adult capable of going into the world to try and make a positive change. A thank you to my brother Zavier Holloway, who remains family and keeps me grounded.

College was a culture shift. Regardless, I found peers and mentors that kept me from throwing away opportunity when I reached the limits of what I believed I was capable. A special thanks to Talia DeCant and Karishma Assaudani for their help in my intellectual journey. Thank you to my committee members, Dr. Nicole Damico and Dr. Randall Hewitt, for recognizing my work as something of value and worth sharing. I am filled with gratitude for my committee chair, advisor, and mentor, Dr. Elsie Lindy Olan. You saw what I did not see in myself. For that, I will be forever grateful. Espero que sienta orgullo en este trabajo. Milliones de gracias.

Finally, I would like to thank the young people that volunteered to take part in my research. Your contributions were invaluable, and I hope this work is something you can feel proud to say you took part in.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

"Labeling is a complex issue that involves developmental, psychological, and sociological factors, yet it has long been understudied, especially in the gifted education sector" (Lo, 2014, p.281-282).

From sixth to twelfth grade, I was a student in the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. IB is an international education program with the mission to create rigorous educational programs which will help foster the development of students interculturally in order to promote understanding and respect across differences (IBO, 2017, p.1). IB has four programs; the Primary Years Program, Middle Years Program, Diploma Program, and the Career-related Program. The study will focus on students in the IB Diploma Program. The middle and high schools I attended were also Title I schools. Title I is a federal government program which allocates money to schools that have "high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families" (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

These two aspects of my educational experience came with various informal labels. Labels included "poor," "smart," "under-achieving," "college-bound," "ghetto," "exceptional." These labels formed a dichotomous relationship within me that I carry to this day. Despite obtaining a bachelor's degree and continuing my education with my master's, a self-esteem tied to a need for high academic achievement continue to trouble me. My educational success informs my self-worth. That success is what redeemed me in a world that would otherwise discount me. The negative labels reminded me of what I was, and what I was supposed to be. The positive labels reminded me of what I should be and what I should aspire to, as if the

positive and negative labels were mutually exclusive. To the world around us, the students in the IB program were an exception to that rule. We were different because we succeeded academically with both labels. Nonetheless, the experience required us to judge ourselves by standards imposed upon us by a majority which looked at us as undeserving, incapable, and unintelligent.

Often, these labels come directly from the students' teachers. They give and accept labels to students without being fully aware of the impact it may have on their teaching practices and the students. This includes how labels affect the way teachers treat students interpersonally, the short-term and long-term expectations set for them, as well as the self-perception and self-esteem of students.

This is not to say labeling is an inherently negative process. It helps compartmentalize the information people take in through, "…a complex process of differentiation, identification, and separation, both of objects and of people" (Hudak and Kihn, 2001, p.14). Furthermore, it is an everyday practice in the education system. The practice distinguishes high-achieving students, English Language Learners, and students with exceptionalities, just to name a few groups. In many cases, these labels help teachers, school systems, and the government address the needs of each specific population by providing them with the appropriate resources and support systems. Nonetheless, the formal labels often come together with informal counterparts that result in differential treatment.

For example, Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson (1966) conducted an experiment where they gave an IQ test to elementary school students in 18 classrooms. They proceeded to inform the teachers that certain students could expect high intellectual gains. Unbeknownst to the teachers, the students identified as such were randomly selected and were not any more or less

likely to succeed academically than their peers. The students were retested eight months later, and the experimental group of students showed significantly higher gains than students who were not identified as those with high academic potential. This led to the researchers questioning how much the academic gains were a result of the content and methods of the educational programs and how much were due to the "favorable expectancies of the teachers and administrators involved?" (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1966, p.118). The researchers concluded that the experiment provided evidence, "…that one person's expectations of another's behavior may come to serve a self-fulfilling prophecy. When teachers expected that certain children would show greater intellectual development, those children did show greater intellectual development" (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968, p. 20). The phenomenon in which a person's expectations affects the performance of another person is known as the Pygmalion effect, or Rosenthal effect.

The Rosenthal effect is tied to the initial process of labeling. Regardless of whether the labeling is accurate, there is a resulting effect on students. The effects of this phenomenon can then lead to Robert K. Merton's self-fulfilling prophecy, "a false definition of the situation evoking a new behavior which makes the originally false conception come true" (Merton, 1948, p. 195). In Rosenthal and Jacobson's experiment, the false definition of highly intellectually capable students resulted in high intellectually achieving students because of the resulting treatment those students received from teachers who believed in them.

It should be noted that the narrative of an IB student in a Title I school does not fit neatly into the definition of Merton's self-fulfilling prophecy. Part of being an IB student is succeeding academically, therefore their definition (label) is partly rooted in truth. However, because the students in this study also attend a Title I school, part of their definition (label) also predicts low

academic achievement. This prediction is the "false label". This research explored how labels that seemingly contradict one another affect students that carry them.

Statement of Problem

The participants in this study attended a Central Florida public school designated as Title I. Students in these schools are considered to be disadvantaged due to their low-socioeconomic status. The purpose of this government program is to provide federal funding to schools with "high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families" (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). After 1994's Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), Title I shifted to, "supporting schoolwide efforts to raise academic standards and student performance" (Rubenstein and Wodatch, 2000, p.12). The IASA states;

[W]hile Title I and other programs funded under this Act contribute to narrowing the

achievement gap between children in high-poverty and low-poverty schools, such

programs need to become even more effective in improving schools in order to enable all

children to achieve high standards (Title I, Sec. 1001).

This gap is elaborated on in the article, "Poverty and Education",

Children from poor families are, generally speaking, the least successful by conventional

measures and the hardest to teach by traditional methods. They are the least powerful of the

schools' clients, the least able to enforce their claims or insist their needs be met, yet the most

dependent on schools for their educational resources (Connell, 1994, p.125).

By definition, students in Title I schools are being viewed through a deficit lens. While there are academic disadvantages connected to living in poverty, the distinction of being a Title I

school should not be the only framework through which the student population is understood. Educators and legislators should be wary of these generalizations because, "When a habit of looking for intrinsic deficit intertwines with a habit of interpreting cultural and racial difference as a deficit, the deck is powerfully loaded against poor students of color" (Harry and Klinger, 2007). According to the United States Census Bureau's 2018 Poverty by Race data, 20.7% of Black Americans, 17.6% of Hispanic Americans, 9.8% of Asian Americans, and 9.9% of White Americans lived below the poverty line. This tells us that Black American and Hispanic American children are disproportionately more likely to be part of a low-income family and subsequently face the range of disadvantages described. Unfortunately, this means that they are also more likely to be wholly defined through the "living-in-poverty" label. It is also crucial to note that not every student that attends a Title I school lives in poverty. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the school which I recruited participants from had 1,473 out of 2,513 (58.6%) students eligible for free or reduced lunch during the 2018-2019 school year. This means that not every student is part of the classification regardless of whether the school is defined as Title I.

The students in this study simultaneously carry the IB label. According to Leslie Siskin's 2010 report on supporting IB programs in Title I schools:

With its demanding requirements and assessments, its academic and international orientation, and its aspirations for admission to highly selective universities, IB has often been seen as an "elite" program: one for highly motivated, academically strong, and often affluent schools and students.

This label defines IB students as the inverse of what it means to attend a Title I school. What does the contradictory nature of this positionality mean for an IB student in a Title I school? How can one be both "good" and "bad" at the same time?

Additionally, the nature of the program encourages a distinction between IB students and non-IB students. The IB Diploma Program is created specifically, "with not only required and interconnected courses and rigorous external exams, but also a Personal Project, an extended research essay of 4,000 words, and demonstration of 150 hours of the "CAS" Creative, Action, and Service" (Siskin, 2010, p. 15). Due to the nature of the courses, students are generally only exposed to other IB students. The school in this study has a hallway dedicated to the IB DP, separated from the rest of the student population. Core subject courses are all in the hallway. IB students need only to leave for certain elective courses and lunch time. Non-IB students come and go in the hallway for standard level classes, however only IB students can attend IB courses.

Ability grouping comes with possible advantages, "such as not being teased because of their intelligence, being around other students who understand them and think like they do, and having a more trusting, more fun and faster paced class atmosphere" (Foust and Davis, 2009, p. 3). According to the same study by Foust and Davis, ability grouping also comes with possible disadvantages like differential treatment, isolation, and social rejection. The isolated nature of the IB program reinforces that IB students and non-IB students are different from one another, thus creating an environment where differential treatment by faculty and administration members is clear to students. This could lead to social rejection on the part of both IB and non-IB students because they recognize that they operate within separate spheres. Not only do the students in this study grapple with the IB label, they are also aware that they are Title I students. Could this create a more prominent separation between IB and non-IB students? Do the students recognize a

separation between the groups? Most importantly, for this study, how does this web of labels affect the self-perception of IB students?

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this research was to explore the thoughts and feelings of IB students within the context of two overarching labels. Through this exploration, the study attempts to highlight the culture and identity of an IB student as a Title I school attendee. By highlighting these specific students, teachers and administrators can understand their experiences and perhaps address and begin to shift the sources of the negative aspects of their experiences.

Significance of Study

The mental wellbeing of students should be of the utmost importance to school systems. Due to their academic success, faculty may not recognize that IB students struggle in their school identities and possibly even suffer because of them. This study contributes to the existing body of research using qualitative data which displays student narratives in a unique, and even conflicting context.

Theoretical Perspective

Labeling Theory

This research was conducted through the lens of Frank Tannenbaum's work in his writing, *Crime and Community*. Tannenbaum introduces the idea of "tagging," the foundation of the labeling theory. He writes, "The process of making the criminal, therefore, is a process of tagging, defining, identifying, segregating, describing, emphasizing, making conscious and self-conscious; it becomes a way of stimulation, suggesting, emphasizing, and evoking the very traits that are complained of" (Tannenbaum. 1938, pp. 19-20). In the tagging, or the term that will be used in this study, labeling, of a person, those who assign a label are doing much more than

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classifying someone. It is a social process which comes with differential treatment, assignment of status, and continual reinforcement. If the process ended at identification, labeling would not be such a harmful practice. However, because labeling goes beyond identification and goes as far as corralling a person's psyche into believing they can only be what they are identified as, the process becomes a form of social branding. This mark separates the social deviants from those within the social norm.

It should be noted that this theory was created within the field of criminology to understand how and why individuals exhibited criminal behavior. It was later expanded upon by other researchers to include social deviance. John I. Kitsuse's (1962) take on labeling and social deviance will be described within Chapter Two's literature review. Furthermore, research surrounding labeling has primarily consisted of studying perceived negative labels and the subsequent effects. Labeling focused on perceived positive labels and the resulting effects have not been studied to the same extent, but examples of such phenomena will be included within the literature review as well.

Rationale for Study

The rationale behind this research is to explore the effects of two seemingly contradictory labels on students. This research will add to existing knowledge by providing teachers and researchers with possible internal and external conflicts in this setting that have not been adequately addressed or recognized.

COVID-19

This study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. There were several impacts on the methods of data collection. Public schools closed between the months of April 2020 and May 2020, thus preventing the researcher from obtaining field observations in school's

classrooms. Field observations were limited to the interactions the researcher had with participants during interviews. The mode of the interviews changed to a virtual format. Consequently, the researcher was not able to fully assess participants demeanors and body language since the researcher had a limited view of the participants.

The number of participants was presumably affected since the researcher was not able to recruit students in-person. In general, the students were not responsive to email communication despite the initial interest response of thirty-one students. Ultimately, only three students decided to participate in the study.

Glossary of Terms

International Baccalaureate Diploma Program- One of the four programs by the International Baccalaureate Organization. It is an academically rigorous program built for students aged between sixteen and nineteen. Students are typically juniors and seniors in the American education system when in this program. The is program's purpose is to prepare students for the academic challenges they will encounter at the university level (IBO)

Labeling- The process in which and individual identifies, defines, and treats another individual according to the framework set by the society.

Self-Esteem- A person' sense of self-worth (Du et al., 2017, p.1)

 Deviance- Behaviors outside of the conventional or conforming members of a group's idea of acceptable (Kitsuse, 1962, p. 248).

Title I- The purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on

challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments (U.S.

Department of Education)

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This study explored the effects labeling has on the self-esteem of 12th-grade students enrolled in the IB program at a Title I school. Research was done on key themes present in this objective. The themes included labeling theory, self-esteem, Title I schools, and how gifted students internalize labels given to them.

Labeling Theory

Frank Tannenbaum provides this research with the lens through which the effects of labeling are understood. Tannenbaum's quest to understand how criminals are created and the treatment they receive from their communities in *Crime and the Community* provide this research with the fundamental understanding of these effects:

From the community's point of view, the individual who used to do bad and mischievous things has now become a bad and unredeemable human being. From the individual's point of view, there has taken place a similar change. He has gone slowly from a sense of grievance and injustice, of being mistreated and punished, to a recognition that the definition of him as a human being is different from that of other boys in his neighborhood, his school, street, community. (Tannenbaum, 1938, p. 17)

Labeling occurs on two levels. The first is by the community, who assigns the label. The label is now fixed and all encompassing. Those who assign it have all the information they need from the label. The labeled can be nothing else than what they are defined as. The second is by the individual, who internalizes the label and conforms to its defining characteristics thus affirming the beliefs of the community. It is an easy, convenient, and reductive act. The process does not allow for the conception of the labeled as individuals with multiple defining identities.

While Tannenbaum's writing was limited to criminal behavior, other researchers continued and progressed his work. John Kitsuse was one of these researchers, but instead of labeling, he utilizes the term "deviance" in his work "Societal Reaction to Deviant Behavior". It is an interrelated concept to labeling as seen by the author's description, "…deviance may be conceived as a process by which the members of a group, community, or society interpret behavior as deviant, define persons who so behave as a certain kind of deviant, and accord them the treatment considered appropriate" (1963, p. 248). There is a parallel between Tannenbaum's and Kitsuse's processes of identifying, defining, and subsequent treatment of the labeled/deviant. Kitsuse's work focused on the reaction of those within the social norm to those labeled as deviant. His study examined the reactions of subjects when an individual, or their behavior, was defined by the subject as homosexual.

A notable finding was that the process by which subjects identified deviants varied significantly and was often vague. Additionally, some subjects were informed of the individual's deviance by a third party and many times accepted the label without verification. Instead, subjects confirmed the accusations through retrospective interpretations of the individual's behavior. Subjects searched and found evidence in their past interactions with these individuals in order affirm their idea of them. This tells readers that the behavior of the individuals was of little consequence to the assignment of a label. The way the subjects interpreted their behaviors is what ultimately decided the label. Kitsuse goes on to say that the penalties and conduct toward the deviants depended significantly on the subjects and the subjects' memberships within certain groups. He states that social deviance occurs only when the subject rejects the homosexual individual. If the subject is indifferent to the individual's sexuality, the social deviance process does not occur because the individual is not considered to

be deviant. The homosexual identity is regarded only as a classifier, not an indication of anything else. The refusal to attribute characteristics because of a label is important to the study because it may show that IB and Title I have no impact.

Kitsuse's work shows that labels and their consequences are rulings made by those within a majority group and are often stronger reflections of the majority group's standards of social norms and biases than an accurate representation of the identified person's character. Furthermore, those within the social norm change the identifiers in order to bend the standards to make the labeled person fit within the framework the social norm has already deemed them to be a part of. An initial labeling with strong, some, little, or at times, no strong evidence can then lead to Robert Rosenthal's Pygmalion effect.

Rosenthal's Pygmalion effect proposes that the expectations of an observer have an effect on the performance of the observed. Rosenthal's study "Teacher Expectancies: Determinants of Pupil's IQ Gains" brought this phenomena attention within the education field. In it, he provided teachers in an elementary school with a list of students who had more academic potential than their peers based on a test Rosenthal had the students take. Unbeknownst to the teachers, the students deemed highly capable were selected through a randomized process. Those within the capable group were not significantly different from their peers. Several months later, Rosenthal retested the same students at the elementary school. Those who were initially identified as having high academic potential made significantly higher increases in their score compared to those who did not have the label attached to them. This led to the question of, "how a teacher's expectation becomes translated into behavior in such a way as to elicit the expected pupil behavior" (Rosenthal, 1966, p.118). Taking Rosenthal's Pygmalion effect into consideration along with Tannenbaum's and Kitsuse's descriptions of the labeling process, this study aims to

explore the effects of these phenomena on a specific population of students. Does Robert Merton's concept of the self-fulfilling prophecy play out and create what teachers, schools, and institutions expect to see? What happens when there are contradicting labels attached to an individual? Are the students aware of the labels? Do they reject or accept these labels? How do they display their relationship with the labels through their behaviors? How is their self-esteem affected, if at all?

Effects of Labeling on Students

In order to answer some of these questions, further preliminary research was done. As much as teachers would like to think they do not carry biases into the classroom, the research says otherwise. Evidence of differential treatment based on labels have been noted in various pieces of research within, but not limited to the domains of race, academic achievement, and exceptionalities. This section will provide several examples of such treatment, including research previously done specifically with IB students.

Labeling: Ethnic and Racial Identities

The text "Hispanic Teachers and The Labeling of Hispanic Students" focuses on the labels Hispanic and Anglo teachers associate with Hispanic and Anglo students. Alvin Y. So provides a framework to understand teacher's assignment of the labels:

…the assignment of a label, e.g. a "good" or a "bad" student. (2) …differential treatments from the teacher follow. For example, a teacher tends to talk and praise a "good" student more than that of a "bad" one. (3) …the student tends to accept the teacher's label and behave accordingly. (1987, p.5).

The study showed Hispanic and Anglo teachers associate positive and negative labels differently between their Hispanic and Anglo students. Anglo teachers consistently disassociated

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Hispanic students with positive labels at higher rates than their Hispanic teaching counterparts. For example, when asked to determine whether teachers perceived students as "college-ready," there was a margin of over twenty percent between who the Anglo teachers saw as "college-ready" and who the Hispanic teachers saw as college-ready. Hispanic teachers believed that 60% of Hispanic students would probably go to college. On the other hand, Anglo teachers believed that 36% of Hispanic students would go to college. Looking further into the data, Anglo teachers believed that 55% of their Anglo students would go to college while Hispanic teachers believed that 65% of their Anglo students would go to college. There is a significant gap in the teacher's estimation of their students that So attributes to unfavorable biases Anglo teachers hold against Hispanic students (So, 1987).

Rosenthal showed that teachers expectations can and do influence student behaviors and success. Based on his work, the low expectations Anglo teachers had of Hispanic students almost certainly impacted how the teachers treated, taught, and supported those students. Hispanic students with academic potential could have been forgotten simply because of their Hispanic identity. A secondary problem with this practice is that it compounds the longer the student remains in the education system. A student going to a tenth-grade teacher's class after performing poorly with a teacher who had little to no confidence in them is already entering with a disadvantage. The tenth-grade teacher bases their initial estimation of a student's potential on the grades and feedback they receive from the student's previous teacher. The new teacher may have less of an incentive to work with the student because they do not believe the student will succeed regardless of their efforts. The cycle continues and exacerbates itself every year with the student falling further and further behind.

The power of labels can also be seen in So's finding that Anglo teachers treated Hispanic students identified as "college-going" the same as Anglo students who were also believed to be college-bound. This tells readers that initial positive labels can override the preconceived notions people hold with negative labels. Furthermore, the positive label can aid in equalizing the treatment of an otherwise disenfranchised group.

In "Racial Differences in Informal Labeling Effects," Mike Adams, James Johnson, and T. David Evans explore the effects informal labels have based on the race of the person labeled. A trend the researchers noticed was that Whites tended to associate more strongly with official labels imposed by a system of authority. On the other hand, Blacks were less likely to internalize negative formal labels. Additionally, the study concluded that informal labeling was more detrimental to people of color. The researchers attributed this difference to people of color's perception that formal labels and labelers were not credible because people of color understood that the institution was against them from the beginning. Furthermore, people who are close to them, who give them informal labels are much more reliable because they are not already against them (Adams et al., 1998, p. 168).

Adams' study tells readers that the overarching labels in this study, IB and Title I, may not have a drastic direct effect on the study participants since they are people of color. Nonetheless, while these institutional labels may not bear significant meaning to them, the informal labels tied to them which are assigned to by their peers, community members, and close teachers may have a more pronounced impact.

In Ramón A. Martínez's "Beyond the English Learner Label" the researcher describes the perception of English Learners in school settings. Associations with English Learning students included being seen as deviant from normal American culture, emphasizing what they do not

know versus what they do know, and the viewing the code-switching or translanguaging process English Learners commonly use as something to be ashamed of (Martínez, 2018). The article shows that institutions carry a level of ethnocentrism that results in the devaluing of students that are perceived as outsiders of the culture. This is important to note because America is a white, middle-class society with institutions that reflect the society's values. This means that for people of color, their culture, and by extension their identities, are being judged based upon the majority's standards.

Martínez concludes the way teachers see English Learners directly influences the type of opportunities teachers share and withhold with them (2018, p.521). This echoes Kitsuse's work that speaks on what labeling without the attribution of additional characteristics would be like. A classification without implicit weight that may or may not have any foundation in truth.

Labeling: Students with Exceptionalities

In "The Language of Labels," Darcy Markam describes the power of language within the context of teaching students with disabilities. Language carries the assumptions and beliefs which have been shaped by the culture people function within, therefore language is never neutral. Accordingly, words such as disabled carry great power for institutions, teachers, and students. When separated into its word parts, disabled means "not able" (Markham, 2005, p. 1). While other labels carry implicit meanings, this label is explicit in what it communicates. The student with disabilities is limited, powerless, requiring outside intervention to function at the same level as those who are not disabled. The author states that the disability label is problematic because people will view those who are disabled based on their disability rather than identifying them as a person first. Predictably, teachers report that students with disabilities are "less motivated to learn, less likely to graduate from high school, and less successful in their future

interpersonal relations and work as adults" (Markham, 2005, p.5). Again, this brings Rosenthal's

Pygmalion Effect to mind. To what extent are teachers creating a narrative that traps a student

within a label that does not fully encompass who they are? The misrecognition and

nonrecognition done by teachers and institutions is capable of harming, oppressing, and

"imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being" (Markham, 2005, p. 5).

Here, Markham's ideas coincide neatly with Tannenbaum's idea of labeling and Merton's self-

fulfilling prophecy. The commonality of this phenomena within the education field requires

educators to take the initiative to reframe their conceptions behind words. Without doing so,

educators may inadvertently reinforce thoughts and behaviors that prevent students from ever

reaching their potential.

However, it is crucial to understand how necessary a label like "disabled" can be within

education. In "Navigating the Labels: Appropriate Terminology for Students with Disabilities,"

Ellary Draper presents the reader with the stance that labels are necessary, especially for those

who receive aid as a result of them. This is true for students with physical and intellectual

disabilities who rely on government programs such as the Individuals with Disabilities Act

(IDEA). IDEA required students to be appropriately labeled in order to provide them with the

corresponding resources (Draper, 2018, p. 30). Draper's case for the use of labels is irrefutable

and is a major reason why the purpose of this research does not include abandoning them. They

are indispensable when it comes to certain day-to-day transactional activities that occur on a

grand scale. Of course, this does not mean that if an institution is large enough, the implicit

meanings behind labels are ignored. Institutional racism is a perfect example of these biases

working on large scale.

Draper touches on another important idea within her text. She talks about identity-first language versus person-first language. Identity-first language is reflected in the statement, "I am an autistic student." The student is choosing to be defined, in part, by their autism, because they see it as an essential piece to their identity. On the other hand, person first language looks like, "I am a person who is deaf." As an educator, Draper states that it is important to allow students to select their preference and abide by it (2018, p.31). Ultimately, teachers must allow students and groups of students to define themselves rather than define them before understanding who they are. This extends to defining the labels as well. Rather than define groups as an outsider, why not allow those who carry the label, function with it, and understand it better than anyone else, define it for themselves. It is about giving people the opportunity to create narratives for themselves rather than creating the narratives for them.

Labeling: Academically Gifted Students

Robert Hoge and Joseph Renzolli researched the association academically gifted students had with their label in "Exploring the Link Between Giftedness and Self Concept." While not the same as IB, gifted students parallel them through their rigorous academic work. The researchers described the possible detriments of such a label on the self-concept of students. For example, once part of such a program, high expectations are placed which some students feel that they may never be able to meet. Moreover, in a class full of exceptional students, a student who was once at the top of their class with non-gifted peers may compare themselves to their more successful peers. This could result in a damaged self-concept due to the realization that their work or intelligence is not as high or special as they believed it to be. Additionally, due to their intelligence, gifted students are more critical of their own performance (Hoge and Renzolli, 1993, p. 451). The research the authors conducted led them to conclude that gifted students had a

slightly higher self-concept compared to their non-gifted peers when it came to academics and behavior. In physical and social dimensions, the two groups did not show a significant difference in their self-concept (Hoge and Renzolli, 1993, p.458).

Their conclusion indicates that the positive label does not have notable negative effects on the self-concept, and by extension the self-esteem of students. There do appear to be some positive effects relates to the label, but causality between the label and the effects could not be concluded due to other factors (moving classes from a heterogenous to a homogenous group, change in academic success). For studies conducted without these additional factors, the association between the label and the increased self-concept can be more definite. This study benefits from the fact that the students in the study were part of the IB program for four years in high school and have been in the same homogenous group since then (barring the leaving of students and entering of new students). Furthermore, the research conducted by the authors was quantitative, preventing the researchers from directly probing what the students' self-concepts were in relation to the gifted label. On the other hand, this is a qualitative study, allowing the researcher to directly inquire what the students' thoughts and emotions are.

Rogan Foust's qualitative research done specifically with IB and Advanced Placement (AP- another program specifically geared to prepare students for college) students presented the perceived advantages and disadvantages of taking part in academically rigorous programs. Advantages included pride students felt from completing challenging work, the bonds the students built with their cohort, higher respect from their teachers, and learning environments conducive to their needs. Disadvantages included the high workload, the social and emotional consequences of a high workload, and negative stereotypes associated with being part of the program. IB students reported a level of rigidity within the program, perceived more negative

stereotypes about their program, and more fatigue from the workload (Foust et al., 2009, pp. 18-19). There were notable student comments made in the study such as, "They give you a lot more respect in AP classes, the teachers. Because they assume that if you're in the class, then you're smart enough and…what you're going to say is actually intelligent" (Foust et al., 2009, p.11). An IB student speaking on the differences between IB classes and general education classes note, "…it's a matter of motivation… I don't care what the content is or who the teacher is, it's easier to learn…and learn it in a fun and entertaining way with a group of individuals who wants to be learning" (Foust et al., 2009, p. 12). There is a definite positive association between the academic programs the students are in and their experiences in the school's academic environment. With that said, IB students specifically faced challenges to a greater extent than their AP counterparts. For the purposes of this study, a significant obstacle was the perceived social difference between IB and non-IB students. The sentiment will be echoed by the participants of this study.

Self-Esteem

This research did not aim to measure student self-esteem. Instead, it attempted to find whether labels affected student self-esteem. Therefore, only an introductory understanding of the concept was needed. For this purpose, Hongfei Du's article, "Self-esteem and Subjective Well-Being Revisited" was used. Self-esteem is rooted in a person's feelings of self-worth and Du explains that the self can be understood through three levels. There is the personal self, referring to self-concept, the relational self, referring to interpersonal attachments, and the collective self, referring to the self that is built from the membership of social groups (Du et al., p.2, 2017). With this understanding, this research aims to explore how the relational self and the collective self affect the personal self. The collective self is defined by the inclusion in two groups: IB and Title I. The relational self is defined by the views of friends, peers, teachers, family, and the

community. The personal self is the participant's view of the aspects of their personhood that make them unique.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Study procedures, setting, data collection, ethical considerations, privacy, researcher's role, limitations and delimitations will be outlined in this chapter. Data analysis will be included for the following research questions:

How are senior IB students' self-esteem influenced by perceived labels in a Title I School?

To what extent do IB students express any dissociation or association with ascribed labels they perceive during their senior year?

Ethnographic Case Study

The ethnographic case study is a qualitative method of research. The purpose of qualitative research is, "define/interpret unclear phenomena through non-numerical methods of measurement that focus on meaning and insight" (Fusch et al., 2017, p.924). The research uses a blended design because it allows, "researchers to explore causality links, which is not typical for ethnographies" (Fusch et al., 2017, p.926). In this case, the researcher attempted to reveal whether there was a link between labels students carry and their self-esteem. Using interview responses, field observations, and reflective journaling, the researcher gathered qualitative data that examined the possible links between the Title I/IB labels and the students' self-esteem.

Researcher's Role

The researcher's role was to explore the thoughts and feelings of IB students within the context of two overarching labels. Throughout this study, it attempts to highlight the culture of an IB student at a Title I school. Due to the global pandemic, the interviews and discussions were administered online and not in a face-to-face environment.

Research Setting

  This qualitative study took place through an online platform instead of the traditional classroom setting due to COVID-19. The researcher emailed the coordinator of the International Baccalaureate program to communicate with the recently graduated students. Once the students agreed to participate, they provided their emails to the coordinator, who passed them along to the researcher, allowing him to contact the participants in order to share the study information and consent forms. Once participants responded with their consent forms or assent to participate, the researcher scheduled a Zoom meeting with the participants. The researcher took notes during the interviews.

Participants

  A combination of convenience sampling and stratified sampling was used to recruit participants. A specific group of students were considered for this research (Battaglia, 2008, p.2).

  The participants had to be IB students attending the Title I school where the researcher was conducting the study. However, not everyone within the population volunteered to be part of the study. Only three students decided to participate, therefore the research also utilized convenient sampling.

  According to the county's website, the school's racial demographics for the 2018-2019 school year are 11.7% Hispanic, 1.4% White, 2.1% Asian, 82.8% Black, and 1.5% Multiracial. 9.5% of students are English Language Learners and 10.3% are students with exceptionalities.

  Additionally, the researcher was not able to recruit participants face-to-face due to Covid-19.

Procedures

The Internal Review Board (IRB) granted approval for this study prior to the researcher's outreach to students. Once approval was obtained, the researcher sent an invitation-email which also included an explanation of the procedures and the consent form.

Students were asked interview questions during one-on-one sessions. The meaning of the participants' responses was explored and thematic narratives were identified. The responses to researcher's questions, researcher's field notes, and reflective journaling were the tools used to collect data.

The research was conducted with graduates from a central Florida high school. However, given that the government is currently trying to prevent the spread of Covid-19, only online interviews were conducted, as per the social distancing guidelines recommended by the state government. Research was completed by the end of the second week of June.

Interview participants completed one interview session that lasted approximately 45 minutes. Interviews were conducted at the most convenient time for students, between the hours of 8 AM and 7 PM. Students voluntarily signed up for interview times using an online poll system (Doodle) that only asked for the participant to use their first name. The research was conducted for two weeks.

Only three participants took part in the study. Participants were asked questions from the pool the researcher submitted. The questions were not organized in a specific sequence. The goal was to have the interviewees answer all forty-two questions by the end of the interviews. Participants were told that they would be prompted for deeper analysis using clarifying questions/statements such as: why, how, in what ways, say more, what are your thoughts. Participants were only responsible for answering all forty-two questions.

At the beginning and end of each interview, the researcher asked the participant about their level of comfort concerning the study. The researcher also asked if any questions provoked strong responses. Proper outreach would occur if the participants responded affirmatively.

The researcher took physical notes with pencil and paper as the interviews were conducted.

Limitations

A limitation of the study was the number of participants, which totaled three. The desired number of participants was ten, with a maximum of fifteen. This means that the data was limited because of the low number of responses that could be analyzed. Another limitation was the use of the Labeling Theory, which originated from the criminology field. Furthermore, the Labeling phenomena was primarily studied in the context of the attribution of negative labels.

A major limitation of the study was the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic during the research process. The pandemic did not allow the researcher to recruit participants face-to-face. Interviews had to be shifted to a virtual platform, limiting the quality of the field observations the researcher was able to make. Classroom field observations could no longer be done because the public-school county overseeing the high school transitioned to virtual learning.

Additional participation exclusion criteria are included in the Delimitations section.

Delimitations

The delimitations, or the boundaries placed on this study, include the researcher working only with the recently graduated IB population versus other programs or including a wider criterion for the desired population of the study.

Ethical Considerations

The following ethical considerations for this study, are but not limited to, a) gaining consent through the use consent forms that required parent's signature because some of the participants were minors, and b) participants were completely voluntary. There were not incentives provided to the participants. c) no harm was done to the participants, d) participants remained anonymous.

Research Participant Privacy

To maintain the privacy of all participants, the researcher provided codes to the participants (the names were changed to the most commonly used English names).

Benefits to Research Participants

There were no benefits for the research participants.

Risks to the Research Participants

There were no risks for the research participants.

Data Collection Tools

The researcher gathered data for the interviews using an online video conference tool called Zoom. Due to COVID-19, the researcher was not able to establish a relationship with the participants, thus the interviews could not be considered ethnographic (Allen, 2017, p.2). Instead, the researcher utilized unstructured respondent interviews which asked questions concerning the participants' opinions, perceptions, and experiences (Allen, 2018, p. 2). The second form of data collection was the in-person observation, which focused on the "context as well as the behaviors of individuals to understand the meaning of certain behaviors or beliefs" (Bottorff, 2011, p. 2). It should be noted that the in-person observations were limited to the Zoom virtual platform due to COVID-19. The third form of data collection was the reflective journaling done by the researcher. The justification for reflective journaling was to generate a new understanding of the

data by allowing the researcher to think about their background, behavior, and beliefs compared to those of the participants, otherwise known as reflexivity (Reece, 2014, p. 3).

Triangulation, Credibility, and Reliability

For this study, triangulation is used to establish the credibility of the study because of the use of multiple data collection tools to capture the data for this study (Creswell & Clark). Data tools used in this study were the Zoom interviews, field observations, and the reflective journaling done by the researcher.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The following findings were gathered using three data collection tools standard for the ethnographer. The forty-two interview questions and the corresponding student responses are listed first. The field observations made by the researcher during the interview are included in the following table. Three journal entries, one for each interview, were included at the end.

Upon reviewing the data, two different sets of codes will be established in order to identify themes. The process of coding is defined by Karen O'Reilly as, "close exploration of collected data and assigning it codes, which may be names, categories, concepts, theoretical ideas or classes" (2012, p.2). These codes will help the researcher analyze trends within the data by displaying the frequency of themes throughout the data. The interview questions will have one set of codes dedicated to them and they are based on the narratives shared by the students. The field observation notes and the journal entries will share a table since they are narratives constructed from the point of view of the researcher.

As a note, the interview question responses are not direct transcriptions of the participants responses. They are transcriptions made by the researcher during the interview process. Key words and phrases have not been changed in order to retain the meaning behind the responses. Nonetheless, it is important to mention that the responses are not one hundred percent accurate.

Interview Question Responses

Table 1) Why did you choose to participate in this research study?

	Response
Emma	I'm in IB now and I know how hard it can be to get people to participate and also you were in IB.
Olivia	I have an older sibling who was in the IB program. They didn't get to share, and I want to share my positive experience.
Ava	It seemed interesting to do and learn about. I also wanted to help someone that used to be in the program.

Table 2) Please share some of your personal background. Where are you from? Did you grow up in the area? How long have you been in the IB program?

_____

	Response
Emma	I'm from Orlando, Florida, and I've been in the IB Program since the 9th grade.
Olivia	Orlando, my mom is from the Virgin Islands, and my dad is from Trinidad. I went to E. High School, and I went R. Middle School. It's been in my family since my brother. My true intention is to be better than him.
Ava	I grew up in Orlando. I was in MYP in middle school. I got into the DP program in junior year.

_____

Table 3) How do you feel about the IB program?

_____

Response

Emma   It's good but kind of bad. The amount of work they make you do...
            They say its to prepare you.

Olivia   I enjoyed it. It helped me with my writing, preparing for college, and my
            friends told me the same. We got to know how college would be. In the
            Diploma Program, it felt like it was a family. I had a set group of friends.
            You get to build a better relationship with friends and teachers. IB helped
            me push me out of my shell.

Ava   It was easy until I got to DP. At first, you see it as prestigious, but it's not
            the way you think it is. It's not just for show. You have work that's three
            times harder than other people's. You stay up until 2 AM to do
            assignments. There were other kids who felt a way about it. They assumed
            we were stuck up, mean, snobbish. Once they know you, they realize it's
            not true; it's not all of who you are.

_____

Table 4) In what ways has the IB program prepared you for college academically?

_____

	Response
Emma	We've been exposed to so much material, and that will help so we won't be lost when it comes to new subject matters.
Olivia	The writing and workload. I wasn't a strong writer. When I joined IB, I saw flaws and I improved. I was not great in English, but I was strong in math, that was my subject. They helped me improve with my work in my academics. I didn't know what I wanted to be until junior year. After my biology class, where I learned more about animals, I decided I wanted to be a zoologist. I also feel more focused when it comes to academics.
Ava	Academically. We got used to problem-solving, critical thinking, and time-management with seven classes.

_____

Table 5) Do you feel prepared for college? Why/Why not? How?

_____

                Response

Emma   Yes, we've been exposed to a lot of material, so I don't think everything
will be completely new to me.

Olivia   Yes and no. Yes, academically. No, because I want to have people that
I'm used to being around. Meeting new people is hard. I'm not used to
randomly meeting people. I'm worried that people won't like how I am.

Ava   I feel more than prepared.

                Do you only feel prepared academically?

                No, all facets. I've become more outgoing, more open-minded. I don't
believe the first thing I hear; I do research; I'm a better listener. I take time
to take a break and be active in the community as well.

_____

Table 6) What do you think it means to be ready for college?

_____

	Response
Emma	Being independent having, a solid academic understanding of the material.
Olivia	Being mentally prepared. Figuring out what it is to be in the real world
Ava	You don't feel overwhelmed about class choices, coursework, workload. You know how to write, do research, and take the initiative to ask for help when it's needed.

_____

Table 7) Are you planning on pursuing a college degree? Why/Why not?

_____

	Response
Emma	Yes, I want a college degree. People are all around me say that you go to have a sound, stable income. It's good to be exposed to different ideas and hopefully, you exit out of college a changed person.
Olivia	Yes, my interest in animals in my Diploma Program biology class pushed my desire to work with them more. Education is the biggest deal for me.
Ava	I never imagined myself not going to college. I plan on going to medical school and studying biomedical engineering.

_____

Table 8) What are your plans/goals after high school?

	Response
Emma	I plan on going to the Navy for five years. I can go to school with them without having to pay, so that's a big reason.
Olivia	Get a job, for the experience. Move, get my own place, not depending on my parents anymore. And traveling.
Ava	I want to get a job. Do community service. With the Coronavirus, you can't really do it in person, so I want to sign up for virtual service. Something I've been doing now is translating medical documents online. I also downloaded an app to help blind people do things when they need help. **What makes community service important to you?** I want to stay active instead of doing nothing. I want to help others and my community. When I started school, I had classmates and other people there that helped me. I want to pass that along.

Table 9) Is your plan something that you created or a product of someone else's vision for your future?

_____

                       Response

Emma	A little bit of both. With my parents, it can be difficult being a kid. You have dreams and your parents have dreams and you want to satisfy your parents and yourself. My parents, they want me to be financially stable, make a good amount of money, have a good job. I just want to be happy and satisfied with what I'll be doing
	But I guess there's no use in worrying about it
	Would you choose a job where you can be happy, but not as financially stable?
	I don't know...probably not. I'm worried about what my parents would think. My parents will think I'm a rebel.
Olivia	A vision for myself. I have always thought, "Go on and do something with yourself."
Ava	It's my own vision. At times, I have been dissuaded from medical school. People say, "This is your time to relax and have fun." I don't see it like that, I want to better the world, do something that makes me happy.

_____

Table 10) What does success mean to you?

_____

                  Response

Emma	Success means looking at your accomplishments and who you are... being proud of what I did.
Olivia	Achieving something even though you must have multiple trials and errors. You did something meaningful to improve life around you.
Ava	Being happy. Doing the thing you love where it's not just a job. It's something you want to do, put in your time, effort, and money.

_____

Table 11) Do you feel pressure to succeed in life? From who or what?

_____

Response

Emma   Yes, my parents, my community, my family at home, church,

                people at school. They expect you to go and do great things.

Olivia   My dad has always been pushing me to try to do better things. Education

                has been a big thing; he wants us to be more successful than he was.

Ava   A little. A lot of people are counting on me, but it's a pressure to succeed

                that's needed. It helps me do what's needed.

                Do you feel pressure from yourself?

                I'm my harshest critic. I push myself to do more than what's needed, but

                that's because I know what I want in life.

_____

Table 12) Do you feel pressure to go to college?

_____

	Response
Emma	Yes, my parents believe that a college education is the only way to achieve in life. They strongly believe in formal education
Olivia	Yeah, from my mom's sisters. They've pushed me to step out of my comfort zone.
	I've had this small fear of messing up. All through high school, I struggled to keep achieving. In tenth grade, I had to take two math classes in order to catch up with my peers. It helped me figure out my strengths though. I mean sometimes I would get upset over exams and grades, but it happens.
Ava	No, I've always been told it's important, but people also said there are different options. People haven't told me that I need to.

_____

Table 13) How many of your family members have a college degree? How many of your family members have gone to college?

_____

                                        Response

Emma	Three. None in my immediate family. They're all cousins. Some are older; one is in my generation.
Olivia	On my mom's side of the family, there are five people with college degrees. On my dad's side of the family, there are two. My brother just graduated with his degree.
	There's not much of my family that went to college. It's a lot harder for people from the islands you know because of the cost. It's just too much.
Ava	None have gone to college.

_____

Table 14) Do you know someone outside of school with a college degree?

_____

                          Response

Emma   Yes, my sister's babysitter's daughter.

Olivia   Yeah, when I was a freshman, I made friends with people who were
                  seniors and went on to college. We also have family friends too.

Ava   Mentors and coaches that have helped me decide on a college, which one
                  is the best fit for me. They've provided me with advice and skills. It's
                  important because a lot of people don't finish. A lot of those are from
                  school...I also volunteered as the PTA secretary and both vice president
                  and president mentored me. There were people from my church too.

_____

Table 15) Do you feel that students outside of the IB program, in your school, are more/less/equally prepared for college? Why? How?

_____

                    Response

Emma   People outside of the program are less prepared because they don't get the same training, the same education. I think they're well off, though. They still go on to do great things.

Olivia   I would say in between less and equal. It's more likely that teachers give up because they don't have the same resources. But there are non-IB teachers who go the extra mile.

                        Some teachers don't have the same motivation. There's some stupid to feel forced to be there but there are others who want to be there. With our teachers, we have before school tutoring, we get to retake exams, there's more of a focus on the topics, and also, we're the most highly motivated.

Ava   We're more prepared for college. I've known a lot of my classmates since ninth and tenth grade. They were all IB students with me. The amount of time; we've been friends since the beginning of high school. During the last two years, you have the same teachers. It can get annoying, but it's also easier to talk about your struggles, reaching out. The length of time makes it easier.

                        There's not as much unity with the kids outside of IB. They go with the flow. Every year it's different. There's a whole new set of people and teachers that you have to get to know. You have to get used to new faces coming and going.

_____

Table 16) Do you think students that go to E. High School tend to go to college?

	Response
Emma	Some of them do, some of them don't. A lot of people from IB go straight to college. I can't really speak on those who aren't in IB. I'm not too sure.
Olivia	Yes, they are given more opportunities to see life. A lot start off in community college. We also get a lot of scholarships because of diversity.
Ava	I'd like to say yes. Based on my friends and what I've seen on social media, many have committed to a college, others went to the military, Some went to a two-year college. Others went to take a gap year.
	Looking at the facts of where the school is… maybe I'm more exposed to people who are graduating?
	What do you mean by facts?
	It's in Pine Hills, where they say kids are bad and don't do work.
	There's negative commentary, a bad perception, but it's not those things. I wouldn't want to go to another school. There are some things we can't help. Attendance has been a big issue, and it got to the point where the school established a system to give kids remediation if they weren't attending.

Table 17) What kind of support do you receive from home to go to college?

_____

                    Response

Emma	They value education a lot, especially formal education.
Olivia	My brother, Mom, Dad, we all push me to better myself. They offer support, they asked if I wanted a tutor. They want me to see bigger things they give me a shoulder to depend on. My teachers are like that too.
Ava	Verbal support. When I participate or get involved, they support me by helping me travel. They encourage me to do what I want to do instead of something I have to do.

_____

Table 18) Do you think your peers in the IB program will attend college?

_____

                        Response

Emma   Yes, a lot of them will.

Olivia   For the most part, yes. Some gave up a little near the end. Only one person

                I know isn't going. But people choose to do different things like spend

                time with their family, go get a job.

Ava   Yes. (See 16 for details)

_____

Table 19) If you plan on attending college, what do you think will be obstacles that will make it hard to finish?

_____

                 Response

Emma   Staying motivated. Sticking it out for the long term.

Olivia   I would say getting there on time. I hear that the classes are very far and I'm not a very fast walker. I'm not worried about academics. And sleep people tell me not to choose classes in the morning because I might not want to wake up for them

Ava   Getting used to the college culture. I've read reviews, heard people's experiences. I don't know what to expect. I have to go through with it to know. I've heard morning classes are tough because you might not want to wake up for them. Being responsible for everything will be the hardest part.

_____

Table 20) How do you think your teachers view your academic performance?

_____

                           Response

Emma   IB is academically rigorous but at the same time, when you look at my grades, I think they would have said that she could have done better.

Olivia   I think they would say I did well. You could call me a teacher's pet. I was the first to do our work. I was more focused on getting everything down. I took a lot of notes. I had like two notebooks for every single subject that would just get full even before the end of the year. I think they would say I was a great student I work my butt off.

Ava   They would say I had a good academic performance.

_____

Table 21) What do you know of college culture?

Response

Emma It's heavily social. There are lots of clubs, activities, parties.

Olivia There are different people from all over. And the professors, they won't be the same as our teachers.

Ava I've gotten advice on dorms, parties, the club, majors. Avoiding classes I wouldn't want to be interested in. Once you miss one class you lose motivation to go and I definitely want to avoid that. I've been on college visits and stayed overnight. The food only tastes good for so long. People have also told me how to be safe, how to get involved in sports, clubs. Making sure that they will help me toward my career goals and become more well-rounded.

You said before you don't know what to expect, but it seems like you know a lot. Where did you get all this advice from?

I talked to a lot of people, people that are in college. Freshmen, graduates, supportive friendships that I've made with others. They tell me to ask them anything, they're happy to share.

Table 22) Do you think your school culture prizes academic achievement? How does your school display their support?

_____

                      Response

Emma   I think it does. "Determination," "perseverance," those are all the words they use in order to promote achievement all around. They congratulate students who do well academically, and every now and then, they give little prizes to those who do well.

Olivia   Yes and no. In IB they held us accountable for our academics. I can't say much for the people outside of it.

Ava   One hundred percent. Starting in tenth grade when we got a new principal all the way through twelfth grade. The staff, the teachers too. They set up resources for us like the HUB, CORE, tutoring hours, school materials. You never have an issue of finding help.

_____

Table 23) Would you consider your education to be a priority?

_____

Response

Emma   I consider it to be a necessity, not necessarily a priority. Not specifically
            academics, but I think education, yes.

Olivia   Yes because without an education it's like you have no knowledge. With
            it, you learn more about yourself, you gain more insight into yourself.

Ava   Yes...I don't know. I like to learn. I don't like going to school all the time.
            It can be draining. I like to learn outside of the curriculum. It makes
            learning easier.

            What don't they teach you?

            We don't learn about African American history and other cultures. We
            learn a whole bunch of events and laws, and we're given different
            perspectives. But there's only so much you can fit in 180 days.

            Do you think they should teach more about those subjects?

            Yes. I know winners write history, so it makes sense why we were taught
            certain things. It should be more progressive, so they can teach us why
            society is the way it is. Knowing that will help reduce ignorance. Having
            knowledge will make it easier to happen.4

_____

Table 24) Outside of a job, what do you perceive to be the value of an education?

_____

               Response

Emma   It comes with having a status, a title to your name, and it also opens your mind.

Olivia   Just to know things. Know how to do my job better. Gaining knowledge and new information that could help me later on in life.

Ava   Knowledge is power. The more you know, the easier it is to evaluate everything around you. You can be in different ways, how to cook, how to take care of yourself. It helps you become a better person by contributing more to society.

                 In most cases, you go further toward a job or career. But sometimes, you may find a job that has nothing to do with your degree. College exposes you to more things. People from all over the country, international students, different cultures, new ways of life.

                 You're able to create your own ideas and perspectives. You become more open-minded about the world around you. Growing up in the same area, you're only surrounded by a small group of people and ideas.

_____

Table 25) Do you believe your peers in the IB program value academic achievement? How is this displayed?

_____

                          Response

Emma	Yes, IB culture is sort of competitive. IB wants you to be the best, they want you to embody the learner profile, they want you to get top marks. It's very important that you get into college. They foster an environment that encourages academic excellence.
Olivia	Yes, it's very competitive. Everything is a challenge. They showed it by helping others, helping in class, tutoring each other outside of class, and using our knowledge to help other students. Everyone was helpful.
Ava	Yes, for similar reasons to my own. They displayed it through the effort they put into their schoolwork. Some of them had a job, they started businesses, met clients who weren't always the best. We have a group chat where we talked and learned about things that are happening. We stay connected.

_____

Table 26) Do you believe students outside of the IB program value education to the same extent?

_____

	Response
Emma	I think that some do some don't. Some see education as a necessity, they need it to get to where you want to be.
Olivia	People thought IB was very hard. You know how there are workaholics? Well, they kind of looked at us as "schoolaholics." They thought we had more power. The main thing was that they didn't know how to manage the time as well as we did. We had a stronger work ethic. Both for the IB and AP students. The school depended on us and we were always united as a program.
Ava	Yes, because I have friends in AP who work as hard as we do. They show the same effort, the same energy. We do the same things even though we're not in the same program.
	What about the general population of students?
	I'd like to say yeah. On social media, people talk about succeeding, doing better, and providing for their families. They prioritize education to be able to contribute back.

_____

Table 27) Do you perceive a difference between IB students and non-IB students? If so, what is the difference?

	Response
Emma	Yes. Well, I feel like we're the same, but different. We conduct ourselves differently; the way we speak academically. The IB classroom environment is different. But there are always people who stuck out on both sides. In an IB classroom, when teachers speak there's not a lot going on. Students are attentive. Outside of those classrooms, there are more interruptions and the students are less focused. IB, the students are generally more focused.
Olivia	The workload was different and how teachers motivate them to. Attendance-wise, non-IB students kind of just came when they felt like it. In IB, we had events like movie nights after hard tests, so we could also relax. They didn't have a student body for them. Many felt like they didn't belong, so there was less motivation to go to school. A student body would have helped them have that. It also seemed like some of the teachers didn't care. If they don't feel any motivation for you, why should you?
Ava	We're more comfortable with each other. People will hear us talking to one another and think we are being mean or bullying one another, but we just make jokes with another. With schoolwork, we tend to reach out for help more. Besides that, there's not much of a difference.

Table 28) Do you think the same opportunities are offered to you as students who go to different schools?

_____

	Response
Emma	No, E. High has many opportunities for students to prosper and succeed.
Olivia	Yes, but not exactly the same. I know people who go to other schools and they're held to a higher standard because of the higher income there. A lot of people from other schools perceive E. High as a place with a lot of fights, a place with drugs, but honestly, I feel like it's more common at other schools. When you talked to them about our school, they say "oh you go to that school." I would say our school is more involved in helping students. I think we're giving more opportunities to improve as a school.
Ava	No, not in a negative way. In a way, we have more resources. The school has a community partnership that helps kids get jobs, scholarships, fee waivers for tests, and there's an availability of different programs. Students from other schools are limited with the number of times they can attempt a test because of cost. The school is perceived negatively by the community. Both Pine Hills and the West Orlando community. I've been told don't do anything, the school is filled with gangs, there are fights all the time, and kids just getting into trouble. Community members assume you don't do as well academically as the advanced students at other schools.

_____

Table 29) Has anyone expressed doubt in your ability to achieve in school?

_____

                      Response

Emma   My parents may have a little bit throughout High School since I didn't have the best of grades. My parents valued grades a lot. But they always knew I would make it.

Olivia   In my family, on my dad's side. I've had people tell me to leave IB because it's too much work. From them, I've had less motivation and less encouragement.

Ava   I don't think so, at least not to my face.

_____

Table 30) Has anyone shown that they believe in your ability to achieve in school?

_____

               Response

Emma   Missed Question

Olivia   In the Boys & Girls Club; the art director he's a big role model and he's
              also a college professor. He tells me that it is hard now, but it will get
              easy. He helped me understand why it was so important to be in school.

              I remember not wanting to be in school during ninth grade. It was because
              of loneliness, not having other people to relate to, so I struggled. Looking
              back, it felt worse than what it really was. It helped when I realized that
              teachers did care. My teachers have helped me become a better person.
              They wanted me to achieve more than what I thought I could for myself.

Ava   Everyone I've interacted with. From my fourth teacher and up. Every
              teacher, counselor, every adult, every student, every friend.

_____

Table 31) What are the barriers you face in succeeding academically and obtaining higher education?

_____

                    Response

Emma	Number one is motivation. Motivation to study, Motivation to reach my full academic potential. I do have a lack of motivation from being bored. I know long-term it's worth it, but it's hard to find a purpose in the present. I'm just not interested at times...academically.
Olivia	My older brother went to the same schools, so I was compared to him a lot. Everyone knew him, and it made me feel unmotivated at times. When I got to high school it wasn't the experience, I thought it was going to be. But I also got into theatre and found a great community there. The teacher graduated from an IB program at a different high school. They said their program was harder, but they did see how much work we did.
Ava	Making sure I don't get invested too much in the fun part of college. My sleep schedule and managing my time.

_____

Table 32) Do your peers in IB motivate/support you to succeed academically? How do they show their support?

_____

	Response
Emma	Yes, they really do. They are very encouraging. We're all going through the same thing so it's like if they can, you can too.
Olivia	Yes, they hosted tutoring sessions, planned things together to do activities with one another. They also offered personal help when it came to school.
Ava	Yes, when I need it. If I missed an announcement, someone else would have heard it and we tell each other. We Facetime each other at night when we do our assignments. We tell each other "don't go to sleep yet, you haven't finished working on this." We encourage each other to finish.

_____

Table 33) Do your teachers support your academic goals? How do they help you succeed in class?

_____

                Response

Emma   Yes, by going the extra mile, reminding me of upcoming tests, due dates, checking up on us, helping us get into a good college.

Olivia   They pushed us to do more and taught us more than what we thought we would learn. We learned about poetry, authors, writers, math, information for later on in life.

Was this limited to academic information?

No, it was both personal and academic information. They taught us about foundational things. The things we talked about in our Theory of Knowledge class opened my eyes.

Ava   By providing tutoring, staying longer than needed. They're only required to stay 25 minutes after school. Our teachers stay until 5 o'clock. They spend extra days on difficult topics, and they make it funny. It's not just a lesson.

That close relationship also helps when we need recommendations for colleges applications or scholarships.

_____

Table 34) What is the perception of the IB program amongst the student population at this school? Amongst faculty?

_____

	Response
Emma	They think that we are privileged. I guess stuck up. Sometimes we joked "Haha we're better than them," but we never really meant it. The way they saw us, it was sort of negative. People who are friends with us though they don't judge us like that.
Olivia	We are the know-it-alls, we work more than we should, and we won't get anything for it. There are some students who see them as models.
	There are some faculty members; they hate IB. Some are very supportive and encouraging because they know what we're doing.
	What makes you say some of the faculty hates IB?
	It depends on the faculty. Hate comes from previous faculty members who have had bad experiences with IB students and others who just hear things. They do like it, but they don't.
Ava	We used to say it was the school versus IB. Students felt like we were privileged. They thought we were stuck-up, mean. Classes don't start until 7:20, but they let us into our floor before 6:50. We would be in the flex space working, studying, trying to get ahead, or just on our phones talking with one another until class started.
	A lot of kids thought it wasn't fair. The IB kids got hoodies at one point too. The kids started saying, "They get to have merch and do what they want to." It was a big argument on social media during the middle and end of the school year. But we talked and we got them to understand that we

were similar, we were just doing a difficult program. I wondered why there was all this animosity.

How'd you take it?

I tried my best to change the perception among the people I did know. I talked with people online and asked why they felt that way. It made me realize they felt like they were missing out on perks. The hoodies weren't given to us, we did fundraisers, and they didn't know that. We showed them how they could do it, so they could get things too.

During freshman year, the faculty would push back anything the IB students had to say. It was mostly about sports then. After that, a new principal came who was more accepting.

There were other teachers who didn't like us though. I know someone went down to the first floor once and a teacher told them "Aren't you supposed to be on your throne on the third floor?"

The new principal was good, though. He was an advocate for us.

Table 35) How would you describe the community around your school?

_____

                        Response

Emma   Pine Hills has a bad reputation. Jokingly people call it Crime Hills. The
                perception isn't very good. But it's not as bad as people make it out to be. I
                think it's okay. The people know each other...it's alright.

Olivia   People know our school. They're surprised IB is there. It's getting more
                well known as an IB school now. We've held events for IB schools and
                people from other places come. It's a great community. People are
                supportive of the school even if they don't have kids who go there. They
                like to be involved

Ava   One that's willing, for lack of a better term, they were ten toes down
                behind the success of the students. Recently, once kids were released from
                school, they would go to a nearby McDonald's parking lot to fight. The
                community came together, the sheriff, business owners, even someone
                from the state came to help fix the issue.

                The community members also held events and activities to get people
                jobs. They also had midnight basketball games. It was all to keep the kids
                busy so they wouldn't get in trouble.

_____

Table 36) How would people outside of your community describe it?

	Response
Emma	See 35.
Olivia	People know our school. They're surprised IB is there. It's getting more well known as an IB school now. We've held events for IB schools and people from other places come. It's a great community. People are supportive of the school even if they don't have kids who go there. They like to be involved.
Ava	They call it crime hills. It's filled with crime, bad kids go to the schools. They run with all the bad things, this perceived idea of what it is instead of learning what it actually is.

Table 37) How would you describe your school?

_____

                    Response

Emma   There are a lot of opportunities. I wouldn't have gotten the experience anywhere else.

Olivia   A home. I enjoyed going there even though I'm not a sports person and that's big there. I got to understand new things, cultures, meet new friends. I was involved in different programs and activities.

It's a great place to go. I know someone who isn't even zoned for the school, but they take the city bus to come here because they like it here.

Ava   It's the best school I've been to. It's a pillar in the community. It's an investment and it's turned out to be a good investment.

_____

Table 38) How do you think people who do not attend your school perceive it?

	Response
Emma	There are a lot of big rumors. People call it ghetto. But it really isn't all that. I think it's a good place.
Olivia	Not the best. They see it as a place with a lot of fights, a place on the "bad side" or on the "crime side." I've heard good things too. It depends on the people.
	I see it as a getaway for people who don't have the best home life.
Ava	Academically behind. It's a school that's improving. Even when people say good things about it, it always comes back to something negative. They say something good and there's always a "but" at the end. "But years ago, this happened. But what about this?" They focus on that instead of what's happening now.

Table 39) How does the general student population perceive your school?

_____

Response

Emma   I think they see it as a place of a lot of opportunities. It is good but it could
            be better. It's alright.

Olivia   They see school as a good place. A place to be themselves, meet different
            people, hear different languages. A positive place.

Ava   It's a great school. Pride is really big at the school. When the school has a
            parade or a community clean-up, students show up. There's a tremendous
            amount of pride.

            But still, we know about the stats.

            What do you mean the stats?

            The graduation stats, the test scores. But that doesn't reflect the school's
            ability to grow. Despite what people outside of the community think, we
            still succeed.

_____

Table 40) Please detail your academic journey. What types of schools have you attended? Are there teachers that stand out?

_____

                  Response

Emma   I started school when I was two or three years old; I was very young. I went to A. C. Academy. I went to L. G. Elementary close by in my neighborhood. Then, I went to K. Middle School.

Olivia   I went to P. H. Elementary, R. Middle, and then E. High.

Starting in elementary, Ms. Starke, Ms. Smith, and Ms. Harris. I stuck to myself and didn't have many friends. They pushed me to make friends and showed me my strengths.

From middle school, Ms. Barden, Ms. Cress, and my Pre-Algebra teacher from seventh grade. They encouraged me to experience events and participate in school. I was part of the gardening club and the math club. In high school, Ms. Dockens was understanding and, fun, engaging. Ms. Cuadros was my favorite in tenth grade. She gave us opportunities for success. Ms. Cordell was my rock. My parents know math so I have to know math. She taught me to be okay with what I can and can't do. Mr. Bornacelli was honest. He helped us understand politics and he was caring.

Ava   When I was in the fourth grade I was concentrating on learning English, so I don't remember much before that. During the fifth grade, I became fluent. My middle school had an "ok" perception. Most kids were involved in sports and that gave people the most pride. I was in regular classes during 6th grade but in the middle of the school year, a guidance counselor called me in and put me in IB. I figured my way around that

_____

year. Seventh grade, I was able to strengthen friendships. During eighth grade, people started talking to me about the high school, the community, and West Orlando in general. Unprovoked, people would talk just talk about it. Some kids' parents didn't allow them to go to the high school.

I wasn't involved until my sophomore year when I joined the lacrosse team. It helped me become more outgoing. It was less of the routine of going to school, doing work, and going home.

Table 41) What thoughts and emotions go through your mind as you attended your school?

_____

Response

Emma   There are certain things the school didn't value about IB. The school could have handled things better like fire drills.

You like the people, the general experience. But there are some days where you feel like I have to go to school."

When I look back, it's fond memories. When I was there, it wasn't that great. Now, looking back, it's a lot more positive.

What could the school have done better?

Announcing things on the intercom, like when we did good. They did not prioritize us like they did sports. They did not care about theater as well...and choir too.

They didn't let us shine as well as we could have. They could have treated us better, in that regard.

Our own teachers called us the best, the cream of the crop. It got in some of our heads: "IB is the best." You actually start to believe you are better.

It was hard for those who got kicked out. You start to think "does that mean that I'm the same as everyone else?"

They thought we were privileged, but outside of school, IB didn't matter.

Did you feel privileged?

Yes, with academics. Exposing me to different things. But they didn't feel it. It was so much more work, and it wasn't something many people would do.

	Response
	I felt like I had to succeed for teachers and myself. I strive to be the best, to live up to those titles.
Olivia	I didn't get treated differently with my background, or skin tone. There was one celebration where I felt left out, but it was an ethnic celebration and I understood it wasn't for me. I was still there, and I supported.
Ava	I think it was a pretty good experience. I am glad for all the schooling experiences.

Table 42) This question will be asked at the end of every session: Did these questions evoke any thoughts or emotions?

_____

	Response
Emma	It was insightful to think back on my times in high school. I thought about my experiences being different from the rest. It was very interesting.
Olivia	It was a hierarchy kind of deal. IB was on top. Teachers and students didn't like it. The school needed to fix it. The new principal tried. They saw us as the kings and queens of the school. We didn't want to seem better than anyone.
	The power did get to my head until junior year. It was a reality check and I changed my perspective. I didn't feel like I was better than everyone. We're all equal.
	I had to communicate that a lot with theatre kids. I had to explain that to people. I just want to be able to do things with you. I wanted to make friends outside of the IB community. At first, I had negative experiences. Later on, they would apologize for making me seem bigger than who I really was.
Ava	I didn't expect this to touch on the social aspects of the IB program. I wasn't expecting it, but I didn't mind. It was pretty interesting and fun.

Interview Coding

Table 43) Interview Coding

	Emma	Olivia	Ava
Association IB **Total: 41**	Q1, Q3, Q15, Q17, Q18, Q25, Q27, Q32, Q 33, Q34, Q40, Q41	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q10, Q11, Q15, Q17, Q18, Q20, Q26, Q32, Q33, Q34, Q42	Q1, Q3, Q8, Q9, Q11, Q14, Q15, Q17, Q18, Q20, Q24, Q27, Q32, Q33, Q34
	Total: 12	**Total: 14**	**Total: 15**
Disassociation IB **Total: 12**	Q3, Q11, Q19, Q20, Q31, Q34	Q12, Q31, Q34, Q42	Q3, Q34
	Total: 6	**Total: 4**	**Total: 2**
Association Title I **Total: 7**	Q35, Q36, Q38	Q27, Q38	Q38, Q39
	Total: 3	**Total: 2**	**Total: 2**
Dissociation Title I **Total: 24**	Q22, Q28, Q35, Q36, Q37, Q38, Q39	Q28, Q30, Q35, Q37, Q38, Q39, Q40	Q16, Q22, Q23, Q26, Q28, Q30, Q35, Q27, Q38, Q39
	Total: 7	**Total: 7**	**Total: 10**

Themes and Participant Responses

Q# Indicates the Codes Presence in the Corresponding Question Number

Interview Field Observations

Table 44) Field Observation Notes

	Observation
Emma	At times, she appeared uncomfortable when answering the questions. This was especially true when the participant answered questions regarding the perception of the school, community, or the IB program. Her answers were typically concise; however, they also provided the researcher with key insights into the school culture. The separation between IB students and non-IB students were prevalent themes in her responses. The apparent perception of the school also appeared to trouble her. Notably, the student apologized at the end of the interview for being "unclear" at times. She expressed interest in the final product of the research. Participant ended the interview with a smile.
Olivia	The participant was visibly excited to share their experience. They also brought their own questions for the researcher concerning college and what to expect. There were at least fifteen minutes of informal dialogue dedicated to the participant's questions. The participant smiled throughout her recollection of positive experiences and feelings of the school. They became more stoic and pensive when considering questions that required her to share negative experiences. It was like listening to someone tell a story. The student appeared to be comfortable with the interviewer.
Ava	The participant was clear and confident with the thoughts and experiences they brought. Displayed a strong sense of pride in the community and the school. They appeared to have strong interpersonal and communal relationships according to their involvement with non-IB students, the school, and the community. The student gave detailed responses for several questions. Anecdotes were included in some of her answers.

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	Observation
Ava	They appeared comfortable with the interviewer, but also determined to share what she believed to be a true representation of her school, community, and peers.

Journal Entries

Emma

Emma's experience reminded me of my own. There was self-doubt and a desire to have done more. The high expectations and workload seemed to have impacted her. She did not refer to academics as a priority, instead, they were a need. The statement resonated with me. Education was the great equalizer. It was the way to escape an environment that could be unforgiving to young people. Due to her discomfort, the level of direct insight provided was limited. However, her disposition was a sign of the effect the environment and the labels she carried had. Part of her discomfort could also be attributed to the context. I was a stranger asking questions that pushed her to reflect on a culture that rejected a group she was a part of. Still, she showed a level of vulnerability that allowed her to share critical information that other participants did not. She shared that she remembers her experience in the IB program and the school more fondly than when she was living in it.

Olivia

I was surprised to find out that she described herself as shy around new people. From the moment the interview began, she was expressive, communicative, and even extended the dialogue to the interviewer. She attributed part of her growth to the IB program. She noted that it was an experience that allowed her to grow interpersonally as well as academically. Her description of the school culture as a sort of hierarchy, reminded me of my experience at the school. I remember when my class left to go pick up books from the library. It just so happened that a couple of non-IB students were also in the hallway at that moment. As we walked past, one student stuck up his middle finger toward us and said "Fuck IB." I also remember when the senior IB students were able to go to school without having to adhere to the dress code. This was

because the IB seniors finish school one month early compared to the rest of the seniors. During this time, we would come back to the school in order to study for the ongoing IB exams. Unfortunately, one of my peers decided to goad the fact that we did not have to adhere to the dress code compared to other students. This resulted in several students complaining to administration and led to the IB seniors having to adhere to the dress code for the rest of the semester despite us technically not being students.

Olivia stated that it was not a desired stratification. In the end, people do not want to be defined as different from others. Nonetheless, she believed that the school was doing positive work in the community and felt that it was moving in a positive direction.

Ava

Of the three participants, she seemed to come with clear a purpose in mind. When interviewing Ava, it felt like she had story to tell and she needed to share it, compared to her peers who wanted to share it. Of the three, she was the most insistent on dispelling the perceived negative labels of her community and school. There was a level of passion expressed for the two that showed how much she cared about the work being done. I resonated with the feelings of frustration that would be apparent in some of her responses. It was a frustration that stemmed from being falsely defined, falsely labeled. The inconsistency between what people believed and what the reality was, was the source of these feelings. She brought up the opinions of people who seemed unwilling to let go of the negative reputation the school and community carried. It was as if the school could not escape the labels given to it. I still remember hearing similar thoughts of my old school and community. I still hear them to this day. It is frustrating listening to people define your community and your people without having a true appreciation for its inner

workings. It reminded me of Tannenbaum's work that said the society does not want to redefine the labeled.

Table 45) Journal Entry and Field Observation Coding

	Emma	Olivia	Ava
Uncomfortable	FO, JE		
Comfortable	FO	FO, JE	FO, JE
IB Pride	JE	FO	FO, JE
Community Pride	JE	JE	FO, JE
School Pride	JE	FO, JE	FO, JE
Negative Reaction to the Effects of Labels	FO, JE	FO, JE	FO, JE
Positive Reaction to the Effects of Labels	JE	FO, JE	FO, JE

FO Indicates the Code's Presence in the Field Observations

JE Indicates the Code's Presence in the Journal Entry

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Summary of Research

The purpose of this research was to explore the thoughts and feelings of IB students within the context of two overarching labels. Through this exploration, the study aimed to highlight the culture and identity of an IB student as a Title I school attendee. By highlighting these specific students, teachers and administrators can understand their experiences and perhaps begin to address and shift the sources of the negative aspects of their experiences.

The researcher gathered data using online interviews, field observations made during the interviews, and reflective journaling. Due to COVID-19, the researcher was not able to establish a relationship with the participants, thus unstructured respondent interviews were used to ask questions concerning the participants' opinions and experiences. The second form of data collection was the in-person observation, which focused on the context of the interview, as well as behaviors noticed of the participant. It should be noted that the in-person observations were limited to the Zoom virtual platform due to COVID-19. The third form of data collection was the reflective journaling done by the researcher. The purpose of the reflective journaling was to generate a new understanding of the data by allowing the researcher to think about their identity in comparison to those of the participants' and explore any biases or misconceptions which may skew the data collection.

Research participants were recruited online, through email. The explanation of the research and consent forms were also provided through email. A list of interested individuals was gathered by the IB coordinator and then shared with the researcher. The researcher emailed all interested participants and then scheduled interview times with those who responded using the online poll site, Doodle. As the interviews were conducted, the researcher took extensive

notes of the participant's responses and observations he made of the participants during the interaction. Responses were not transcribed word for word. Key words and sentences were included in the data collection. Journal reflections were completed the day after the interview with a participant.

Data Analysis

According to Table 43, all three students showed a strong association with the IB Label and a strong disassociation with the Title I Label. In their responses, the students embraced the positive aspects of the IB label, while rejecting the misconceptions of other students and staff in the school. The rejection of these misconceptions was shown by the low number of disassociations recorded in the table. The strong disassociation with the Title I labels was shown with the high number of questions with the disassociation code. They did associate with the Title I label in the questions, but it was because they were aware of the reality in their community and school. Their perceptions were grounded in their experiences. Nonetheless, there were discrepancies between the participants. Notably, when a participant expressed a higher association with the Title I label, there is a lower association with the IB label. Additionally, when the participant associates more with the IB label, there is a lower association with the Title I label. When there is a higher association with the Title I label, which carries almost entirely negative informal labels, it can be deduced that the student has a lower sense of self-esteem. The IB label is more complicated because it carries both a positive perception and a negative perception, as shared by the participants. However, the students deliberately accepted the role because they had an accurate view of the group through their day-to-day lived experiences. They took the "good" and left the "bad." Some participants went as far as going out of their way to battle these misconceptions with peers who were not familiar with the IB identity.

For this study, the researcher ties the IB program is closely to the personal self, the school is tied to the relational self, and the community is tied to the collective self. Ultimately, all three come together to build a person's self-esteem. Using Table 44, the results mirrored what was seen in Table 43. Emma showed less overt pride for her school, community, and the IB program. On the other hand, Ava's pride in those three areas of her life were evident through the coding. The pride Ava feels reflects positive feelings she has for the two domains that operate within the Title I label, community and school. This is a rejection of the of the informal labels associated with those two domains because Ava knows what defines them.

RQ 1

How are senior IB students' self-esteem influenced by perceived labels in a Title I School?

According to the student responses and further analysis done with the field observations and reflective journaling, IB, Title I, and the informal labels attached to them did have an influence on the participant's self-esteem. For the most part, the labels which students considered to be accurate shifted their view positively. Labels considered inaccurate seemed to have significantly less of an impact on the self-esteem of students.

RQ 2

To what extent do IB students express any dissociation or association with ascribed labels they perceive during their senior year?

The IB students in the study expressed an association with positive aspects of the IB label that they found to be supported by their lived experiences. The level of work, cohort setting, and conducive classroom learning environments helped nurture intelligent young people prepared to take the next step in life. The students were aware of their capabilities and of what they overcame. They had confidence in their abilities. While there was some acceptance of the

"privileged" label because of the educational opportunity they had, it was not taken negatively. Additionally, terms like "stuck-up" and "mean" were not internalized because they understood that they were untrue. However, it should be noted that two participants did concede that they felt a level of superiority to non-IB peers at one point.

Regarding Title I, and the associated informal labels, it was clear that the students were aware of the school and the community's reputation. Informal labels like "ghetto" were used both by community members and non-community members to describe the school and its student population. Additionally, the nickname "Crime Hills" was also mentioned by all three participants as a way people within and outside the community summarized the surrounding area. Nonetheless, two out of three participants dissociated the school, the community, the students, and by extension themselves from such labels. The third participant appeared to express mixed feelings concerning these labels. Their responses indicated a weaker connection to the school and the neighborhood. However, the students were not ignorant of the reality and context which the school functions in. They saw where the school and community struggled but were assured in the school's attempts to improve and serve as one student called, "A pillar of the community."

Reflexivity

Ethnography has limitations in that it requires an outsider to go into a space and study the culture of the participants. The field in which ethnography was created, anthropology, was born out of a period of colonialism. Thus, the ethnographer faces the possibility of, "…being identified with a colonizing power or institution promoting inequities of opportunity" (Heath and Street, 2008). In the case of this study, I am a former member of the participants' environment having gone to the same school and graduated from the IB program in 2014. This is not to say

that the experiences between myself and the participants are direct parallels. However, the divided culture present in the school paired with a sense of pride tied to the completion of such a difficult program were experiences that remained true despite the passage of six years. Nonetheless, I am no longer a member, and I am entering as a representative of an institution. Thankfully, some participants noted my former membership as an incentive to participate in the study. A limiting factor of this former membership is that the study was born out of my experience, so it was crucial that I did not allow my narrative to become the narrative of the participants. While my experience held many similarities to that of the participants, the students' experiences showed important differences. The school has continued to grow in its ability to provide for students and the surrounding community. While not perfect, the students were still able to identify positively with the school. This was not true for me immediately after my departure from the school. There were direct confrontations between the school's administration and the IB students that prevented a positive identification with the general body. The researcher left identifying more with the program than the school.

The following is an example of this conflict. Near the end of my time at the high school, I argued with an administrator over a decision the school made regarding student recognition. At the time, the school recognized the top twenty students with the highest-grade point averages. Due to how heavily IB classes were weighted, the top twenty were usually all IB students. That year, the administration decided to split the top twenty into two top ten categories, one for IB and one for AP. In my eyes, this was nonsensical because the AP student grade point averages were weighted on the same scale as the IB students'. This was shown by the fact that my graduating class had an AP student with the tenth highest overall GPA. Therefore, it was possible for AP students to achieve as highly as we did, and it showed there was no clear inequity in treatment.

The school administration decided to appease pressures put on by parents and students. They committed to this new split instead of taking a more egalitarian approach and recognizing the top ten students as is most common in schools throughout the area. At least through that decision, it would be rewarding merit over negative emotions. Additionally, the administration never directly addressed this change with the IB student body.

It is encouraging to have heard the development of the school culture. My initial bitter feelings after leaving the school have turned into fond memories. No place is perfect and like any other institution, there is work to be done. Nonetheless, I took my first steps into adulthood within those halls. The environment, my teachers, and my peers all had a part in building me. Listening to the participants brought me a renewed sense of pride.

Conclusion

While participants confirmed that the school does have problems typical of a Title I school, all three rejected those problems as defining characteristics of the school. The participants presented various experiences and resources as proof that the school and its students were not what people in and outside of the community perceived them to be. They did not focus on labels such as "ghetto," "bad," or "criminal" as defining of their school. Instead, they found it to be a place of opportunity and resources that work hard to provide for its students and the greater community. Regarding the IB label, the participants shared their distaste at having to deal with negative stereotypes by students, faculty, and staff within the school. Nonetheless, the students recalled their experiences proudly. The feelings did not stem from a sense of superiority, rather a sense of accomplishment at completing an experience as demanding as the IB program. Their peers, educators, and school all contributed to this sense of pride.

Educational Implications

It is imperative to note that students showed a sense of pride in the fact that they were IB students. There was a problematic culture between students who were in the IB program and those who were not. This is partly due to negative perceptions held by non-IB students, non-IB faculty, and administration had of the group. Additionally, the participants of the study held some negative perceptions of the school given the lack of support and understanding they felt. Nonetheless, the students rejected the idea that they were fundamentally different from their non-IB peers. All three participants emphasized equality between the two groups. With that said, it is necessary to note that teachers, students, and faculty need to be aware of the perceptions they bring to school and the perceptions that they bring when interacting with one another. It is necessary for teachers, faculty, and students to bridge the gap between the isolated environment IB students must work in and the general school environment. Encouraging interaction and allowing groups to express their collective feelings in a school where a sort of hierarchy appears to be entrenched in the mindsets of some students, faculty, and administration is a strong recommendation for any school that has such an environment.

Further Research

Futures studies should include a larger, more diverse population sample from multiple sites in order to obtain data from more student perspectives. Additionally, researchers could attempt to directly measure the self-esteem of students through a data collection tool such as the Likert scale. Furthermore, the researcher did not have the opportunity to be part of the setting the participants operated within. Building rapport and establishing relationships with participants is a key part of the ethnography. Pre-existing relationships between the researcher and the participants could have yielded different, more in-depth responses the participants would otherwise not feel comfortable sharing with an outsider. A longitudinal qualitative study

observing environments and integrating the researcher into the community for an extended

period of time would be suitable to meet these goals.

APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL

Institutional Review Board
FWA00000351
IRB00001138, IRB00012110
Office of Research
12201 Research Parkway
Orlando, FL 32826-3246

APPROVAL

May 19, 2020

Dear Denis Serrano Cruz:

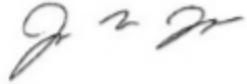On 5/19/2020, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Ethnographic Case Study of International Baccalaureate (IB) Seniors' Self-Esteem and Perception of Labels in a Title I School
Investigator:	Denis Serrano Cruz
IRB ID:	STUDY00001535
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None
IND, IDE, or HDE:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• Faculty Advisor Form , Category: Faculty Research Approval; • Adult Consent Form/Explanation of Research, Category: Consent Form; • Introductory.Consent Email, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Parent Consent Form , Category: Consent Form; • Protocol, Category: IRB Protocol; • Thesis Interview Questions, Category: Interview / Focus Questions;

The IRB approved the protocol on 5/19/2020.

In conducting this protocol, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within the IRB system. Guidance on submitting Modifications and a Continuing Review or Administrative Check-in are detailed in the manual. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request so that IRB records will be accurate.

If you have any questions, please contact the UCF IRB at 407-823-2901 or irb@ucf.edu. Please include your project title and IRB number in all correspondence with this office.

Page 1 of 2

Sincerely,

Racine Jacques, Ph.D.
Designated Reviewer

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1) Why did you choose to participate in this research study?

2) Please share some of your personal background. Where are you from? Did you grow up in the area? How long have you been in the IB program?

3) How do you feel about the IB program?

4) In what ways has the IB program prepared you for college academically?

5) Do you feel prepared for college? Why/Why not? How?

6) What do you think it means to be ready for college?

7) Are you planning on pursuing a college degree? Why/Why not?

8) What are your plans/goals after high school?

9) Is your plan something that you created or a product of someone else's vision for your future?

10) What does success mean to you?

11) Do you feel pressure to succeed in life? From who or what?

12) Do you feel pressure to go to college?

13) How many of your family members have a college degree? How many of your family members have gone to college?

14) Do you know someone outside of school with a college degree?

15) Do you feel that students outside of the IB program, in your school, are more/less/equally prepared for college? Why? How?

16) Do you think students that go to E. High School tend to go to college?

17) What kind of support do you receive from home to go to college?

18) Do you think your peers in the IB program will attend college?

19) If you plan on attending college, what do you think will be obstacles that will make it difficult to finish?

20) How do you think your teachers view your academic performance?

21) What do you know of college culture?

22) Do you think your school culture prizes academic achievement? How does your school display their support?

23) Would you consider your education to be a priority?

24) Outside of finding a career, what do you perceive to be the value of an education?

25) Do you believe your peers in the IB program value academic achievement? How is this displayed?

26) Do you believe students outside of the IB program value education at this school?

27) Do you perceive a difference between IB students and non-IB students? If so, what is the difference?

28) Do you think the same opportunities are offered to you as students who go to different schools?

29) Has anyone expressed doubt in your ability to achieve in school?

30) Has anyone shown that they believe in your ability to achieve in school?

31) What are the barriers you face in succeeding academically and obtaining higher education?

32) Do your peers in IB motivate/support you to succeed academically? How do they show their support?

33) Do your teachers support your academic goals? How do they help you succeed in class?

34) What is the perception of the IB program amongst the student population at this school? Amongst faculty?

35) How would you describe the community around your school?

36) How would people outside of your community describe it?

37) How would you describe your school?

38) How do you think people who do not attend your school perceive it?

39) How does the general student population perceive your school?

40) Please detail your academic journey. What types of schools have you attended? Are there teachers that stand out?

41) What thoughts and emotions go through your mind as you attend your school? When you walk through the halls what do you think? When you attend school events? When you are around your peers? When you are around your teachers?

42) This question will be asked at the end of every session: Did these questions evoke any thoughts or emotions?

Note* Clarifying questions/prompts will be given if the student responds with little to no detail. Questions and prompts will include: Why? How? In what ways? What are your thoughts/feelings about that? Say more, please. Please explain.

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

Title of research study: 12th Grade Student's Perception of Being College Ready in the IB

Program

Investigator: Denis Serrano Cruz

Faculty Advisor: Elsie Olan

<u>Key Information</u>: The following is a short summary of this study to help you decide whether to

be a part of this study. More detailed information is listed later in this form.

Why am I being invited to take part in a research study?

You are being invited to take part in a research study because you are a 12th grade International

Baccalaureate students at E. High School.

Why is this research being done?

The researcher's objective is to find if the students express any association with any labels they

are supposed to personify as a result of being part of a college-readiness program.

How long will the research last and what will I need to do?

Interview participants will complete four to six virtual individual sessions that range from 15 to

30 minutes.

Interviews will be conducted at the most convenient time for students which falls between the

hours of 8 AM and 7 PM through a virtual platform the interviewee is most comfortable with.

Those who participate in group sessions can expect to dedicate 30 minutes each session.

The maximum number of participants allowed in group sessions will be five.

Students who participate in the group sessions will not be asked to complete individual interviews.

The same questions will be asked in individual and group sessions.

This research will be conducted for one month (May).

Students will be asked to sign up for interview times using an online poll system (Doodle) that will only ask for the participant to use their first name.

Students will be asked a series of questions. Transparency and honesty are all that will be asked from their responses.

More detailed information about the study procedures can be found under "What happens if I say yes, I want to be in this research?"

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?

The risks to participation are minimal.

Will being in this study help me in any way?

There are no benefits to you from your taking part in this research. We cannot promise any benefits to others from your taking part in this research. We cannot promise any benefits to your child or others from taking part in this research. However, possible benefits include a deeper understanding of the pressures students face in academic their journey, and greater knowledge of the possible effects labels have on their success as students.

What happens if I do not want to be in this research?

Participation in research is completely voluntary. You can decide to participate or not to. Your alternative to participating in this research study is to not participate. Your decision to participate or not participate in this research will in no way impact your grades, enrollment, class standing, or relationship with those who may have an interest in this research.

Detailed Information: The following is more detailed information about this study in addition to the information listed above.

What should I know about a research study?

Someone will explain this research study to you.

Whether or not you take part is up to you.

You can choose not to take part.

You can agree to take part and later change your mind.

Your decision will not be held against you.

You can ask all the questions you want before you decide.

Who can I talk to?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, talk to the research team at: Denis Serrano Cruz denis.serranocruz@ucf.edu or Dr. Olan, Faculty Supervisor, (407) 823-2233 Elsie.Olan@ucf.edu.

This research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board ("IRB"). You may talk to them at 407-823-2901or irb@ucf.edu if:

Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.

You cannot reach the research team.

You want to talk to someone besides the research team.

You have questions about your rights as a research subject.

You want to get information or provide input about this research.

How many people will be studied?

We expect fifteen people will be in the study.

What happens if I say yes, I want to be in this research?

The subject will interact with the primary researcher, Denis Serrano Cruz, and will complete the consent form with parent/legal guardian permission.

The research will be conducted with students from E. High School virtually. However, given that the government is currently trying to prevent the spread of the Covid-19, only online interviews will be conducted, as per the guidelines of OCPS. No field research will be conducted for this reason. The research is estimated to be completed by May 31st.

Interview sessions will be performed one to two times a week. Interview participants will complete four to six individual sessions that range from 15 to 30 minutes. Interviews will be conducted at the most convenient time for students which falls between the hours of 8 AM and 7 PM. Students who participate in the group sessions will not be asked to complete individual interviews. The same questions will be asked in individual and group sessions. Students will be asked to sign up for interview times using an online poll system (Doodle) that will only ask for the participant to use their first name. This research will be conducted for one month (May).

The participants will be chosen through a randomization process. Only pseudonyms will be placed into an online randomizer. The first fifteen people in the randomized list will be selected for the interview process. If there are fifteen or less participants, the randomization process will no longer be necessary.

The option to participate in group sessions rather than individual sessions will be offered to those chosen for interviews. The size of the group will be limited to five participants. Those who volunteer for the group sessions will also be placed in an online randomizer. The first five participants in the list will be chosen. If there are less than five people, the group session will not take place.

Participants who will take part in individual interviews will complete four to six sessions that range from fifteen to thirty minutes. Those who participate in group sessions can expect to dedicate 30 minutes to each session. The amount of time and sessions will be determined by how long it takes for the participants to answer all forty questions.

Students will be asked questions from the pool the researcher submitted. The questions are not organized in a specific sequence. The goal is to have the interviewees answer all forty questions by the end of the study. Participants can expect to be prompted for deeper analysis using clarifying questions/statements such as: why, how, in what ways, say more, what are your thoughts.

Participants will only be responsible for answering the questions. During group sessions, participants will be encouraged to react to a peer's point of view.

The researcher will be taking physical notes with pencil and paper as the interview is conducted.

What happens if I say yes, but I change my mind later?

You can leave the research at any time it will not be held against you.

Withdrawal of Subjects

Subjects may be withdrawn from the research without their consent if they lose their status as an IB student at E. High School. This could be due to poor academic performance, behavioral issues, or other issues.

Subjects who are terminated early will be notified in conjunction with the guardian/guardians that provided their consent. Once the consenting party/parties have been notified of the early termination, any data concerning the subject will be erased. No data gathered related to that subject will be used in the creation of the final report.

Any data concerning a subject who withdraws from the research will be erased. No data gathered related to that subject will be used in the creation of the final report. If a subject partially withdraws from the research, then data gathered from the section of the research they withdraw from will not be used and will subsequently be erased. If the student withdraws from the interview portion of the research, no more interviews will be scheduled.

What happens to the information collected for the research?

Efforts will be made to limit the use and disclosure of your personal information, including the research study records to people who have a need to review this information. The primary researcher, Denis Serrano Cruz and his advisor, Elsie Lindy Olan, will have access to this data. We cannot promise complete secrecy. Organizations that may inspect and copy your information include the IRB and other representatives of this organization.

Any abuse, neglect, or reportable diseases must also be reported by the researcher to the appropriate authorities.

Demographic data will be collected, including name, age, gender, and socio-economic status. Identifiable information will be kept until the end of the research study.

Your information collected as part of this research will not be used or distributed for future research studies, even if all your identifiers are removed.

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