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Dean's Foreword

It is an honour to have been asked, in my in my last year as Dean of the Faculty of Education and Humanities, to write the foreword for the fifth volume of the *Journal of Education and Humanities* (*JEH*). This volume, the completion of which coincided with the celebrations marking the 60th Anniversary of the University of Guyana, has upheld the mission of the FEH to provide a refereed avenue for our lecturers to not only share their research output, but to also continue fostering the development of a research agenda that includes all the disciplines within the faculty.

Five articles by experienced and young faculty members provide us with an array of thought-provoking insights regarding their respective disciplines. From the Education Division, we are treated to the findings of a collaborative study on the voices of early childhood teachers regarding the query about the extent to which the conduct of play threatens the development of STEM skills in young children, as well as how public school administrators, who like so many others, were unprepared for the educational consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic, effectively utilized motivation and resilience to counteract the effects of the rapid learning loss that was being experienced by students. From the Humanities Division, two of the three articles, attest, in no uncertain terms, to the versatility of the disciplines in the Humanities to address human concerns in many areas of our existence, including economics, politics, religion, racism, anthropology and concerns about the environment among others, while the third article provides us with a personal perspective of the challenging journey being charted by of one of our creative colleagues as she strives to assert her distinct and unique 'brand' of art and personhood as an artist, while addressing inhumane aspects of our human existence.

As I sincerely hope that I have succeeded in stimulating the academic interest of all potential readers to delve fully into each of these articles, I would like to express heartfelt thanks to each of our colleague-writers, who are either embarking on or continuing to expand their research output, for their willingness to share their knowledge, especially since, as believed by some of us, knowledge, if not shared, has no meaning. I would like to express gratitude to the two active members of the editorial board, Mr. Alim Hosein and Dr. Charmaine Bissessar, without whose indefatigable commitment and dedication to the

JEH's mission – enhancing the academic life and fostering research output – this volume would not have materialized.

Best wishes to the entire FEH Family for 2024, and we look forward enthusiastically to the 6th volume of the *JEH*.

Dr. Roslin Khan
Dean, FEH

Anthropology and Development: Anthropological Contributions to Dependency Theory

Trevon Baird

Abstract

Dependency Theory emerged in the latter half of the twentieth century in response to Modernisation's claim that the state of being 'undeveloped' is intrinsic to the economic, cultural, social, and political systems in Global South countries. The central thesis of Dependency Theory is that the development of the Global North is premised on the 'underdevelopment' of the Global South. Behind this school of thought is a host of economists, historians, economic historians, and other social scientists who have developed the theoretical foundations of this framework. This paper argues that Anthropology, as a discipline, makes significant contributions to the legacy of Dependency writings. It does this through its ethnographic practice, engaging with the realities of people on the ground, through sustained critical perspectives of development and developmental aid, and through the solutions it offers to some contemporary situations of dependence.

Keywords: Anthropology, Dependency Theory, Global North, Global South, Modernisation

Historical Background: Modernisation Theory

The latter half of the twentieth century, in the aftermath of World War 2 and into the Cold War, ushered in a new era of international relations and politics. During this time, a wave of independence in the colonial world swept the globe, and former Western colonial powers sought ways to reinsert themselves into the economies of newly-independent territories. Development - the process of restructuring the economies of non-western territories to reflect Western notions of civilisation - provided that foothold. However, the Development agenda needed an ideological and theoretical framework to advance its cause. According to Leys (2005), such a framework had already existed in the scholarship of Marx and Hegel who recognised capitalist societies as the necessary offshoot of a social evolutionary process that extends into time immemorial. But since Development originated as a capitalist project during, and likely because of, the Cold War, a development theory founded upon the ideas of Marx and Hegel was counterproductive to its goals. Therefore, the development industry demanded a theoretical framework that reflected the ideological underpinnings of capitalism and ignored the Marxian tradition.

Thus, early development theorists turned to the ideas of John Maynard Keynes, who advocated for state-led macroeconomic policies. Keynes's ideas, however, failed to produce

the desired transformation in *undeveloped* economies. Consequently, in reconciling failure with what was thought to be 'good economic analysis,' Western economists sought to explain this failure in terms of some inherent backward nature of non-Western economies to produce and sustain the markers of a developed nation. In the United States, this explanation is what came to be known as Modernisation Theory.

There are various accounts of the heritage of Modernisation Theory. Martinelli (2005), in an attempt to reclaim Modernisation, defines it etymologically and historically as extensive social change in which a society's culture, politics, and economics gain attributes conventionally associated with modernity. He traces its heritage through to the Enlightenment era. In this way, Martinelli (2005) envisages modernity as a plural experience endogenous to different societies. However, he does acknowledge the more classical manifestation of the term in post-World War 2 economics of development which offers a unilinear perspective of development.

Modernisation theory in this post-war context applied an evolutionary concept to society; that is, societies move through stages of metamorphosis from traditional to modern. In this conceptualisation, with influence from Rostow's theory of economic growth, 'modern' society is characterised by mass production and mass consumption (Binns, 2014). According to Mehmet (1999), this school of thought offered the idea of development as capital accumulation, which was highly technical, deliberate, and therefore, transferable. This disposition did two things: (1) it placed a dichotomy between the industrial capitalist nations of the West and the rest of the world, and (2) it justified Western intervention in postcolonial economies.

However, this unilinear model of development suggested by Modernisation Theory attracted strong criticism. It was dismissed as Eurocentric for romanticising Western ideas of progress as the apex of development that Global South countries should aspire towards. One of the strong critiques of development that emerged in response to Modernisation originated within the context of those subject to the development agenda themselves, through the writings of economist Raul Prebisch - who at the time served on the leadership of the United Nations Economic Commission on Latin America (ECLA) - and his colleagues in the 1950s. In opposition to the presumption by Modernisation theorists that poverty in less-developed countries was a result of intrinsic factors relative to their 'primitive' economic structure, Prebisch suggested that poverty in the Global South was

caused by external forces in the form of unequal trade relationships with the North (Fratkin, 2013). Some writers credit Prebisch as the author of what became known as Dependency Theory - the assertion that the development of the North is premised on the 'underdevelopment' of the South. However, Ghosh (2019) maintains that although Prebisch's writings offer an alternative theory of development, they do not meet all the criteria of the Dependency Theory. According to Ghosh (2019), Paul Baran was the true founder of Dependency Theory.

Dependency Theory

Paul Baran was an American economist who developed his theory of dependency in his 1957 text, *The Political Economy of Growth*. What distinguishes Baran from the Prebisch and the other ECLA writers is the strong Marxist underpinnings in his writings. Baran believed that capitalist accumulation in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries concentrated wealth in Western countries and stagnated development everywhere else. These two ideas were mutually inclusive. According to Ghosh (2019), "The central point of Baran's analysis is that the main obstacle to the rapid economic growth of LDCs is how their potential economic surplus is utilised" (p. 68). Baran suggested that surpluses in less-developed countries (LDCs) were appropriated in service to Western interests and that any attempt at development on the part of these countries on behalf of themselves was met with strong opposition by their developed counterparts. For Baran, the solution for underdevelopment is a social revolution: disbanding capitalist modes of production and consumption and replacing them with a planned socialist economy (Ghosh, 2019).

Since Baran, other writers have emerged putting forward similar arguments about the nature of global North-South relationships by which the North is enriched at the expense of the South, and the need for social revolution. Economists Andre Gunder Frank, Samir Amin, and Theotonio Dos Santos, and historian Walter Rodney were also major proponents of this school referred to as neo-Marxism or Radical Dependency theory. Though Dependency theorists have developed their distinct views of development and underdevelopment, several thematic ideas converge. Ghosh (2019) provides a useful outline of these themes:

> *First*, central capitalism is imposed on the periphery.
>
> *Second*, [the] surplus is extracted from the periphery. DCs exploit the LDCs.

> *Third*, surplus extraction leads to [the] development of the centre and underdevelopment at the periphery.
> *Fourth*, there is unequal and uneven development between DCs and LDCs.
> *Fifth*, integration with world capitalism aggravates the problem of national/international inequalities and underdevelopment.
> *Sixth*, the trade relations between DCs and LDCs are unequal relations favouring the DCs and discriminating against the LDCs.
> *Seventh*, LDCS have subordinate status to the DCs.
> *Lastly*, [the] development of LDCs is not possible unless and until the tie with central capitalism is snapped (p. 8 – 9).

While many of its leading proponents come from the background of Economics, Dependency Theory is interdisciplinary and Anthropology has made its unique contributions to this intellectual tradition. Outside of Eric Wolf's *Europe and the People Without a History,* first published in 1982, and Peter Worsley's *The Three Worlds: Culture and World Development,* not many anthropologists have written comprehensive theoretical work on Dependency (Eades, 2005). Nevertheless, some of the major tenets of Dependency are more thoroughly explicated through the ethnographic practice of Anthropologists. It is also argued that sustained anthropological critiques of development have followed in the footsteps of early Dependency writers and have even come to similar conclusions about the nature of 'undevelopment' in the Global South and its solutions, further augmenting Anthropology's contribution to the Dependency Theory and Political Economy.

Ethnographies of Dependency

Ethnography has been one of the most important contributions of Anthropology to academia. According to renowned Anthropologist Marvin Harris, Ethnography is "a portrait of a people" (Harris & Johnson, 2002, p. 5). For anthropology, the ethnographic practice aims to paint a holistic picture of what it means to be of a particular cultural group, and ethnographies of development have sometimes painted pictures of dependency. In his well-known text, *Sweetness and Power*, Mintz (1985) examines sugar production in the Caribbean in relation to its consumption in Europe. Mintz establishes early in the text that this relationship between production and consumption is one of dependency on an international level. He contends that anthropological studies of non-Western, colonial, or postcolonial societies with which Anthropologists historically have been occupied must not

neglect the interrelatedness of the two. He states that "a view that excludes the linkage between metropolis and colony by choosing one perspective and ignoring the other is necessarily incomplete" (p. xvi, 1985). This text traces the sugar consumption habit and its movement over time from a luxurious commodity of wealthy Europeans to a household item of the common man and eventually back to the tables of periphery nations whose initial labour began the process. Mintz (1985) makes several important observations that are instructive to the Dependency discourse:

1. Increased consumption and demand in Europe means increased production in the West Indies and *vice-versa*.
2. The rise in sugar production in LDCs and consequently consumption in Europe is directly related to Europe's 'development'.
3. Sugarcane workers in Latin America and the West Indies are directly dependent on sugar manufactured and sold in Europe for their livelihoods, even when they are not large consumers themselves.
4. When over-production resulted in market-saturation price falls in Europe, colonial powers wielded their power to open new markets in periphery territories.

It is noticeable that Mintz's observations support the core premises of Dependency as identified by Ghosh (2019), particularly the assertions that central "capitalism is imposed on the periphery" and that there is a structural inequality that produces development in Europe and 'underdevelopment' in the West Indies. However, Mintz recognises the significance of ethnographic fieldwork methods as a necessary tool to unravel the entanglements of the 'undeveloped' people of the Caribbean and Latin America with economic development in the North (Mintz, 1985).

Mintz, Harriss, and Harriss (1989) examine Dependency in the context of agricultural production. They argue that capitalism dispossessed peasant farmers and created a dependency on wage labour that ultimately served the capitalists' goals. However, Harriss and Harriss (1989) particularly focus on how the process of transformation impacted the localised aspects of the Third World and peasant life. They argue that commodification and commercialisation of agriculture in developing countries have resulted in a process of differentiation among rural dwellers. Differentiation, here, refers to a processual model of the coming into being of quite distinct classes among rural producers as an outcome of

commercialisation and commodification (Harriss & Harriss, 1989). They identify four classes that emerged in the peasantry as a result of capitalist influence. These are:

1. rich peasants: those who, though cultivators themselves, can employ others and can realise a surplus in profits;
2. middle peasants: those who sometimes hire, but also sell their labour;
3. poor peasants: those who work for others to a larger extent and can hardly sustain their livelihoods without engaging in wage labour; and
4. landless: those completely reliant on selling their labour because they own none of the means of production.

In this example, there is a formation of class structures in what Harriss and Harriss (1989) describe as otherwise egalitarian societies. Frank (1966) proposes the idea that dependency is reproduced at various levels at the periphery. According to Frank, provincial capitals form their centres, even as they are satellites of national metropoles and the national metropoles satellites of world metropoles. In this way, the same power imbalances and resource extraction experienced at the international and national levels are reproduced at the local level.

Mintz (1985) and Harriss and Harriss (1989) demonstrate that, despite the underwhelming literature in this area, the political economy of food and food production within the agriculture sector is aptly suited to a Dependency framework of analysis. Nevertheless, according to László Bruszt (quoted in Kvangraven, 2017), Dependency is about understanding "situations of dependency," and Anthropologists have been critical to the unpacking of varying situations of dependency in multiple spheres. For example, Morgan (1987) noted that within the various traditions in the political economy of health, Dependency Theory is the primary tool of Medical Anthropologists. Appel (2014) appeals to Dependency themes by investigating how capitalism deliberately obscures the profit-making aspects of offshore oil production and keeps them separate from the social and economic liabilities onshore in Equatorial Guinea. Carrico (2016) argues that Guyana's postcolonial state has inherited the contradictions of Western colonialism in Guyana, which saw the extraction, exploitation, and capitalisation of Indigenous land resources and labour in the mining sector. Bear (2017) focuses her work on Dependency in finance and infrastructure. Gmelch (2003) examines tourism in the Caribbean, including a focus on the cultural and economic impacts that are emblematic of Dependency. Finally, Anthropology has carved out an entire niche sub-discipline in 'Anthropology of Development' which has

consistently and extensively explored various forms of Dependency in different domains, including economics (Hickel, 2017; Stirrat & Henkel, 1997), technology (Crewe & Harrison, 1998), and knowledge production (Mosse, 2015).

Therefore, one of the critical values that Anthropology brings to Dependency Theory is its diversity in spheres of operation. Anthropology is charged with investigating phenomena wherever humans are present. And though, for a long time, Anthropology has stereotypically concerned itself with the local, 'exotic', pre-modern, or non-Western society, Amselle (2002) contends that Anthropology has always engaged in a globalising task, on which Dependency is hinged, through its diffusionist and comparative traditions. Further, this characteristic of Anthropology as a holistic discipline, considering all facets of human existence, helps to address one of the most sustained criticisms of Dependency Theory, that is, that Dependency Theory is too economically deterministic and has lacked robustness in considering other social factors such as class relations (Centeno, 2017; Morgan, 1987). But as Harris and Harris (1989) and the other ethnographic works presented above demonstrate, because of its holistic nature, class relations as well as a multitude of other social factors and contexts are considered within the Anthropological tradition of Dependency Theory.

It also follows that even in the production of macroeconomic theory, as in the case of Dependency, the local contexts must also be considered and thoroughly investigated. This is especially important since the solution to dependency, as propagated by the 'radical' Dependency theorists, is a bottom-up approach - social revolution. By their reliance on the ethnographic method, Anthropologists are in the best position to study social systems at the ground level to unpack situations of Dependence that are otherwise not so obvious.

Anthropological Critique of Development

The Mintz (1985) and Harriss and Harriss' (1985) examples examine dependency specific to the economic context of colonialism and early postcolonialism in the agriculture sector in the Third World. However, since the 1950s and 1960s, there have been many developments in the development industry, and Anthropologists in the contemporary, postmodern ilk have continued to probe the experiences of people within the context of a changing world order. Following recommendations coming out of the United Nations Economic Commission on Latin America, Latin America, and other Global South countries started to realise economic development by exercising control over their natural resources

that were appropriated by the North. By developing the New International Economic Order (NIEO), G77 countries organised to establish rules for making the global economy fair for the 'rest of the world'. Not long after, however, the developed Global North countries pushed back against these new arrangements. Economic Anthropologist, Jason Hickel, in his text, *The Divide,* chronicles the experiences of Global South countries in their pursuit of development and how they were forced to maintain relations of dependence with the North.

According to Hickel (2017), The NIEO proposed that international law be amended to incorporate a set of rights to protect the economies of developing countries from unfair trade relations with developed countries. These propositions would see less-developed countries: (1) managing the actions of multinational corporations in their territories; (2) nationalising foreign-owned assets if needed; (3) imposing tariffs as they see fit to protect their local industries; and (4) working with each other to receive and maintain fair prices for their commodities. Unhappy with the progress of the Global South in advocating for, and championing a path for fair international economic relations, Western countries also organised and orchestrated a plan to reverse this progress. Thus, in 1975, an alliance that became known as the G7 was formed:

> The idea was to create a new group of so-called Least Developed Countries (LDCs) - the poorest and most desperate members of the global South - and offer them aid in exchange for siding with the West against OPEC and the rest of the G77. Aid would be wielded as an intentional strategy to shatter global South unity (Hickel, 2017, p. 147).

Hickel further recognised that along with leveraging aid, enlisting the institution of money via loans to developing countries was another strategy used by Western powers through multilateral lending agencies to reinforce dependent relationships. By repurposing the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Western countries forced Global South countries to repay their debts to Western banks under stringent terms. The IMF would help developing countries repay their debts if they subjected themselves to Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). These structural adjustments did two things: (1) they forced developing countries to redirect cash flows to the servicing of their debts, cutting off spending on essential services; (2) they forced developing countries to remove regulations around industry and trade in their economies (Hickel, 2017). According to Hickel, structural adjustments reversed the policies global South countries used to good effect to eradicate

poverty and global inequality. He describes the process as "de-development imposed in the name of development" (p. 163).

Commenting on these paradigm shifts in Development and Development Economics, Ghosh (2019) contended that Dependency Theory continues to be a relevant and important tool in analysing development. In this continued tradition, anthropological insights also continue to play an instrumental role in critiquing development, especially based on the 'development and underdevelopment' argument of Dependency Theory. One particular focus of anthropological critique has been in the area of development aid as Hickel's (2017) text rightly identifies. Ferguson's (1990) *The Antipolitics Machine* is one such example.

The *Antipolitics Machine* by James Ferguson is an ethnographic critique of development projects with a focus on Lesotho in Southern Africa during the period of 1975 - 1984. Ferguson (1990) finds that development aid projects were largely ineffective in delivering their goals, but instead, they expanded state bureaucracy and empowered local elites. Ferguson argues that development projects, by creating structures of knowledge, create a rhetoric of 'anti-politics', but at the same time, almost unnoticeably, perform their own highly political function of expanding state bureaucracy (1990).

In addition, Mosse (2013), in accounting for Anthropology in the history of neoliberal development, asserts that while development agencies claim to bring economic uplift to people in poverty, they shroud government practices of control that entangle local people into the global capitalist system and redirect their resources for the capitalist gains which, in turn, lead to failure and dispossession.

Further, Stirrat and Henkel (1997), drawing from Mauss' (2002) classic anthropological text *The Gift*, examine how development aid between Western donor countries and Global South countries, mediated by NGOs, reinforces dependent relationships between donors and aid recipients. They argued that while NGOs aim to identify with the poor, the nature of the gift (aid) instead reifies differences between the groups. According to Stirrat and Henkel, "In the end, this could be seen as no more than a recognition that the surplus that is available for the giving of gifts is the product of precisely the same system of production, exchange, and distribution that produces the poor who receive these gifts."

Anthropology and Development

In keeping with the Dependency discourse, the major theme that these anthropological critiques of aid explore is that development aid often has a self-interested property that serves to maintain a structural divide between donors and recipients. In some cases, not only does it maintain structural inequalities, but aid itself is used to gain economic advantages over Global South countries.

Contemporary Issues in Development, Dependency, and Anthropology

A recurrent theme in the history of Dependency Theory is the tendency of capitalism to infiltrate every nook and cranny of the world system, both geographically and sectorally. It can be argued that developmentalism after the Second World War was not necessarily a neo-colonial project in terms of political and ideological dominance, but rather, it was a capitalist one, through dominant ideology, with the aim of market expansion which, in turn, created patterns of dependency amongst the world's poorest and most vulnerable. The *modus operandi* has been one of alienation and separation. Mintz (1985) showed how sugarcane cultivators were first alienated from the product that they helped to create (refined sugar), but also, how they were alienated from the development it sprung. With debt financing and developmental aid, motivations to expand capital markets by deregulation were kept separate from the externally-presented and supposed function to develop Global South economies. It is a powerful rhetorical strategy. This is why today capitalism's secret agenda in development can transfer almost seamlessly from mechanisms with globalist overtones to ones that are nationalistic. But as shown so far, anthropological methods and critiques have helped to reveal these disguises for what they really are.

Bear (2017) examined this rhetorical shift from globalisation to nationalism. Focusing on financialised infrastructure in India, Bear explored how massive infrastructure projects echo sentiments of nationalism and an end to austerity. She argued that infrastructure projects hardly attract criticism because they seem like an investment in public welfare but, in reality, they are a means of strengthening public-private partnerships. These partnerships transfer much of the capital burden to private corporations creating infrastructure deficits, and consequently, more control of the economy is handed over to these corporations. She further argued that a focus on infrastructure hollows out the public funds in service to multinational corporations, creating a state of dependency in the same way austerity and globalisation did. She contended that the nationalist rhetoric peddled across these projects "conceals the fact that financialized infrastructure is a further stage in

the transfer of fiscal control of public institutions from the state to global commercial banks and international financial markets" (Bear, 2017, p. 6). Bear suggested that capitalist gains from public-private partnerships are usually "invisible" to citizens since contracts are signed in secret. For Bear, it is incumbent upon anthropologists to continue to unpack various situations where this kind of rhetoric operates to hide capitalist interests by "linking their ethnographic accounts of living with austerity, and of popularism, to a critical engagement with financial market innovation and macroeconomic policy" (2017, p. 4).

Another contemporary issue of Dependency can be found in the area of ecology (Ghosh, 2019). Ghosh suggested that developing countries become dependent on developed countries for solutions to environmental issues such as pollution. However, developed countries are also guilty of appropriating the benefits from the environmental resources of developing countries in ways that mirror the structural imbalances of their historical economic and trade relations. In this era of planetary emergency and climate crisis, policymakers around the world are taking steps to curb the problem of the plundering of the earth's resources beyond the boundaries acceptable for sustainability. One of these initiatives is called The Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+). REDD+ initiative affords companies, particularly in rich countries, to purchase carbon credits as a means of circumventing their emissions limits (Hickel, 2017).

While Hickel (2019) comments on some of the devastating effects these projects have in their localised contexts, such as dispossessing Indigenous communities, there is a pattern of dependency emerging in these relationships as well. In developing countries such as Guyana, where REDD+ operates, the project is touted as a progressive environmental initiative and is embraced by politicians and even some Indigenous communities. However, these local stakeholders are alienated from the fact that the purpose of the project is to offset legal limits of emissions needed by energy-intensive industries for their operation. Therefore, it keeps industrialisation in the host countries in check while international Western companies can continue massive industrial production at will, aggressively pursuing their economic development at the expense of developing countries. As Hickel demonstrates, anthropological insights into the localised situations of these types of initiatives are what have contributed immensely to the understanding of the geopolitical forces at work.

Conclusion: Anthropology and the Solutions to Dependency

The ethnographic and theoretical work in the Anthropology of Dependency presented here either exemplify fundamental arguments of Dependency Theory as they play out in history or present theoretical perspectives and critiques from Anthropology in line with the 'development of underdevelopment thesis. However, it must be noted that from its inception, Dependency Theory has been a practical initiative to bring about social change. Frank (1966) strongly advocates for socialist revolutions- breaking ties with the capitalist West. Other schools of thought hold a less radical view, suggesting that some amount of development "catch-up" is still possible in less-developed economies within the global economic structure. Nevertheless, Dependency has played out under shifting global economic and political paradigms. Under these paradigm shifts, how has anthropology contributed to solving problems of continued patterns of development in the North at the expense of development in the South? We can once again turn to the area of ecological dependency for relevant examples.

In the wake of the global ecological crisis, scholars (environmentalists, economists, and even anthropologists) have been working to model a world that is consistent with the principles of ecology. Hence, a growing body of work is being produced envisioning the end of the capitalist growth imperative. Degrowth, post-growth, post-development imaginaries, and 'doughnut' economics are some examples of this rhetorical shift in economic thinking. According to Hickel (2019), the objective of degrowth is to bring the world's material and energy throughput safely within the planetary boundaries, and to do this by scaling down production in developed countries with historically higher per capita emissions and in sectors that are environmentally destructive with little benefits to society.

Degrowth policy recommendations are relevant to the Dependency discourse because: first, they recognise that the capitalist growth imperative resulting in global inequalities is the major cause of the climate crisis we are now experiencing; second, the proposed solutions are grounded in principles of equality. "The core feature of degrowth economics is that it requires a progressive distribution of existing income" (Hickel, 2019, p. 57). These are strong tenets of Dependency as outlined by Ghosh (2019). Degrowth proponents further propose policies such as implementing a universal basic income (UBI), increasing wages, shortening the work week, and redistributing labour to tackle unemployment. These plans are largely being modelled by Ecological Economists. Nevertheless, Anthropology also has some unique contributions to bring to the discourse.

Anthropology and Development

Traditionally, Cultural Anthropology has been invested in, and is known for, studying non-Western, 'exotic', pre-modern societies. From this practice, French anthropologist Descola (2013) makes an interesting observation from the large body of ethnographic reports produced over time. Descola finds that the prevailing dualistic ontological perceptions about nature and humans were a historically recent construct and that Indigenous peoples across the globe through time and space have held a fundamentally different outlook. Using the example of the Achuar people, Descola shows how Indigenous Non-Western societies achieved ecological balance and sustainability with non-dualistic frameworks. Merchant (1990) argues that ontological dualism came to prominence with the Scientific Revolution and the mechanisation of industry. In short, the rise of capitalism directly coincided with the rise of dualistic ontological frameworks of being and the consequent endangerment of the planet. This, in part, is the unique value Anthropology brings to the post-growth, post-development discourse. It provides a deeper understanding of the philosophical and ideological underpinnings of the systems that shape our realities today. It can draw from a multitude of sources across time and space to glean from the best practices that have sustained humanity until now and help devise solutions to the problems we face today.

Even though not many Anthropologists have explicitly described themselves as Dependency theorists, Anthropology as a discipline has made significant contributions to the discourse. Anthropological practice and critique have been useful in mapping the Dependency argument of the 'development of underdevelopment'. The ethnographic works of Mintz (1985) and Harriss and Harriss (1989), have helped evidence this reality. Further, Ferguson (1990) and Stirrat and Henkel (1997) demonstrated that Anthropology has developed a dependency critique of its own, focusing on the power and politics of developmental aid. Finally, Bear (2017) and Hickel (2017; 2019) showed that anthropological analyses play a critical role in unpacking relations of dependency wherever they appear due to capitalism's tendency to permeate nearly every aspect of our society.

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Early Childhood Teachers' Voices: Does the Conduct of Play Threaten the Development of STEM Skills?

Godryne Wintz and *Peter Wintz*

Abstract

This qualitative study, grounded in the play philosophies of Piaget and Vygotsky, explored the views of 25 undergraduate in-service teachers on "play" in their early childhood classrooms in Guyana. The teachers' views and perceptions of self-initiated play as a context for developing STEM skills formed an essential lens in this study. Emerging themes include "play sidelined" and "play is empowering". The data, collected from an online open-ended questionnaire, were processed using thematic analysis. All 25 participants perceived play as an enriching experience for children but noted constraints restricting self-initiated play such as space, time, resources, parent perception, and structured curriculum. Participants recognised the value of integrating play and STEM, but 56% claimed play is sidelined in early childhood classrooms. Teachers' ability to combine structured learning with child-directed play affects the quality of children's play experiences. Early childhood programmes must give priority to supporting children's natural inclination to explore and play without restraint.

Keywords: play, STEM, self-initiated play, early childhood teachers, Constructivist theory, Sociocultural theory

Introduction

Play is essential for young children (Haney & Bissonnette, 2011; Veraksa et al., 2020) and is an everyday activity in early childhood settings. As defined in this study, play refers to an educational resource adults use to promote learning (Kinkead-Clark, 2017; Tortello & Minott, 2015). Play encompasses self-initiated play, which refers to child-initiated, unstructured play that is relatively free from adult intrusion and direction, allowing children to exercise agency, ownership, and control over their learning.

Much research validates the significance of play to young children's healthy development, learning, and well-being. Han et al. (2010) viewed play as a vehicle for developing language, cognition, and social competence. Ahmad et al. (2016) conclude that play has a significant role in developing children's creativity. Elkind (2008) asserted that children create new learning experiences through play, which helps them acquire social, emotional, and intellectual skills they could not otherwise achieve. Play also allows children to engage in extended interactions that foster oral language, imagination, critical thinking,

and social skills (Bowdon, 2015). Common to these definitions is that play contributes to children's holistic development and learning. Against this backdrop, play is an authentic learning mode in early childhood programmes.

Research evidence indicates that many early years programmes increasingly focus on academics at the expense of play, despite substantial claims that young children learn best through meaningful play experience (Elkind, 2008; Miller & Almon, 2009). Today, many children engage less in learning through play and exploration, exercising their bodies, and using their imaginations; instead, they spend more time in direct instruction and being tested on literacy and mathematical skills (Miller & Almon, 2009). In Guyana's early childhood classrooms, children have lost many hours of play due to a focus on building numeracy and literacy skills. Revisions to the national timetable in 2012 saw a reduction in the allotted time for play-based activities from 145 minutes to 45 minutes of the 240-minute programme. This is comparable to the United States where fewer hours are devoted to play-based activities in early childhood classrooms (Bodrova et al., 2019; Lynch, 2015). However, in Canada, Manitoba's Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum Framework for Preschool Centres and Nursery Schools makes provision for children to have ample opportunities to choose and direct their play experiences and to take the initiative (CMEC Early Childhood Learning and Development Working Group, 2014). Similarly, in Trinidad and Tobago, the National Child Care and Education Curriculum Guide allocates a balance of child-initiated and teacher-structured play daily (Ministry of Education, 2013).

Importantly, in early childhood classrooms, play provides a platform for children to explore their world and showcase themselves as scientists, technologists, engineers, and mathematicians. Play has a role in fostering science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills. STEM skills include problem-solving, self-investigating, inquiry, observation, creativity, hypothesising, and logical and critical thinking.

Theoretical Framework

The significance of play to children's development and learning is grounded in the theories of Jean Piaget (1896-1980) and Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934). Piaget's constructivist theory and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory support play as a strategy for early learning (Mooney, 2000). Both theories hold that children construct knowledge through active engagement with the environment. Play is an essential context for learning and problem-solving within the constructivist framework. Piaget (1945) advocated that play is integral to

the development of intelligence in children. Children's environment and play should extend their cognitive and language development as they mature. When integrating play and STEM, the constructivist approach emphasises hands-on exploration, open-ended questioning, and ample opportunities for children to construct their own understanding of STEM concepts. Manipulatives, experiments, and problem-solving activities encourage children's active engagement with STEM concepts and help them make meaningful connections through their play experiences.

Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory highlights the role of social interaction and cultural context in learning (Mooney, 2000). Within the sociocultural framework, play is a social activity that forges collaboration, language development, and the construction of shared knowledge. When integrating play and STEM, the sociocultural approach encourages shared play experiences where children work collaboratively to solve problems, negotiate roles, and discuss findings. This approach values the importance of language-rich environments and scaffolding, where teachers or more knowledgeable peers provide appropriate support and guidance to enhance children's understanding of STEM concepts.

Teachers hold prior views and experiences that influence their instructional practice (Margot & Kettler, 2019). Teachers are key actors who create opportunities and environments that foster play and, by extension, the development of STEM skills. Focusing on teachers' views and perceptions of play as a context for promoting STEM skills is vital since these are associated with, and influence, their classroom practices. As teachers design STEM experiences and activities, play provides a platform for integration (Wahyuningsih et al., 2020). Integrating play and STEM allows teachers to make the content more relevant to the learners. Teachers' perceptions of their role in play and STEM integration vary. Some teachers may actively participate in play and STEM activities, model concepts, and support children's exploration. Other teachers may act as facilitators and guides, providing children with opportunities, resources, and support to engage in play and STEM activities. These teachers may observe, ask open-ended questions, and scaffold children's learning during play experiences.

The Importance of Play

Play is an effective instructional strategy and an authentic learning mode in developmentally-appropriate early childhood programmes (Kinkead-Clark, 2017; Tortello & Minott, 2015). This is in line with the Piagetian and Vygotskyian theories which view play

as a strategy for learning in the early years. Play contributes to children's holistic development despite their socioeconomic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds (Eberle, 2011; Kinkead-Clark, 2017; Tortello & Minott, 2015). Play encourages critical thinking, leadership, and creative expression (Tortello & Minott, 2015). Play can also strengthen children's empathy and sensitivity towards others through perspective-taking (Haney & Bissonnette, 2011). The benefits of play are boundless.

Further, play is an important arena that allows children to self-initiate, self-regulate, create, explore, and control their world. Through play, children rehearse adult life, re-enact lived experiences and navigate social roadblocks (Miller & Almon, 2009; Wintz, 2015). Similarly, Lester and Russell (2010) posited that play provides children with a safe avenue to express themselves without dreading the consequences of the real world. When children play, they develop, utilise, and master many interactional skills including challenging and opposing peers, compromising, and negotiating. Ultimately, play equips them with necessary lifelong skills. The teachers' role as facilitators of children's play is critical. When children are denied or do not get ample opportunities to play, these benefits cannot accrue.

What about Self-initiated Play?

The value of self-initiated play to young children's learning cannot be over-emphasised. Self-initiated play, the purest form of play, with its unstructured, self-motivated, imaginative, independent nature, allows children's curiosity, imagination, and creativity to flourish. However, without play, children can lose these abilities (Elkind, 2008). Children garner critical skills, develop creative abilities, and are empowered to take control of their learning through self-initiated play. Early childhood learning environments are responsible for achieving this end. The quality of children's play experiences rests with early childhood educators.

Despite its value, child-initiated, self-directed play is disappearing from early childhood programmes. Miller and Almon (2009) posited that play in all forms, primarily open-ended child-initiated play, is now a minor activity in many early childhood classrooms, if not eliminated. An emphasis on academics in many early childhood settings deprives children of play (Miller & Almon, 2009; Veraksa et al., 2020). Bassok et al. (2016) noted a shift towards more challenging literacy and mathematical content and highlight an alarming drop in child-selected activities, art, music, and science and a rise in standardised testing. Miller and Almon

(2009) added that many classroom activities that adults describe as play are highly teacher-directed. This will inhibit children's imagination or creativity.

Limiting self-initiated, child-led play means limiting opportunities for children to discover things for themselves, experience the thrill of self-discovery, problem-solve, and think innovatively about their world. Such a situation hinders children from learning to take healthy risks. In the long-term, limiting children's play stifles children's creativity, growth, and development of skills necessary for later school success. Children today have to channel their energies into more teacher-led activities and may suffer burnout in the long term due to academic rigour. A contributing factor to the disappearance of child-initiated play, as noted by Saracho and Spodek (1998), is that while teachers tend to value child-initiated play, they have difficulty utilising children's play in an instructional way.

Play and STEM in the Early Years

Research indicated that early childhood is a natural starting point for STEM appreciation (Campbell et al., 2018; Simoncini & Lasen, 2018) and play is an important medium to engage children with STEM activities and develop the abilities and skills for future educational outcomes (McClure, 2017; Torres-Crespo et al., 2014). Since children are natural researchers in their play, opportunities for STEM learning surround them. STEM learning is considered critical for addressing the challenges of the 21st century since it incorporates the hard and soft skills children need (Wahyuningsih et al., 2020). When early childhood programmes downplay the importance of play in the early years, they diminish children's potential now and in the future. Early childhood classrooms are appropriate for promoting STEM skills such as problem-solving, hypothesising, inquiry, creativity, logical, and critical thinking.

The role of STEM in early childhood classrooms is to provide young children with multiple ways to be creative and imaginative within their real-world experiences (Lindeman et al., 2013). Early STEM exposure influences children's ability to reason, predict, hypothesise, problem-solve, and think critically, rather than emphasising learning that relies heavily on memorisation and drills (Wahyuningsih et al., 2020). Young children are natural scientists and engineers (Tippett & Milford, 2017; Torres-Crespo et al., 2014); they always question, explore, and invent. It is common for young children to take toys apart to find out how they work, explore the world, and ask questions to satisfy their curiosity and understanding. Therefore, early childhood classrooms should capitalise on children's natural

inquisitiveness and process-oriented and creative nature by providing rich experiences that support their learning.

Early childhood professionals are essential in providing pleasurable, constructive, hands-on, and play-based activities that naturally propel children's learning to facilitate school success and acquire lifelong skills (Torres-Crespo et al., 2014). Hands-on and play-based learning are cornerstones of early childhood education (Simoncini & Lasen, 2018). Creating an environment that supports self-initiated play is also a means to achieving this end. When children are allowed to explore, discover, question, and create, their STEM experiences are expanded. Therefore, early childhood professionals must prepare environments physically, temporally, and interpersonally, to nurture children's natural curiosity and drive to wonder at and make sense of the world around them (Lindeman et al., 2013).

Young children need sufficient time during the day to explore, create, and innovate (DeJarnette, 2018) to fashion the development of their STEM skills. Unstructured time is necessary for children to think and make decisions about their play. Lindeman et al. (2013) espoused that actual free play, not controlled by a timer, affords children the most meaningful play experiences. They cautioned teachers to give children time and permission to explore their world and lend them a listening ear. Children's play should not be rushed. Children need ample opportunity to explore and construct knowledge of their world.

Notably, recommendations for expanding STEM initiatives in early childhood settings include the developmentally-appropriate materials and learning centres that traditionally existed in early childhood classrooms. The same experiences contribute to developing science, mathematics, technology, and engineering skills. However, meaningfully expanding children's STEM experiences ultimately depends on early childhood professionals' capacity to provide the appropriate structure that capitalises on the value of play.

Teachers' Views of Play and STEM Integration

Teachers hold prior views and experiences that influence their instructional practice (Margot & Kettler, 2019). Teachers' views and perceptions of play and STEM integration in the early years evolve and are influenced by their experiences, training, research, collaboration, reflection, and beliefs about education. Bell (2016) believed that teachers' perceptions of the value of STEM affect their ability to learn and grow as STEM educators.

This influences how they incorporate STEM experiences in early childhood classrooms. Teachers who value STEM education understand the significance of early exposure to STEM concepts. They see the early years as crucial for laying solid foundations for developing STEM skills. They recognise that STEM skills are becoming increasingly essential in a rapidly-changing world and see STEM integration as a means of preparing children for future academic and career success.

Asghar et al. (2012) reported challenges teachers face in combining STEM pedagogy with their typical content concepts. Teachers may struggle to balance structured learning with child-directed play, provide children with appropriate resources and materials, or address children's diverse needs and interests. Curriculum requirements, assessment pressures, and time constraints may also be perceived as barriers to effectively integrating play and STEM in early-years classrooms.

Teachers' perceptions of STEM education may affect their design of STEM activities and instructional delivery (Margot & Kettler, 2019). As in STEM education, teachers with positive attitudes toward innovative teaching tend to be more willing to conduct innovative teaching practices. A dynamic teacher with a positive attitude is crucial for smooth implementation and STEM programme success (McMullin & Reeve, 2014). Teachers who appreciate the benefits of integrating play and STEM recognise play as a meaningful context for children engaging with STEM concepts. They may design open-ended, hands-on activities that allow children to explore STEM concepts through play and inquiry.

Research Aim and Questions

This cross-sectional research adds to available works by exploring early childhood teachers' views on play in early childhood classrooms, particularly on self-initiated play. The study also examined the role of play in fostering STEM skills.

Three questions guided the research: (1) What are early childhood teachers' views of play in Guyana's early childhood classrooms? (2) How do early childhood teachers view self-initiated play in the early childhood classroom? (3) What are early childhood teachers' perceptions of the role of play in promoting STEM skills?

Methodology

Design

A qualitative cross-sectional design was employed to ascertain early childhood teachers' views about play. Data were gathered using an open-ended online questionnaire

conducted during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Questionnaires effectively collect data concerning participants' views or opinions (Mertler, 2020).

Participants

Twenty-five Cyril Potter College trained teachers (one male and 24 females) who were final-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) students at the University of Guyana participated in this study. They ranged from 20-49 years of age, with a minimum of three years of teaching experience. Fourteen participants have been teaching for 3 to 10 years, nine for 11 to 20 years, and two had more than 20 years' experience.

Data Collection Procedures

The research began with the recruitment of participants using a purposive sampling technique. The participants were in the final semester of their final year of the B.Ed. programme. Purposive selection involves researchers handpicking subjects based on their judgment of typicality (Cohen et al. 2005). Participants were selected based on convenience; participants were students of one of the researchers. Participants provided informed consent electronically before accessing the questionnaire. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw their participation at any time without fear of retribution. Twenty-five early childhood teachers agreed to complete an open-ended questionnaire comprising six open-ended questions that aligned with the research questions, allowing them to give their views about play and its role in promoting STEM skills. The questionnaire also collected demographic information.

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to identify, analyse and report themes within the data. The themes capture important information about the data. Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase analysis structure was used in this study. The first phase entailed the researchers reading and rereading the data to gain familiarity. The second phase involved coding the data, and the third phase required generating initial themes by collating the codes. In the fourth phase, themes were reviewed, while in the fifth phase, themes were defined and named, and the sixth phase was producing the report from the themes by aligning them with the research questions.

Results

This study's findings align with the three research questions: What are early childhood teachers' views of play in Guyana's early childhood classrooms? How do early childhood

teachers view self-initiated play in the early childhood classroom? What are early childhood teachers' perceptions of the role of play in promoting STEM skills?

In line with *Research Question 1*, two key themes encapsulate the teachers' views of play: Play as Learning and Play Sidelined.

Play as Learning: The data revealed that 11 of 25 (44%) teachers focused on play as a learning mode. For instance, *Teacher (I)* declared: "Play is a powerful tool for children's learning. It is more like the key to learning. It enriches learning in all areas and develops skills such as inquiry, expression, experimentation, and teamwork." *Teacher (D)* stated that "Play in the early childhood classroom today is about children using their imagination and creativity to interact with peers, discover, and problem solve."

Play Sidelined: From the participants' responses, 14 or 56% believed that play in the early childhood classroom is sidelined. Their comments indicate that play today is structured, the time allotted to play is limited, and children engage more in instructional work. Also, the structured curriculum leaves little scope for variation; when children are allowed to play, it is teacher-directed; and teachers sometimes utilise the play session to complete "bookwork." Children's late arrival at school also means less time for free play. These comments are typical:

- *Play in the early childhood classroom today is like a painting in black and white, and play is the colours that are missing. It is not catered for enough at the early childhood level.* (Teacher F)
- *…play has become almost extinct and is under siege in the early childhood classroom today.* (Teacher P)
- *Sometimes children do not get to play… teachers use the free play session to do remedial work…* (Teacher K)
- *When children are allowed to play it is teacher-directed.* (Teacher Y)

In response to *Research Question 2*, two themes emerged regarding teachers' views on self-initiated play: Self-initiated Play is Enriching, and Self-initiated Play is Restricted.

Self-initiated Play is Enriching: The findings showed that self-initiated play was viewed as an enriching experience by the 25 teachers. One teacher noted:

- *… While involved in self-initiated play a child will have to make their own decisions on what resources to use. The children will also gain first-hand experience with leadership roles.* (Teacher W)

Table 1 shows five ways teachers viewed self-initiated play as an enriching experience for children. The highest-rated way of enrichment was promoting learning and development (16 mentions) and the lowest was following interests (5 mentions).

Table 1

Self–Initiated Play is Enriching: Teachers Views (N=25)

Ways of enrichment	Example quote	Count
Promotes learning and development	"Self-initiated play should be fostered in the nursery classroom because it has a vital role in the child's learning and development."	16
Develops independence and builds self-confidence	"Self-initiated play should be encouraged because it allows children to develop independence and build their confidence and self-esteem."	14
Supports knowledge construction	"Self-initiated play allows the child to construct his or her own knowledge through exploration and discovery."	8
Facilitates self-discovery	"Self-initiated play stimulates children's drive for exploration and discovery."	6
Follows interests	"Self-initiated play supports children having their own ideas, following their interest and being in control of their learning."	5

Note. Some teachers identified several ways in which self-initiated play is enriching.

Self-initiated Play is Restricted: All 25 teachers noted constraints which restricted self-initiated play in their classrooms. Two teachers noted:

- *One major challenge I face is time because the timetable is so packed the time allotted for the learning sessions is short and the children aren't given the opportunity to explore as they should, they have to rush through everything.* (Teacher Y)
- *Parents see play as a waste of time, and the leadership of the school sees play as insignificant*. (Teacher E)

Table 2 shows the constraints with other examples of teachers' views. Space (21mentions) and time (17 mentions) were rated highly among the constraints.

Table 2

Self–Initiated Play is Restricted: Teachers Views (N=25)

Constraints	Example quote
Space	"In my classroom, I have two barriers to promoting self-initiated play, these are lack of playing materials and lack of space."
Time	"Children are not given enough time to experience play fully."
Resources	"One barrier to self-initiated play is lack of resources."
Structured curriculum	"The curriculum is packed and does not cater for self-initiated play."
Teacher perception	"Teachers and Leadership see play as insignificant."
Rigid schedule	"Due to a stressful and packed daily programme schedule, children become drained and don't have time for self-initiated play."
Parent perception	"Parents do not believe in play they are more focused on the children writing."
Overcrowding	"Some barriers to self-initiated play are overcrowded classroom, structured curriculum, limited time available for play."

Note. Some teachers identified several factors restricting self-initiated in their classrooms.

In response to *Research Question 3* about teachers' perceptions of the role of play in promoting STEM skills, two themes were unearthed: Play embraces STEM skills, and Play is empowering.

Play embraces STEM skills: Thirteen (52%) teachers believed that play embraces STEM skills development. The teachers articulated that play provides children with opportunities for exploration (6 mentions), discovery (3 mentions), and hands-on learning (4 mentions). *Teacher (Y)* voiced: "To encourage STEM skills I make my lessons more hands-on and minds-on as much as possible and have children more involved." *Teacher (L)* indicated that "play makes the development of STEM skills easier because, through play, children would

explore and manipulate objects in the environment." Other typical teacher responses are noted:

- *Play gives children the will to make their own discovery and they become curious and creative.* (Teacher M)
- *The development of STEM skills can be encouraged in the classroom by creating opportunities for children to explore…and learn through trial and error…* (Teacher V)

Play is Empowering: Twelve (48%) of the teachers reported that play empowers the development of STEM skills. These teachers reported that play helps children to make real-world connections (5 mentions), supports children's creativity (4 mentions), and encourages imagination (3 mentions). Teacher responses are noted:

- *STEM skills such as creativity, intellectual curiosity, and flexibility are some of the skills that can indeed be encouraged and developed through play by allowing the children to be exposed to free play for longer periods.* (Teacher Y)
- *Children will gain STEM skills when they explore, solve problems, and discover how things operate.* (Teacher E)

Discussion

In considering the data, we return to the research aim to ascertain early childhood teachers' views on play in the early childhood classroom in Guyana, with particular emphasis on self-initiated play. The role of play in fostering STEM skills was also examined. Responding to the research questions will address this aim.

Research Question 1: What are early childhood teachers' views of play in Guyana's early childhood classrooms?

Notably, our research has evidenced that 44% of the teachers described play in the early childhood classroom as a learning opportunity that brings play's pedagogical value to the fore. As research demonstrates, play is an effective mode of instruction and an authentic way children learn in developmentally-appropriate early childhood programmes (Kinkead-Clark, 2017; Tortello & Minott, 2015). Nonetheless, for self-initiated play to be actualised and promoted in early childhood classrooms, teachers and curriculum planners must be confident about the potential of play in equipping children with requisite skills.

Our research found that play in Guyana's early childhood classrooms is fading in favour of academics. Fifty-six percent of the teachers reportedly acknowledged that play is side-lined. *Teacher (P)* shared: "... play has become almost extinct and is under siege in the early

childhood classroom today." As *Teacher (F)* puts it: "play in the early childhood classroom today is like a painting in black and white and play being the colours that are missing. It is not catered for enough at the early childhood level." Such imagery presents a grim picture of children's engagement in the early childhood classroom where play is almost, if not totally, non-existent. Such imagery calls to mind Brown and Vaughan's (2010) analogy that the absence of play in children's life is like life without music, books, games, and a world without flirting and daydreaming.

The findings revealed that play is conceptually valued. However, in practice, play is not a priority. Firstly, the time allocated for play, which the teachers deem insufficient, directly opposes Lindeman's et al. (2013) claimed that children need sufficient time to create and that actual free play, not controlled by a timer, affords children the most meaningful play experiences. Children do need ample time and many opportunities to play. Play ignites children's imagination and creativity. When play is limited, children's creativity is inhibited.

Further, when teachers engage in academic work during the allotted free play sessions, they deny children the opportunity to play. Schools are expected to offer an engaging curriculum encompassing learners' interests (Joong et al., 2016). *Teacher (X)* pointed out that "Play in the early childhood classroom today is very structured and gives little scope for variations." As a result, teachers are consumed with direct instruction and completing academic tasks at the expense of play. This concurs with the assertion that children are deprived of this valuable resource due to an emphasis on academics in many early childhood settings (Miller & Almon, 2009; Veraksa et al., 2020). This emphasis on academics highlights an imbalance between children learning through play and direct teacher instruction. Saracho and Spodek's (1998) contention that while teachers tend to value child-initiated play, they have difficulty utilising children's play in an instructional way, also has relevance here.

Research Question 2: How do early childhood teachers view self-initiated play in the early childhood classroom?

We found that all the teachers recognised self-initiated play as an enriching experience. There was a consensus among the teachers that the early childhood classroom should promote self-initiated play. Teachers reasoned that self-initiated play equips children with critical life skills, including decision-making and leadership, independence, and self-confidence, and

helps them to construct their knowledge. Play should be the main activity in early childhood settings (Veraksa et al., 2020).

Inadequate space, time, and resources, the rigid schedule, the academic nature of the curriculum, overcrowding, and parent- and teacher-perceptions are all inhibiting factors of children's play experiences. As *Teacher (E)* lamented, "Parents see play as a waste of time, and the leadership of the school sees play as insignificant." This finding aligns with Kinkead-Clark and Hardacre's (2017) assertion that children's play is at risk due to adult-centric stereotypical constructions of play, which are working to stifle children's curiosity and creativity. Ultimately, such findings have implications for children's learning and development as children stand to lose out on the many benefits of play. The results also illuminate the need for stakeholder willingness and support for children's play.

It was reported by *Teacher (Y)* that "when children are allowed to play it is teacher-directed." This suggests that self-initiated play is minimal in some classrooms. The finding aligns with Miller and Almon's (2009) contention that many classroom activities that adults describe as play are highly teacher-directed, leaving little or no room for children to use their imagination or creativity. Elkind's (2008) assertion has merit here: children's curiosity, imagination, and creativity flourish through self-initiated play, but these abilities are lost if children do not use them. In light of this, teachers must maximise opportunities for self-initiated play so that children do not lose their imaginative and creative powers. Teachers have a responsibility to keep play inside their classrooms. The onus is on them to create an enabling environment where children's learning through play is scaffolded.

Research Question 3: What are early childhood teachers' perceptions of the role of play in promoting STEM skills?

The teachers perceived play as an important context for developing STEM skills. This finding aligns with Torres-Crespo et al.'s (2014) view that play in early years classrooms is an essential medium to engage children with STEM activities and develop the abilities and skills they will need to succeed. Teachers' recognition of the potential of play in promoting STEM is critical. The teachers' role in expanding children's STEM experiences through play is crucial for 21st-century learners. Wahyuningsih et al. (2020) pointed out that STEM learning is considered necessary for addressing the challenges of the 21st century since it incorporates the hard and soft skills children need. However, teachers must be cognizant that

supporting children's curiosity and self-direction requires intention and practice (McClure, 2017).

The data also show that hands-on experiences, exploration, and discovery are acknowledged as foundational to developing STEM skills. In line with this, McClure (2017) expounded that young children are active scientists, systematically and intentionally exploring their environments. Fostering STEM skills necessitates ample opportunities to explore the world. Correspondingly, Torres-Crespo et al. (2014) reiterated that early childhood professionals are crucial in providing pleasurable, constructive, hands-on, and play-based activities that naturally propel children's learning to facilitate school success and acquire lifelong learning skills. Additionally, Simoncini and Lasen (2018) concluded that hands-on and play-based learning are cornerstones of early childhood education.

Play was viewed as a means of developing STEM skills since it promotes children's creativity and imagination and forges real-world connections. As *Teacher (E)* reasoned, "Children will gain STEM skills when they explore, solve problems, and discover how things operate." These findings align with Lindeman et al.'s (2013) assertion that the creative nature of technological and engineering design is evident when children are encouraged to invent and innovate by asking questions and making observations in unique ways. In line with this, *Teacher (Y)* stated: "STEM skills such as creativity, intellectual curiosity and flexibility are some of the skills that can indeed be encouraged and developed through play by allowing the children to be exposed to free play for longer periods." Teachers may be committed to promoting STEM and make a case for more playtime, but may have limited skills in integrating STEM into their classroom activities (Joong et al., 2016).

Conclusion

It is unproductive to deny children opportunities for play, particularly self-initiated play. Early childhood professionals should be encouraged to create the best environment to support children's play activities to empower them socially and educationally. Play is a significant context for promoting STEM skills for nurturing 21st-century learners. Early childhood programmes should provide an enabling environment that supports children's natural curiosity and inclination for exploration, discovery, and questioning if children's STEM experiences are to be expanded. Teachers' ability to combine structured learning with child-directed play affects the quality of children's play experiences. Priority must be given

to play. Children must be allowed more play opportunities, extended play periods and to engage in play without restraint.

Early childhood teachers' views of play shed some light on the current state of play in Guyana's classrooms. However, this study did not focus on how teachers define play. This might be a limitation in this study since teachers may define play differently.

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A Journey Begun – the Activist-turn in the Art of Akima McPherson

Akima McPherson

Art has a special role to play in the evolution of the individual and humanity. It is a gift of the Universe and should serve humanity. This is the guiding principle of whatever I do in art, whether exploring my cultural patrimony or making articulations of gendered concerns. As a multi-media artist, my aim is to produce work that connects with the viewer intellectually, emotionally, and experientially. My practice is concept and research-driven and thus bends to the requirements of ideas and processes as much as to my skills in painting, sculpture, ceramics, move-image, sound constructions, and my experimentation with these. I am not interested in the sacred objectification of art. Therefore, my work embraces ephemerality and the recycling of constituent parts to propose discourses that navigate temporal and situational space.

Sometimes it is good to be a rebel, but, with a cause! In 2011 while pursuing Master's study in London, my cohort and I were encouraged to make work in response to the impending UK tertiary education tuition hikes for locals and European Union students. Perhaps because the student protests erupted at a known art school (Goldsmith's, University of London) and because the hikes were anticipated to have a deleterious effect on arts and humanities programmes, we were being encouraged to respond to the activist-inclined term module by centring this issue in our work. As a Commonwealth Scholar, however, I had no business getting involved. Aside from the obvious fact that my substantially higher tuition as an international student was being paid for by the UK Government, I simply was not impassioned by that issue. But, there was one issue that had bothered me for some time.

The American news show *60 Minutes* – a staple of Sunday night television watching – was never as impactful on me as that January 2008 show which featured then-reporter Anderson Cooper presenting on rape as a weapon of war in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The short news item left me in a sort of paralysis. I wanted to help the women presented but how could I, from a living room in Georgetown, Guyana, with no money or other form of power? So, immediately as my MA tutors spoke of tuition hikes for folks who had access despite challenges, I thought of the women and girls who had no access to education and had lost control over their bodies. My thoughts were with these women and girls who,

regardless of their particulars, had been raped as part of a deliberate mechanism by armed groups fighting to control the mineral wealth of the Eastern DRC.

Beginning in January 2011, the stories of these women and girls whose bodies had been sexually violated in yet another instance of perverse capitalism became the sole preoccupation of my MA studies. The work I did in the studios of Kingston University (KU), London, allowed me to share the horrific stories encountered through research. Stories of women who had fled captors by walking miles through forested terrain to the Panzi Hospital, a safe haven, or of the girls who in the course of fetching water or firewood had their innocence shattered. I was able to inform friends and coursemates about the fight over land to gain control of coltan, a mineral used in smartphones, laptops, DVD players, and other electronics to reduce the conduction of heat within the devices. I was able to explain to whoever cared to listen that rape was deemed cheaper than bullets. So in a KU art studio, I turned my art practice from its previous dedication to Chakra philosophy and meditation into a tool of individual activism to speak about the atrocities unfolding in what was considered the "rape capital of the world".

The first result of the activist-turn was *Mukwegee* (Figure 1). The work is named after Dr. Denis Mukwege,[1] a Congolese gynecologist who established the Panzi Hospital (1999), in Bukavu, Kivu Province, where survivors of rape as a weapon of war in Eastern DRC can go for psycho-social support and a variety of medical treatments including urogenital reconstruction surgery. *Mukwegee* comprised three vertical boxes painted with slip, a mixture of clay and water. As the slip dried, it cracked and peeled away from the box. On top of the boxes were clay mounds topped by figures of women and girls in postures of waiting, walking, pensive isolation, and communication. The figures/stand-ins numbered 31, referencing the daily occurrence of sexual violence in the region. Together, the figures and the boxes evoke notions of fragility and vulnerability. The work was shown in a group exhibition in one of KU's exhibition spaces.

Not wanting to make permanent markers of the pain of the women and girls whom I encountered in my research, the figures of *Mukwegee* were made of unfired terracotta rendering them vulnerable to water but also to rough handling; this latter aspect echoed the reality of the individuals the figures represented. *Mukwegee* was also made to be dismantled. Eventually, the

[1] Dr. Denis Mukwege won a Nobel Peace Prize in 2018 for the work he does in supporting survivors of rape as a weapon of war in the Eastern DRC and in fighting for the end of rape as a weapon of war globally.

figures were used in other work. Before departing the UK, I entrusted each of the unfired terracotta figures to the care of the new friends I met along my journey. In accepting the care of these unfired figurines, these friends-turned-guardians agreed to share the stories of the real-life women the figures attempted to represent. The willingness of these friends-turned-guardians to care for these stand-ins and to share stories of real-life victim-survivors became a collaborative gesture of socially engaged art-making that lacked the specificity of time and location, embodying as it did no beginning or end or precision of spatial unfolding. The work exists on a register of the conceptual and is infinite in its possibilities.

Figure 1
Mukwegee (2012), Clay, variable dimensions

Figure 2
Mukwegee (2012) – detail

Back in Guyana, in 2012, I replicated the activist work of my MA, first showing *Mukwegee (2012)* at the Inter-Guiana Cultural Festival (IGCF) and then *Transformations (2012)* at the Guyana Women Artists' Association's (GWAA) 24th Annual Exhibition. In both instances, the works had a dynamic interaction with the physical spaces within which they were exhibited. Sited within the Lillendaal Convention Centre, *Mukwegee (2012)* (Figures 1 & 2) was positioned in a transitional space flanked by small pools of water within atriums. Here, the work was vulnerable to water from rain and the bodies which traversed the space. Augmenting the tension, the nearby pools of water were an omnipresent threat and echoed the ceaselessness of the danger women and girls face in Eastern DRC. Diagonally opposite the work, against a blackened faux wall, a crescendo of read-testimonies from Congolese victim-survivors of rape as a weapon of war could be heard through headphones. The testimonies were read by one voice. Together they formed an audio-construction entitled *150 Seconds but a Lifetime.* The audio-construction was accompanied by a text which warned of its contents.

Similarly, *Transformations (2012)* (not shown) relied on the particulars of the environment and in this instance, the verticality of the space within which it was installed – its two walls of towering glass windows which allowed an abundance of natural light to bathe the room. *Transformations (2012)* comprised three works – *Transformations (The Essence of Self)* (Figure 3), *Transformations (The Voices of our Silence)* (Figure 4), and *Transformations (7*

Beauties) (not shown). The suite of sculptures was accompanied by the soothing sounds of Gregorian Catholic chants sung by the Benedictine Monks of Santo Domingo del Silos; the compilation *Chant* was played continuously on a loop. Hence, the features of white walls, the abundance of natural light, the soaring height of the space, and the music played within the room added to the healing and restorative qualities inherent in the work.

Figure 3
Transformations (The Essence of Self) (2012), Mixed media, variable dimensions

In *Transformations (The Essence of Self)* three unfired clay figures, stand-ins for victim-survivors of rape as a weapon of war in Eastern DRC, stood alongside abstractly-formed plastic containers of water on top of tall slender plinths. At two different intervals during the exhibition, one of the figures was placed in the container of water beside which it stood. As the figures were bisque – unfired clay – they were vulnerable to water. Once in the water, the figures moistened and then collapsed quickly turning the water a murky brown. Thereafter, the

clay particles slowly settled in the container resulting in a moist mound of clay beneath the clear water. This sequence of initiated and natural gestures allowed the work to have a performative aspect that was intended to mimic the journey of healing. In performing the healing journey, the slow reconstituting of the figures with water echoed the return to the essential self; a prayer for my subjects made visual.

Figure 4

Transformations (The Voices of our Silence) (2012), Mixed media, variable dimensions

Meanwhile, *Transformations (The Voices of our Silence)* – a sculptural and text piece was both a prayer as well as a direct articulation of the horrors faced by the actual women and girls *Mukwegee* and *Mukwegee (2012)* represented. Suspended within the space, 31 ghostly strips of clear plastic of varying lengths were hung. The varying lengths pointed to the age of the victim-survivor whose story was partially shared in the handwritten text. These testimonies were accompanied by the names and ages of the women and girls when known. Several strips of plastic were left blank for the stories that had not yet been told or would never be told. The collection of 31 strips of plastic was suspended by white threads from a square mesh set within a painted white wooden frame. This assemblage was, in turn, suspended over a single abstractly-formed plastic container with water. The water in the container simultaneously represented cleansing waters and tears.

Rounding off the suite, *Transformations (7 Beauties)* comprised seven pieces of wood recovered from the waste pile of a building renovation site. The pieces of wood varied in length from three to five feet, and most had been restored to a beautiful natural raw finish while two carried vestiges of the paint that once adorned their surfaces. The most conceptual of the works within the room, *7 Beauties* referred to the stories I encountered in which women spoke of being ostracised for the rape(s) they endured and the effects of the sexual violence on their bodies. *7 Beauties* did not refer to seven specific women, but to the routine discarding of women by their spouses or families despite the traumas they endured. The work quietly stood for women who had lost control of their solid and liquid excretory functions because they had been raped with extraneous objects such as gun barrels or tree twigs, yet they had traveled (sometimes on foot) to the Panzi Hospital where Dr. Mukwege and his team could perform urogenital reconstruction surgery. *7 Beauties*, therefore, also referred to human life that was discarded due to perceived flaws, overlooking the inherent value and beauty of the individual.

Showing *Mukwegee (2012)* and *Transformations (2012)* meant local audiences were faced with visual art which engaged subject matter that was atypical, on the one hand in addressing sexual violence against women and girls, and on the other, in addressing a socio-political ill in a geo-political space far removed from Guyana. In showing *Mukwegee (2012)* and *Transformations (2012)* the aim was awareness-building through emotive engagement. The intention was also to show that despite the geographical and situational differences, we in Guyana along with the wider global community are implicated in what was/is unfolding in the Congo.

Columbite-tantalite, commonly referred to as coltan, is a mineral widely used in electronic devices to reduce the conduction of heat. Therefore, it can be found in many devices with electronic components. Consequently, it is monetarily valuable. While it can be found over a wide and diverse geographic range from Canada to Australia, Brazil to China, the majority of the coltan on the market originates in the Eastern DRC.

Coltan is a "conflict mineral". In other words, it is a mineral mined in a conflict zone and it is so classified although not all regions where it can be found are characterised by armed dispute. At the time when I began centring my art practice on sexual violence in Eastern DRC, the supply chain of coltan to manufacturers of electronics was grossly unregulated and this failure served to encourage the conflicts and the variety of human rights violations that

followed. Since then, there have been several ceasefires and poorly-maintained peace agreements; continuation of advocacy on behalf of the women, girls, and now men who have been sexually violated in the wars; a pledge by electronic manufacturers to use only responsibly-sourced coltan thereby theoretically putting pressure on the regulatory bodies; and a pledge by institutions not to purchase electronics from companies which have not committed to support regulation and conflict-free coltan. However, the realities on the ground point to the failure of regulation and pledges, continued sexual violence, child labour, and environmental degradation inclusive of loss of species habitats and pollution of waterways.

Due to their form, *Mukwegee (2012)* and *Transformations (2012)* also presented challenges as many in the local visual art community accustomed to naturalistic approaches to the human form that are steeped in simulacra could not understand the privileging of the gesture over proportion and naturalism. Similarly, the privileging of ephemerality over permanence presented a unique challenge as did the material choices over the normative wood, paint, and canvas.

> *Sometimes the proverbial envelope needs to be pushed. Sometimes we become complacent with our understanding of things and fail to look beyond our parameters to see the more that exists.*

These foregoing lines characterise my art practice since 2012. Since then, I have been challenging the parameters of art in Guyana. While the question of what is art defies definition and consensus and is perennially undergoing thoughtful consideration in the world's centres of art, it almost seems as if in Guyana it has a definition and exactitude of meaning. Therefore, a box, while unsubstantially articulated, exists that says art can only be certain things. Generally, it is a sculpture made of wood or bronze; painting done with standard painting fluids on canvas, paper, or walls; ceramic vessels; textiles made using batiks, tie and dye, and woven yarn; and photography achieved using high-definition cameras and an eye for composition. My material choices, therefore, have been deliberate to challenge the conception of what makes art. The *Walk with Me* series of which *Walk with Me* (Figures 5 & 6) is the first, has been a deliberate act of material non-conformity.

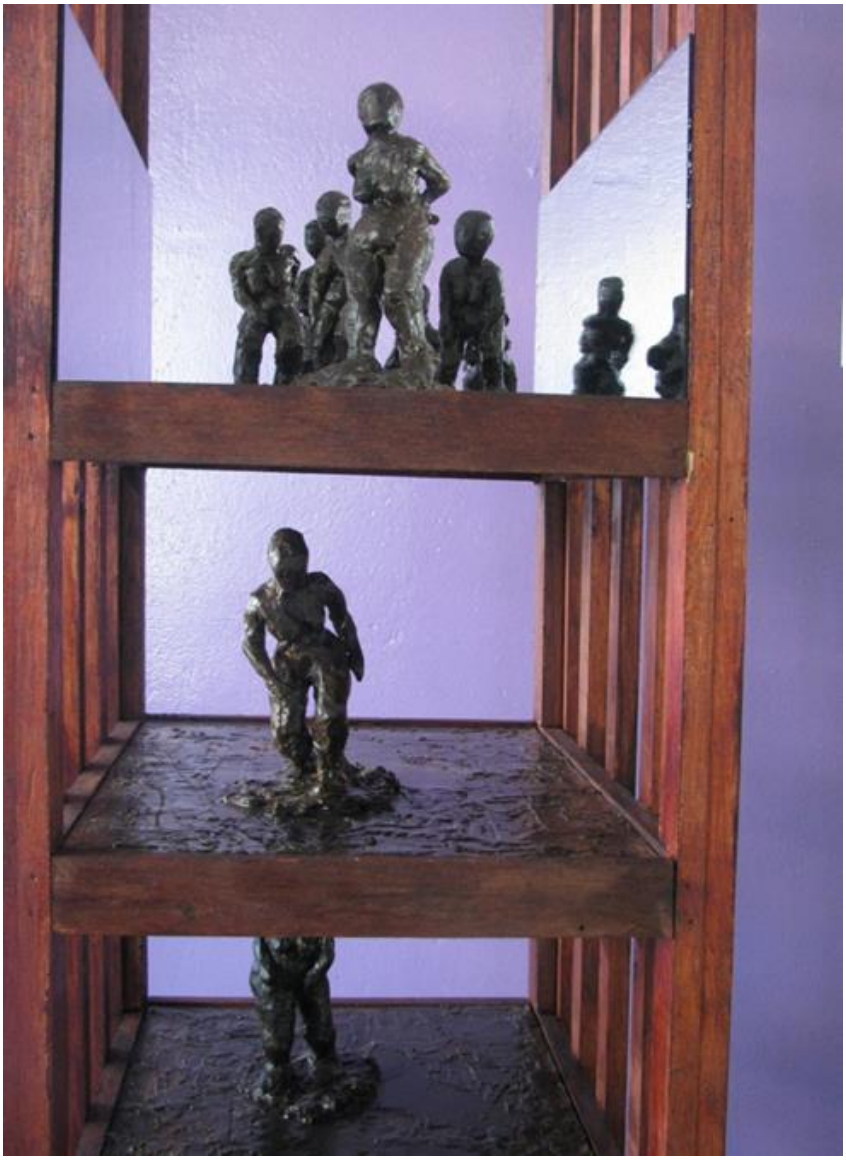
Walk with Me was made with wax, glass, and wood, a deliberate material proposition to diversify sculpture in Guyana. In being made with wax, a material used in the early stages of bronze casting, the figures of *Walk with Me* are vulnerable to intense heat. Hence, there was no expectation of permanence. But of course, this was not the point. Furthering the work's

inherent impermanence, it was made to be dismantled and reassembled, and thus the work was not intended to exist as a monument to pain in perpetuity. Inherent in the work's impermanence is a wish, a prayer that the realities referenced in the work would become a historical fact and cease to be a contemporaneous reality.

Figure 5: *Walk with Me* (2012), Mixed media, 203 x 61 x 50 cm

Figure 6

Walk with Me - detail



Walk with Me was not only referential to the victim-survivors of rape as a weapon of war in the Congo but it was also referential to the reality of violence against women and girls in Guyana. The figures at the top tier number seven adult females and were multiplied infinitely in the mirror on either side. This multiplication referred to the numerical reality of the situations in both countries and simultaneously, that these women were not alone in their journey to healing. The multiplication also served as an invocation for women experiencing

violence to be supported in extracting themselves from the situations as well as on the necessary journey of healing that must take place in the aftermath.

Walk with Me was first shown at the Guyana Visual Art Competition and Exhibition (GVACE) in 2012. It provoked limited conversation on what was the art – the figures apart from the wooden construction or the wooden construction and figures? It also provoked limited conversation related to authorship and collaboration. While I had made the individual figures, and designed and finished the wooden construction, I did not make the structure. Subtly, I intended to show how through collaboration with non-artists, the repertoire of the artist could be expanded, and thus the experience of the viewing public could be enhanced due to the diversification of visual art formats and presentations. The conversation was stifled in the malaise of tradition and conformity before it could get started.

Figure 7

Walk with Me III (2014), Film projection and clay, variable dimensions.

A Journey Begun

Years later, intending to further disrupt the normative approaches to art in Guyana, *Walk with Me III* set out to challenge the demarcation of boundaries among the visual art disciplines as I saw them being strictly adhered to and maintained locally. The work was also intended to extend the discussions initiated two years earlier. *Walk with Me III* comprised a film projection in which a woman shared the impetus of her decision to walk away from an abusive partner. Positioned beside the projection were seven unfired/bisque clay eggs. In the film, the camera focused on the hands of the woman as she spoke. Thus, her face was not visible and her identity was concealed. The woman spoke freely and uninterrupted for 16 minutes and 45 seconds. Her narrative underscored the value of preparation for life through having an education; having a personal philosophy of life (not to be confused with religion); sharing one's story; and acknowledging one's pain, loss, and personhood. Meanwhile, the unfired clay eggs which were scarred in individual and common ways, were distributed on three Perspex shelves adjacent to the projection. Through a chronological survey of the eggs, from the lowest to the uppermost shelf, it could be ascertained that as one read the scars from left to right, bottom to top, the scars changed in depth and size, disappeared, sometimes reappeared, or were accompanied by new scars until the final egg was less scarred than the first. Together the eggs and the film projection spoke of healing in complementary ways.

Surprisingly, on the first occasion of showing *Walk with Me III*, it was impossible to show the work properly; this was at the GVACE 2014. In what remains a conundrum, I was disallowed from using the National Gallery of Art's (NGA) projector by organisers of the GVACE as it was deemed that artists would interpret my use of the object as giving me an unfair advantage in the competition. My predicament revealed more than I was willing to concede at the time. Visual art in Guyana was distressingly stuck in a traditionalist mode from which it needed extraction. Therefore, while art has made formal leaps and bounds in the art centres of the world, in Guyana art remained retrograde, characterised by local values that defined art in the 1970s and 1980s when it was a logical handmaiden to building a national identity. Consequently, the formal approaches which characterised art elsewhere could not be entertained locally and still were not. With the projector removed after the formal opening of the exhibition, the collaboration between the artist and the subject was lost as audiences were subjected to clay eggs on shelves adjacent to a blank wall. More importantly, the words of my collaborator and their instructive value were silenced.

A Journey Begun

In 2017, I was able to show *Walk with Me III* along with others of the series as 'a show within a show' entitled *Walk with Me – A Show*[2] at the GWAA's 29th Annual exhibition. The show was held as a solo exhibition in 2018. *Walk with Me III* was shown alongside *Walk with Me IV – Jasmine's Story –* which shares a real-life story from the standpoint of the victim-survivor of intimate partner violence and offers a perspective on why women may become partnered with abusers; *Walk with Me V – Text Suspended –* which explores the journal as a site for the telling of one's story and of healing; *Walk with me VI – Overcoming –* which visualised the pained body experiencing restorative release; and the painting *Moodscape Introspection VI* from an earlier series focusing on the silencing of women in patriarchal systems. Although predicated on pain, the show brought the works together in one space to engage in a dialogue of healing.

Writing in *The Intersection between Transformative Socio-political Engagement and Art* in July 2011 in partial fulfilment of the MA, Art, and Space, I wrote:

> As an artist, a recurrent question has been how to make work that engages potently with traumas of the modern human condition without compromising characteristics elemental to art. Can this object/gesture not present itself as a protest-demonstration-placard-type, but with subtleties and ambiguities characteristic of contemporary art, yet be effective? […]

Today, July 2022, these concerns remain. Thus, I am not interested in a Kantian approach to art that champions art's purposelessness thereby validating objects made only to engage aesthetic sensibilities. I am not interested in demonstrations of skill when replicating the substances of sight and objective reality. As with Walter Benjamin (1982-1940), I question the work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction; in other words, what can I do with art that a camera cannot? Additionally, I am influenced by the art of Paul Thek (1933-1988) and conceptual artists of the 1970s and their demystification of the art object/gesture and prioritising of the idea(s). Hence, if the work can only have a singular temporal existence, then so be it. Lastly, I confess, I am interested in how this nebulous thing called 'art' can contribute

[2] The exhibition is featured on BBC (2018, August 6) *The Cultural Frontline* https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3cswp68 from 19mins 12secs, and Churchroadman. (2017, December 22). Owning her, loving her, beating her – Walk with me. Churchroadman. https://churchroadman.blogspot.com/2017/12/owning-her-loving-her-beating-her-walk.html

as activist, instigating change, and remain 'art'. I am interested in the instrumentalisation of art for socio-political and socio-cultural change.

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Seven Ponds *Wuk*: Virtually Circulating "Afterlives of Slavery" in Guyana

Jeremy Peretz

Abstract

Engaging peripherally with Guyana's disputed and protracted 2020 elections provides a view of certain disconcerting attitudes Guyanese have expressed towards fellow residents of particular faith communities. A survey of post-election Facebook commentary reveals that practitioners of an African diasporic faith known as Spiritualists, or Komfa People, have been targeted online in attacks typically founded on entanglements of racial and religious chauvinisms. Such overt condemnations illustrate Guyanese "afterlives of slavery" and colonisation that inform anti-Komfa/Obeah sentiments *as* anti-Black/African in both their underpinnings and ongoing expressions. A critical textual and ethnographic analysis of public statements illuminates how Komfa is typically mis/understood in Guyanese society. Local forms of antiblackness have long intersected with religious discrimination to sustain insidious configurations of "religious racism." The essay explores examples of the ideological junctures attaching anti-Black racism to rhetoric espousing so-called "Christian" and "Hindu" senses of morality in contradistinction to an instance of public-facing Spiritual "wuk."

Keywords: Komfa, Obeah, Africana religions, religious racism, antiblackness, intersectionality

> In popular opinion and also among a great number of Guyanese Hindus, such concepts are often stereotypically associated with 'Vodou' or 'Obeah' practices. They are excluded from the realm of Hinduism…Most of these practices are often regarded as 'superstitious', especially in societies identifying themselves as 'modern' and 'civilized.'
>
> Sinah Theres Kloß (2016, p. 235)

> "Religious racism"…was the first marker of racism in the "Capitalist/Patriarc[h]al Western-Centric/Christian-centric modern/colonial world-system."
>
> Ramón Grosfoguel (2013, p. 81)

At roughly 11 am on March 18, just over two weeks after the 2020 elections during the tenuously indeterminate period before any definitive plans for a recount had been established, a new post was made by the administrator of a Facebook group called GuyaneseTing'zz. The page is dedicated to sharing "funny things coming out of Guyana," as their "Our Story" blurb informs visitors, of which there are many, boasting nearly 200,000 followers.[3] The public post made on that Wednesday morning featured seven still

[3] See https://www.facebook.com/GuyanesegTingzzOffical. All of the following quotes referring to GuyaneseTing'zz come from this source.

images titled together under the following brief caption, quoted here in full as originally posted:

> Former Minister of Health Volda Lawrence in attendance with Denise Miller they organized this spiritual "wuk" at the Seven Ponds resting place of Forbes Burnham !!!!.
>
> Just when you thought guyana couldn't have gotten anymore crazier.[4]

As prefigured by the final line of the posted text, a majority of the dialogue produced by responding commenters was exceedingly critical, disapproving of the very premise of "spiritual 'wuk'" and of the politicised context surrounding this particular manifestation of ritual, as well as disparaging those involved in these and like practices. As of this writing, the post had received almost 700 comments and was shared over 250 times. Each of the seven images posted also received its fair share of comments, adding to the hundreds made in response to the general message. About ten minutes after this post was made to GuyaneseTing'zz, a story based on similar content was published by *Action News Guyana*, which, lacking a dedicated hosting site, uses Facebook as its primary online platform.[5] The post made by *Action News* was more direct in attributing the "SPIRITUAL WUK" to the party politics of the day, specifically naming the APNU+AFC coalition as behind the endeavor to invoke the dead president's spirit in swaying the outcome of the yet-inconclusive polls. Again, the text from *Action News Guyana*, which included a thirty-four-second-long video of the ritual, is shared here in full and unaltered:

> APNU/AFC SPIRITUAL WUK TO REVIVE BURNHAM'S SPIRIT
>
> APNU/AFC TURNS TO THE SPIRIT OF FORBES BURNHAM AKA KABAKA TO HELP THEM WITH THE 2020 ELECTIONS THAT HAS BEEN DEEMED AS FRADUALENT [sic]
>
> In the "spiritual wuk" at the 7 Ponds, Botanical Garden where Burnham's mausoleum is located persons can be heard chanting "...Come on Kabaka [Burnham], we call your presence.....to deliver these elections..."
>
> Forbes Burnham is associated with a period of dictatorship in Guyana and rigged elections from the late 60's, and 70's into the mid 80's during which the country plunged into a devastating social and economic crisis.

[4] See https://www.facebook.com/GuyanesegTingzzOffical.

[5] See https://www.facebook.com/actionnewsguyana. All the following quotes referring to *Action News* or *Action News Guyana* come from this source.

> The 2020 elections has plunged the nation into a similar crisis with International Countries threatening serious sanctions on APNU/AFC officials who are accused of attempting to rig the elections with the help of Guyana Elections Commission officials and the Guyana Police Force.[6]

Through an out-of-focus and unsteady frame, the brief clip posted by *Action News* shows a gathering of Spiritualists – or Komfa practitioners – beside the Place of the Seven Ponds, a national monument located in Georgetown's Botanical Gardens.[7] Also known as the Place of Heroes, Seven Ponds was erected in 1969 after the interment of the late-Governor General Sir David Rose, who served from Independence in 1966 until 1969 when he was killed in an accident in front of Whitehall Court, Westminster while in London to relinquish his position in the new government. Subsequently, three other Guyanese "heroes" were buried at Seven Ponds: National Poet Martin Carter and former presidents Arthur Chung and Desmond Hoyte, as was President Burnham, whose mausoleum complex was built adjacent to Seven Ponds in the Botanical Gardens.

The actual whereabouts of Burnham's physical remains, however, remains a matter of much speculation for many interested Guyanese. People like to say that Burnham is "the only leader in the world to have been buried twice," as it is claimed he "was buried days after his death and again one year later, when his body was returned from the Soviet Union where it was sent to be preserved" (*Kaieteur News*, 9 August 2016). Others have argued that by the time the late-Founder Leader's body left Guyana en route to the USSR, it had already begun to deteriorate to such a degree that he was made to stopover in England, where he was buried with dishonor and a wax model made by Madame Tussaud's museum was shipped back to Guyana in his stead. Some people insouciantly hold that the Burnham Mausoleum has never held Burnham's remains, and instead is home to the British wax imitation that rests under the chill of a perpetually running, state-of-the-art, built-in cooling system. As some on Facebook wondered, what then might these Spiritualists hope to gain from their attempt to "revive" the dead executive comrade if his body was not genuinely resting beside Seven Ponds? The uncertainty surrounding Burnham's final days (or year) only added to the puzzlement and derogation exhibited by public commenters responding to this highly politicised ritual performance.

[6] See https://www.facebook.com/actionnewsguyana/.

[7] On Komfa, see Michelle Asantewa (2016), Kean Gibson (2001), and Jeremy Peretz (2020).

In the video posted by *Action News*, a majority of the clip shows the four concrete columns of the towering structure poised in the central water feature of Seven Ponds, as well as the water-lily-filled pool itself. Only after halfway through does the frame pan to focus on the Spiritualists and the ritual they are engaged in performing, the sounds of which can be heard in the background throughout. In particular, one voice emanating from a body not seen in the video comes through strongest above the drums, horn, and melodic singing, which repeats "come on Kabaka, come on Kabaka, come on Kabaka. Come on Odo, come on Odo, come on Odo…" One among a large collection of such "call names," as *Action News* notes, "Kabaka" is used to honor - or otherwise identify - Burnham and is said to be a Creolese term for "chief," "king," or village "head" deriving from the Luganda language of Baganda people in present-day Uganda (Poynting 1985, p. 686). The name "Odo" heard in the clip, a call-name also referring to the late leader, is of even hazier origins but may come from a similar background as the same word in Sranan Tongo, the Creole and primary language of Suriname, where "*odo*" means "proverb" (Wekker 1997, pp. 330-31; 2006, p. 111). In Sranan Tongo, *koti odo*, literally to "cut" a proverb, is a common phrase meaning to recite this form of orature with the intention "to teach someone something" (Languages of Suriname 2003). As such pedagogical functions of proverbial speech are largely drawn upon by – and attributed to – older Guyanese in demonstrating their authority to younger charges, often children, grands, or others, perhaps Burnham found a fitting moniker in the association with revered traditions that "old people does say."[8]

As with the seven images included on the popular GuyaneseTing'zz site, once *Action News*' video turns to focus on the Spiritualists at Seven Ponds, the fleeting scene shows a small gathering of mostly empty chairs, with around a dozen people standing all clad in long white clothes including head-coverings, some with purple or gold waist-ties and other adornments. After focusing on the Seven Ponds sculpture, the video quickly passes over the area around which the group's attention is focused, in the center of which can briefly be seen a table covered in white cloth and holding a few candlesticks, also white. After only one to two seconds, the angle of the footage is again directed away from the center of the gathering to show a few

[8] Guyanese typically preface their proverbs and other forms of "traditional" speech acts with the phrase "the old people say," "dem big people say," "them does say," "dem bai [boy] seh," or some variation. The quote above, "old people does say," comes from a Digicel advertising campaign targeting Guyanese – Digicel being a major provider of cell phone services throughout the Caribbean. On Guyanese proverbial speech acts, including on this traditional prefacing framing device, see Gillian Richards-Greaves (2016). In Suriname, as Gloria Wekker (2006, p. 111) writes, "odo are a women's art form, transmitted through the female line of families" and particularly among "working-class" "Afro-Surinamese women." In Guyana, proverb-telling is not a clearly gendered domain.

unoccupied seats and one young man with a wide golden band of cloth girdling his abdomen above his white robe. An elderly woman can be seen in the background knocking a tambourine against her hand in turn with the drumming and singing before the video abruptly ends. The images provided by GuyaneseTing'zz afford a better view of the table altar, upon which are assembled several items common to Komfa ritual, including candles, vessels of water and other liquids like perfume and liquor, live plants and cuttings, and oversized sticks of incense. The images also show that women seem to make up the majority of those gathered.

Certain of the comments made in response to these Facebook posts exemplify the range of reactions they produced. Thus, dwelling on only a limited number of these public statements will be necessary – and possible – due to the sheer volume. Yet, these statements also provide a revealing portrayal of how Komfa is often mis/understood and demonised in popular Guyanese culture.[9] Local forms of antiblackness have long intersected with religious chauvinisms to sustain insidious and colonially instilled forms of *religious racism*, "a term that originates from Brazil, where," as legal scholar Danielle Boaz (2021, p. 2) details, "devotees of African diaspora religions have been experiencing increasingly pervasive intolerance over the past several years." Boaz (ibid.) demonstrates how employing the concept of religious racism productively "underscores that discrimination against African-based religions is more than mere prejudice against a faith or group of faiths; it is the intersection of religious intolerance and racism…the juncture of racial and religious discrimination." As examples of some of the ideological "junctures" attaching anti-black racism to rhetoric espousing so-called "Christian" *and* "Hindu" senses of morality in contradistinction to the Spiritual "wuk" on display, consider the following.

Responding to the Seven Ponds "wuk" story, one commenter posted to the *Action News Guyana* page, "The blood of Jesus on all of them. There is a special part of hell for those who practice witchcraft!!!"[10] Another held that "Some people are confusing religion with witchcraft. Jesus is lord and savior the beginning and end."[11] Someone else wrote, "Only Jesus

[9] *Stabroek News* columnist Mosa Telford (25 July 2020) has recently written a brief critical account of this event, where she rightly notes that "African spiritual practices were again demonized. This is a norm in our society." She relates that "a couple of months ago there was an incident where Guyanese who practice African spirituality were […] engaged in a religious ceremony in the Botanical Gardens and were mocked and criticized because it was thought they were invoking spirits and therefore engaging in practices which many deem ungodly" (ibid.).

[10] [Name withheld], Facebook, *Action News Guyana* page, 18 March 2020. Note that derogatory, demeaning, and ethically questionable comments in the context of this analysis will be rendered here anonymously.

[11] [Name withheld], Facebook, GuyaneseTing'zz page, 18 March 2020.

can help this country and its people. We all need to pray to Him alone."[12] In response to GuyaneseTing'zz's post, one commenter with a first and last name of clear South Asian derivation, wrote "That will never work my gods are more powerful dan that."[13] One Facebook user asked "Who are these people," and in response, someone wrote "SOME JUMBIE..🤣🤣🤣🤣🤣," with "*jumbie*" typically – and reductively – - translated from Creolese as "ghost" or "spirit," but it is also used to refer to ill-intentioned living persons.[14]

Specifically connecting the purported "evil doing" of this Spiritual "wuk" with "Africa and Haiti," the following post demonstrates how conceiving "Obeah" and thus Spiritual work as part of Guyana's "African" cultural heritage can animate deeply entrenched anti-Black stereotypes and racist conceptions of religion. After all, following Ramón Grosfoguel's (2013, p. 81) genealogical analysis, "religious racism" played a foundational and sustained role in the consolidation of what Sylvia Wynter (2003) has termed the "overrepresentation of Man-as-human." According to Grosfoguel (2013, p. 81), "'color racism' was not the first racist discourse. 'Religious racism' ('people with religion' vs. 'people without religion' or 'people with soul' vs. 'people without a soul') was the first marker of racism in the 'Capitalist/Patriarc[h]al Western-Centric/Christian-centric modern/colonial world-system.'" Wynter "coined the term *Man*," as Eleanor Craig and An Yountae (2021, p. 28n46) write, "as a reference to Europe's modern/colonial imaginary and its hegemonic installation of rational-secular subjecthood over against the colonial/racial other." White male supremacist Christian exceptionalism underwrote European colonial terror around the world and continues to take manifold, insidious global forms, including non-White, non-Christian manifestations such as those deployed in Guyana.

The telling comment posted in response to the Guyanese Ting'zz coverage stated, "That is why they got to punish. Look at Africa and Haiti and Zimbabwe Angola Nigeria. evil a knock dag there that is why they got to punish st because of their evil-doing sk."[15] Another

[12] [Name withheld], Facebook, *Action News Guyana* page, 18 March 2020.

[13] [Name withheld], Facebook, GuyaneseTing'zz page, 18 March 2020.

[14] [Name withheld], Facebook, GuyaneseTing'zz page, 18 March 2020. Richard Allsopp (2003 [1996], p. 317) notes, as have many other scholars, that the word *jumbi/e* has Bantu, and specifically Kikongo etymologies. Allsopp (ibid.) adds that Sigismund Koelle (1963 [1854], p. 75) "lists eleven languages and dialects" in the Kongo-Angola linguistic grouping in which "there is a *nzambe ~ ndṣambe ~ ntsambi* 'God.'"

[15] [Name withheld], Facebook, GuyaneseTing'zz page, 18 March 2020. In Creolese the phrase "to knock dog" means "plenty" or a large amount of something.

commenter, apparently offended and distressed by the previous statement, brought attention to the inequitable view proffered, and – likely seeing the "Indian" name of the offender – challenged that Hindu or "Indian"-related rituals are also common and often highly visible aspects of Guyanese life. Referring to the widespread practice among Indo-Guyanese and others of leaving sacrificial offerings at the sea, this person rejoined, "so what yall does really do at the Atlantic Ocean with all the fruits floating on water eh. This is the African traditions so shut yuh mouth."[16] The commenter who made the initial post returned to defend their position, stating:

> you gonna understand if I say we are going there to worship our Devine [sic] Maa Ganga for sickness and health. She is the mother of nature y'all. Even white folks believed in her when we got earthquake and all kind a disaster we all go to her for her blessings even they white peoples called upon our Devine [sic] at the sea and river.[17]

Clearly, the commenter's statement drawing approval from "white folks" for their own practices surrounding Hindu divinity Maa Ganga demonstrates the extent to which colonial ideologies of "white," English, and Anglo-European cultural superiority maintain hegemonic effect in Guyanese people's lives, regardless of racio-religious affiliations. Embedded in the comment are also implied understandings concerning what constitutes "religion," what "religion" – opposed to say "Obeah" or Spiritual "wuk" conceived as "evil doing" – can do for people, in terms of healing and protection from such ills as sickness and natural disaster. As a Hindu, this commenter seems to express confidence that their own practices involving therapeutic and protective rites can undoubtedly be deemed as "religion," exemplifying the power of legitimacy conferred by hegemonic conceptions such as Max Weber's (1991 [1948]) concerning "the world religions." Yet, this same commenter feels that people participating in comparable rituals in "Africa and Haiti and Zimbabwe Angola Nigeria" – or in Guyana for that matter, if they are Afro-descendants – instead, have "got to punish" for their "evil doing."

[16] [Name withheld], Facebook, Guyanese Ting'zz page, 18 March 2020.

[17] [Name withheld], Facebook, Guyanese Ting'zz page, 18 March 2020.

Figure 1. A public expression of Guyanese antiblackness as religiously informed racism in the context of the 2020 national elections. Facebook, March 10, 2020.

Another example, though appalling and not directly related to the Seven Ponds event, circulated on Facebook in the period immediately following the indeterminate elections of March 2020 (*see* Figure 1). Given the politically inflamed context, that the author – with an apparently "Indian"-identified name – directed their comments to a group called "PPPC Family," seemed for the commenters to confirm public narratives of "racial voting" prompting an impending "race war." More specifically, the Facebook post demonstrates how ideologies constructing ethnoracial identities continue to be informed by conceptions of "religion" – with "divine figureheads" juxtaposed to "voodoo worship" – in ways that underwrite "an ontological credibility" of racio-religious personhoods (Peake and Trotz 1999, pp. 9-10). Without conforming to colonial Christian or "world religion" exemplars, those comprising "the black race" have, for this Facebook user at least, been deemed utter nonpersons through a form of racio-religious negation (Dayan 2001; Williams 1991). Revealingly, Indigenous people remain altogether absent from this particular schematic of religious racism.

Guyana's elections also coincided with the initial global spread of the Coronavirus. In a less demeaning tenor than those quoted above, someone on the *Action News* page posted, "I don't know who kabaka is… but can you please ask him/her to keep us safe from COVID19?"[18] In a similarly jocular fashion, yet further condescending toward Spiritualists, someone else responded to the previous inquiry by stating, "I done ask Kaba Kaba nah worry

[18] [Name withheld], Facebook, *Action News Guyana* page, 18 March 2020.

gal 😟🤣😆😲 if we have to die, we gon dead somehow whenever that time is but not by Kaba kaba rituals 😗😗."[19] Another commenter wrote in to inform the above posters that, "kabaka is the one time dictator linden sampson forbes burnham [sic]. His image made of wax is at the seven ponds where those satanic people are doing their dirty work."[20]

One theme that represented more of a political contention that repeatedly reared its head in responses to the Seven Ponds "wuk" coverage was the incongruity between how commenters perceived the ethical legitimacy of political parties' participation in, and organisation of, public religious observances, and in particular, what gets considered as ritual "work." In their Facebook article, *Action News Guyana* was explicitly claiming that the APNU+AFC had planned the event at Seven Ponds with the purported objective of intervening in the impending outcome of the elections. For some commenters, the alleged connection between APNU+AFC and this instance of Spiritual "work" called to mind the PPP's annual pilgrimage to the resting place of past presidents Cheddi Jagan and Janet Jagan at the Babu John Cemetery in Port Mourant, East Berbice-Corentyne, also the natal village of the former. Each year, PPP dignitaries host a grandiose memorial service honoring both Jagans at an event that has become known by the name of the burial grounds where it takes place, usually comprising a number of activities like bicycle races and student scholarship competitions, often along with some of the PPP's most weighty political speeches of the year.

Many Guyanese, however, question what other potential sorts of activities might occur at these annual tributes. Perhaps due to the location of the events, many people are under the impression that whatever does transpire at Babu John each year played a decisive role in maintaining the PPP/C's previous twenty-three-year stretch at heading the nation. Other more sinister speculations hold that the sorts of otherworldly works performed at the Jagans' annual memorials have not just helped the PPP/C to sustain their political sway in past political seasons, but that these events also serve as "Indian" convocations wherein plans and preparations to ensure "African" suffering and even death become envisioned for implementation. As one Facebook commenter wrote, while also defending the Spiritualists' "wuk" at Seven Ponds as "our culture," "Bharat [sic] and his bugger party does go Babu Jon [sic] and every time they come Berbice and do their wuk black people children does dead so try something else. That is our culture and it's very strong know what you saying about black

[19] [Name withheld], Facebook, *Action News Guyana* page, 18 March 2020.

[20] [Name withheld], Facebook, *Action News Guyana* page, 18 March 2020.

people."[21] In an attempt to vindicate those meeting each year in honor of the Jagans, and emphasising the religious inclusion supposedly featured on these occasions, someone responded to the previous statement saying, "for thise of you who dont know every year them indians does go babujohn [sic] to celebrate the life and times of cheddi them does not do no service there all three religion will say a prayer and then followed by speches [sic] every one are invited there ok."[22] Tellingly, this commenter makes reference to their impression that adherents of "all three religion[s]" are "invited" to participate, further demonstrating the hegemonic authority bestowed upon "the world religions" in ideologically setting them (or the Big 5) apart from all *other*(*ed*) religions practiced by people the world over.

Similarly affirming that Christians and Hindus alike participate in the PPP/C's Jagan memorial service, one commenter also felt it necessary to include mention of race in the form of hair texture, in a comment that was taken by others as "racist." "We going to there [Babu John] to worship our lord Shiva. And Jesus because we all got straight hair," the person wrote.[23] Someone responded to the comment, "well guh long nah and Lowe we!!!," with the Creolese term "lowe" here meaning "leave us alone," and "we" in this context taken to denote Black people generally, or those individuals without "straight hair," including "mixed," or "*dougla*" people, and others.[24] The comment could be translated roughly as "well, do what you have to do and leave us alone." To that, the original poster defensively replied, "look please I am not lowing y'all. please we all got and we only want the best for them especially our children and grandchildren. I am not a racist. Please understand me will ya."[25] Still, their intention behind the allusion to hair made in the original post remains unclear, as does the statement made next which seems to be a reference to "racial mixing," in that "we all got…them," meaning "children and grandchildren" who may not have "straight hair" like their mother and/or father. Another likely interpretation, connected to the first, would rest on the idea that PPP supporters largely comprise an Indo-Guyanese base with Indigenous and other Guyanese adding to the numbers, with very few Afro-Guyanese. Perhaps the commenter meant that those in attendance at Babu

[21] [Name withheld], Facebook, GuyaneseTing'zz page, 18 March 2020.

[22] [Name withheld], Facebook, GuyaneseTing'zz page, 18 March 2020.

[23] [Name withheld], Facebook, GuyaneseTing'zz page, 18 March 2020.

[24] [Name withheld], Facebook, GuyaneseTing'zz page, 18 March 2020.

[25] [Name withheld], Facebook, GuyaneseTing'zz page, 18 March 2020.

John each year, while both Hindu and Christian, are nonetheless mostly "Indian," and like the PPP, recognisably lacking "African" *and* "*dougla*" backers, who have tended to champion the APNU+AFC's "multiracial" posturing.

Others who commented on the alleged involvement of the incumbent government in the Seven Ponds "wuk" voiced their opinions that all people and political parties should be left free to utilise their religious traditions as they see fit. One person even seemed to resent how many other commenters suggested the Spiritualists were misguided and should be instead "cover[ing] themselves in the blood of Jesus," as someone else wrote.[26]

> Y'all study why ppl going Babu Jaan [sic]. Even if she's [APNU+AFC Minister Volda Lawrence] there that's here culture. She's African I don't see why she should call on Jesus (first slave ship) when she should be honouring her ancestors. Get by the blasted books so we won't be offended when ppl say we wuking obeah. I don't care who say what I'm not religious if you come round me funny I'll break your neck.[27]

Still, others expressed the contention most recognisable from the political rhetoric espoused by Guyana's Ministry of Social Cohesion, holding that regardless of context or ethnoracial and religious identities, all Guyanese ought to feel empowered to express themselves religiously through their own freedom of conscience as protected by constitutional law. One example of such thinking was a post that stated, "So I guess it's ok for other ethnic groups in Guyana to practice their rituals but it's not ok for another. What about having appreciation for all whether your views are different. No need to immediately say they're 'wuking evil' all because we don't know."[28] Another commenter wrote, emphatically, "!!!!!!!NO PERSON SHOULD CRITICIZE OR MAKE FUN OF ANY RELIGION or belief that is different from theirs. EVER.!!!!!!!Shame on you all."[29] Someone else, whose comments can be read as quite contradictory, advocating respect for others' traditions while simultaneously condemning, wrote that "Yall ms [motherskunt] disrespecting ppl practice but yet some of yall is being Christians n celebrating phagwah, diwali etc n these stupid ms who is being giving food to deities in the sea n worshipping idols like hanuman n such. Yall need to stop disrespecting ppl

[26] [Name withheld], Facebook, *Action News Guyana* page, 18 March 2020.

[27] [Name withheld], Facebook, GuyaneseTing'zz page, 18 March 2020.

[28] [Name withheld], Facebook, GuyaneseTing'zz page, 18 March 2020.

[29] [Name withheld], Facebook, GuyaneseTing'zz page, 18 March 2020.

belief n practices yall ms."[30] While perhaps duplicitous and deceitful, the last comments also demonstrate the ambiguities, opacities, and acts of violence inherent in attempts to morally differentiate between or among religions or religious aggregates and groupings, moral distinctions which were inculcated through colonisation, and which continue to be sustained in many facets of post-Independence Guyanese life.

One Spiritualist who lives and practices in Georgetown, known as Elder Humphries, suggested to me in a recent conversation that, in all likelihood, the entire framing of the Seven Ponds "wuk" exploited by *Action News* and others to suggest APNU+AFC involvement was "purely" political "manipulation." The *Guyana Times* (19 March 2020) ran an "Eyewitness Feature" on "the rigging circus" that even made brief mention of the ritual event, observing that "last Sunday at Seven Ponds, she [Minster Lawrence] invoked Burnham as 'Odo' and the 'Kabaka'. To help with the elections rigging!!" the article concluded. Elder Humphries agreed that "invoking" Burnham's spirit to intercede on the incumbent government's behalf would indeed be a worthy endeavour, as "is strength Granger strengthening we with" and, moreover, because "Granger following Burnham footstep" in "uplifting the whole a we: Black, Indian, all Guyanese."[31] As such, Elder Humphries advised that the most beneficial Spiritual "work" involving the late Founder-Leader to be attempted at that particular juncture of political and social precarity would not be to pursue Burnham's assistance to re-elect Granger, but rather, to help Guyanese embrace one another to avert any further violence and suffering through what had already become a treacherous transitional period. "If you ask me," Elder Humphries said, "must be them Wuking Burnham spirit to make we all come together now in this time of tribulation, like he already done try for do, but now he gone get a next chance to succeed."[32] By this Elder's thinking, invoking Burnham to "Wuk" the election is anything but divisive or

[30] [Name withheld], Facebook, GuyaneseTing'zz page, March 18, 2020. Possibly Guyanese's favourite Creolese expletive, "motherskunt" (or "ms" in text messages and online) is somewhat similar in sentiment to English's "motherfucker(s)," in the context of the quoted usage. "Skunt" on its own is even more pervasive, and functions in most senses like contemporary English's "cunt," but so also like "pussy," "ass," "fuck," "fucking," and "fucker." On such comparisons, see Jeremy Poynting (1996: 204, on David Dabydeen [1988, p. 23]) and John Rickford (2019, p. 26).

[31] In original Kriiyoliiz as shared: "iz schrenk Granger schrenkn wii wit . . . Granger faloowin Burnham futstep . . . uplifin di hool a wii, Blak, Indiiyen, aal Gaiyaniiz."

[32] In original Kriiyoliiz as shared: "If yu aks mii . . . mus bii dem Wukin Burnham spirit fo mek wii aal kom togeda nou in dis taim a chribyuuleeshan, laik ii alredii don chrai for duu, bu[t] nou hii gon get a neks chans to soksiid."

partisan, and instead represents sincere ambitions for universal upliftment for all Guyanese, or at least, both Indians *and* Africans.[33]

For many Spiritualists and others, Burnham's is an important legacy. After all, he is considered – by some at least – as the "father of social cohesion in Guyana," as President Granger remarked at Seven Ponds in 2016 during a memorial service honoring the thirty-first anniversary of the leader's death (*Kaieteur News* 9 August 2016). Laying a wreath on Burnham's mausoleum, Granger paid tribute to his party mentor in a speech during which he characterised Burnham as "the author of social cohesion and architect of national unity, who transformed Guyana from a divided colony to a more united and less unequal country" (Ministry of the Presidency 6 August 2016).[34] Furthermore, in his commemorative address, Granger maintained that Burnham "established order out of chaos and conciliation out of conflict…He fought against the marginalisation and segregation of the colonial regime into which he was born and sought to create a society of equality and inclusivity for posterity," the president declared, adding that it was through Burnham's "visionary leadership and wise stewardship that the foundation of a just and cohesive society was laid" (*Kaieteur News* 7 August 2016). As exhibited in the reactions to the Spiritual work held at Seven Ponds, many Guyanese disagree with Granger's assessment of Burnham and his supposed legacy of instituting national unity and equality. For many Guyanese, particularly those of South Asian descent, Burnham is remembered for doing quite the opposite, in instigating the initial rupture in 1955 that severed the intercultural anticolonial impetus represented by *both* Burnham and Jagan in alignment under the banner of the original PPP (cf. Socialist Workers Alliance of Guyana 2017). As one columnist in the *Guyana Times* (16 March 2020) wrote, "a party that boasts it introduced 'social cohesion'" – as Granger did of Burnham's PNC during his 2016 memorial service – represents bare "hypocrisy" at "levels that deserve a new name to describe it!!"

Many Guyanese – regardless of ethnoracial subjectivities – associate Burnham in one way or another with Obeah, whether they understand him to have been an "Obeahman" himself, as many do, or just that through his own African identity and politico-cultural Afrocentrism, he has been seen as embodying an ethos attributed to (Afro-)Creole Guyanese

[33] As Andaiye (2020) instructively notes, however, "when we speak of racial conflict among the working people of Guyana, we are really speaking about the racial conflict between the Indians and Africans" (ibid, p. 58) while "Indigenous women [remain] the poorest women in the region" (ibid, p. 10).

[34] Also see coverage in *Kaieteur News* (7 August 2016).

"folk" sensibilities. A considerable number of Guyanese and other people throughout the Caribbean, and the world, remember Burnham's promise to "free-up" Obeah in 1973 at the height of what he referred to as the postcolonial Co-operative Republic's "Cultural Revolution" (Seymour 1977). Promoted through the (de/neo)colonial politics of nation-building, he proposed the decriminalisation of Obeah as a means towards achieving cultural and juridical autonomy from past dictates of Dutch and British hegemonies. Burnham's proposition only confirmed for many – Indo-Guyanese in particular – the president's partiality to inequity *and* iniquity. By suggesting Obeah be legalised as a primary political objective for the nation, he also verified for many of his constituents that he embraced a form of "Obeah politics," which reinforced his ongoing rule (cf. Vidal and Whitehead 2004). Yet for Komfa People and those practitioners of other "little traditions" (Reddock 1996, 1998), as well as for decolonial-thinking nonpractitioners alike throughout the Caribbean of the early 1970s, Burnham's cause célèbre of religious cultural self-determination was thought to match the national "co-operative" self-sufficiency his government embraced through their socialist policy agendas (Paton 2015). How much of a tangible difference Burnham's call for decolonisation through decriminalisation made in the lives of Komfa – or Obeah – practitioners, if any, is also not altogether clear. A few Spiritualist elders have actually reported facing increased antagonisms shown by their fellow Guyanese towards their practices in the months following Burnham's pronouncement. What is evident is that through the machinations of Euro-modernity over many generations, religion – and Obeah specifically – has become a defining element in how Guyanese frame racialised conceptions of their nation and of themselves within the moral contours of the national body.

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Motivation and Resilience on the Achievement of Organizational Goals: Perspectives of Senior Public-School Teachers in Guyana during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Lydia Narain

Abstract

There is a gap in the study of motivation and resilience in relation to the achievement of organizational goals in Guyana's educational context. The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study online research was to gain insights from 20 senior educators from 20 public schools in eight administrative regions (80%) in Guyana on motivation and resilience in the achievement of goals. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations were explored in conjunction with resilience. A purposive sampling technique was utilized to facilitate this study. Results showed teachers believed that motivation is a major driving force behind resilience. Motivation is one of the factors that contributes to the achievement of objectives, but requires educators to be resilient as well. This study also highlights strategies that educators implemented in crisis situations to ensure that both personal and organizational goals were achieved.

Keywords: motivation, resilience, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, achievement, organizational goals

The world was plunged into a state of emergency in the year 2020 with the outbreak of the COVID 19 Pandemic. Many countries did not have the resources to deal with the impact of the pandemic (Buckwalter & Peterson, 2020). The developing countries depended heavily on the developed countries for support to acquire vaccines for their citizens to reduce and treat the symptoms of the COVID 19 Pandemic. Many chronic illnesses were exacerbated by this disease-causing organism resulting in numerous deaths (Basu, 2021). It is evident that not only was the health of citizens of countries affected, but that many sectors felt the overall impact of the pandemic. The supply chain of goods and services were affected, resulting in food shortages and hunger as well as limited or no basic amenities and subsequent inflation in the cost of commodities (Santacreu & LaBelle, 2022). Many inequalities were brought to the forefront where citizens within countries were treated unfairly resulting in a lack of transparency, integrity, fairness, and gender biases (Hernández-Medina & Afaneh, 2021).

Motivation and Resilience

While there was general disruption to the dynamics of countries, there was also a disparity in the disruptions when it came to the education sectors of countries (Liu, 2022). It was evident that many countries were making amendments to their budgets where funds that were allocated to the education sector were diverted to the health sector to purchase medical resources to save the lives of people (Kaabi, 2020). This was substantiated by the World Bank which had to create partial budgets to cater to the health needs of citizens of countries; the focus during such a chaotic period was on health rather than education (World Bank Group, 2022). All departments and levels in the education sector were affected, and there were limited resources to offset plans and implement policies at the primary, secondary, and post-secondary/tertiary levels (Reimers, 2021). Moreover, the need for advanced technological tools was even greater than before as the drastic move to online learning and communication was necessary. Many countries were not technologically prepared with the requisite facilities to function in the online milieu. This was compounded by the fact that many citizens were not technologically knowledgeable, which exacerbated the many hindrances faced by the education sector (Shume, 2013).

Similarly, in the context of Guyana, the education sector was disrupted. The focus of the government of Guyana at the initial outbreak of the COVID -19 Pandemic was on the health of its citizens. Guyana was supported by and provided with health resources in the form of sanitation supplies, protective gear, and most importantly the different COVID-19 vaccines (PAHO/WHO, 2021). There was approval from the World Bank for additional funds to Guyana to purchase supplies needed to reduce the spread of the disease and to finance the vaccines and response measures to COVID-19 (World Bank Group, 2021). The education sector was not prepared for such drastic paradigm shift from regular face-to face classroom sessions to virtual learning. It was also evident that the already- limited educational resources, especially finances, had to be utilized for other purposes. Many schools in Guyana did not have the space to accommodate all the students while at the same time implementing social distancing. Many public schools lacked internet access and information technology facilities (UNESCO, 2021).

Additionally, teachers were not prepared to deal with teaching during a pandemic and many lacked the ability to function in the virtual classroom. There was an education crisis and learning loss with the closure of schools. Many educational goals were not achieved in a timely manner (*Guyana Chronicle*, 2021). Many educators suffered silently,

they like their students, were not prepared for the move to remote learning while at the same time they were directly and indirectly affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic. As postulated by Parker and Alfaro (2021):

> Unfortunately, the implementation of remote learning strategies has led the teachers to feel increasingly overwhelmed, as reported by representatives from MoEs and schools. The teachers have faced a double challenge: many of them have not felt comfortable using digital devices, while at the same time, they have been forced to rethink their teaching methodologies in this new context.

In light of the many challenges faced by educators, this study examined the concepts of motivation and resilience as factors that contributed to senior teachers in the public school system in Guyana during the COVID-19 Pandemic being able to deal with such a crisis. There is a gap in the study of motivation and resilience in crisis situations in Guyana's context and as such much research needs to be conducted.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study research was to gain insights from 20 senior educators from 20 schools in eight administrative regions (80%) in Guyana on the effects of motivation and resilience in the achievement of organizational goals. The concepts of motivation and resilience were examined to establish whether motivation has an influence on resilience and ultimately enables senior teachers to execute their duties and responsibilities in an effective manner.

Research Questions

1. How do senior teachers view motivation and resilience on the achievement of personal and organizational goals?
2. What strategies may be implemented to achieve organizational goals in crisis situations?

Significance of the Study

This study provided data that may be used by education stakeholders to understand the contributing factors that propel motivation at the organizational level among senior teachers. This study will also exemplify strategies that may be implemented in crisis situations to achieve organizational goals. Education administrative stakeholders in the public-school system will be aware of the challenges faced by educators and put systems in

place to mitigate existing issues. This study may serve as reference for further research in the associated field. Ultimately this study will add to the literature in the related area.

Definition of Key Terms

Motivation- "Motivation is the activation of goal-oriented behavior" (Singh, 2011, p. 162).

Resilience- "the dynamic and negotiated process within individuals (internal) and between individuals and their environments (external) for the resources and supports to adapt and define themselves as healthy amid adversity, threat, trauma, and/or everyday stress" (Truebridge, 2016, p. 15).

Intrinsic Motivation- "Intrinsic Motivation refers to motivation that is driven by an interest or enjoyment in the task itself, and exists within the individual rather than relying on any external pressure" (Singh, 2011, p. 162).

Extrinsic Motivation- "Engaging in an activity with expectations to receive a reward separate from the activity itself, or to accomplish something to make an impression on others by showing one's competency" (Hsieh, 2011, p. 627).

Achievement Goals- "Achievement goals are self-regulatory commitments that provide direction to individuals as they interpret and respond to competence-relevant situations" (Sommet et al., 2016, p. 1)

Organizational Goals- "The goal of an organization is the direction in which the activity of the organization should be aimed. The goal can also be called objective, purpose and end interchangeably" (Kono, 1984, p. 47)

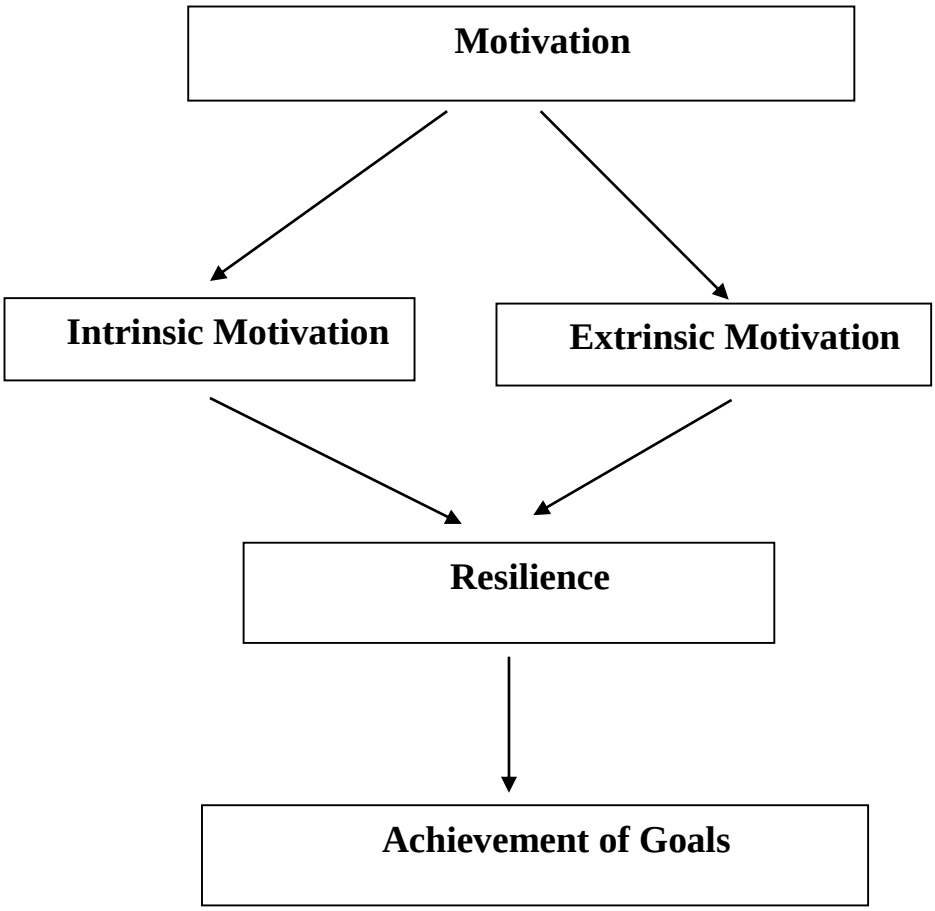
Review of Literature

Motivation was examined by delineating the types, levels and orientations of motivation and a link to resilience was established. The contexts of motivation and resilience were integrated to highlight the underlying connection in the achievement of organizational goals as depicted in the conceptual framework.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework Showing the Logical Alignment of the Research Variables



Levels, Types and Orientations of Motivation

Motivation, according to Bal (2015), is a psychological factor that determines the behaviour of human beings. Motivation is not a unitary factor but encompasses different types (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The types, levels, and orientations of motivation are critical in the perpetuation of desired output and achievement of personal and organizational goals and objectives (Ryan & Grolnick, 1986). Motivation entails personal satisfaction and environmental stimuli (Kleinginna, 1981). According to Reeve and Deci (1996) and Sheldon and Kasser (1995), intrinsic motivation is the outward expression of innate desires and self-satisfaction with self-sustained outputs. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, refers to external driving forces such as employee rewards, promotions, and recognition, among other factors. Ryan and Deci (2000) further emphasised that motivation, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, drives behaviour and depends on the individual's psychological needs

which take into consideration physical survival, the needs for food, clothing, shelter and mental health and well- being. The levels and orientation of motivation are specific to the behavourial output and can be correlated accordingly (Cherry, 2022; Ledford, Gerhart & Fang, 2013; Nicholls, 1989).

Motivation and Resilience

Motivational factors, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, are the major driving forces in resilience (Tanaka & Tsuchiya, 2011). Human beings have strengths individually and collectively which are demonstrated in many situations and these strengths are the enabling factors that allow them to rise above and beyond challenges and bounce back from major or minor setbacks (Van Breda, 2001). Educational resilience is triggered by different dimensions, namely in order of importance, personal, family, school, and community (Rushton, 2018). The first dimension is focused on the individual/personal factor, where the element of self-confidence is critical and is the means by which educators are motivated to achieve personal and organizational goals. This element is also combined with the value the educator places on education, resulting in their commitment to their profession. The second dimension is family-oriented. An individual needs support in many forms: emotional, material/economic, and the demonstration of resilience of family as role models of resilience. These different forms of support provided to the individual will contribute to both the motivation and academic resilience of the individual (Kryshko et al., 2020; Schippers & Scheepers, 2020). The third dimension is that of the school itself and more specifically, the physical working environment of the educator. Here, support from the school is also a critical element contributing to teacher resilience. The school's infrastructure, availability of equipment, the active network between the school and the community, and other environmental working conditions are taken into consideration in this dimension (Ewing, 2014).

The final dimension is the community, which has two elements attached: economic distraction and infrastructure in relation to the ethos and organizational structure of the community. In many cases, politics, privileges, and marginalization can affect teacher resilience. The state of the infrastructure in relation to proper roads, bridges, transportation facilities, and the performance of educational institutions within the community all play major roles in the academic resilience of an individual. The issue of stigma and discrimination must also be considered a priority as it hinders progress and has

accompanying repercussions. Regardless of the many challenges, the ultimate factor is the ability of the educator to be motivated and resilient (Lee et al., 2016).

Since intrinsic motivation is considered as the ability of an individual to implement and execute tasks with or without guidance from a superior, it is very crucial in teachers' resilience. This is a result of personal goals and objectives in addition to commitment to the profession or job resulting in satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2008). While extrinsic motivation encompasses all external factors both tangible and intangible, that are disseminated by individuals or manifested in the physical environment (Deckers, 2022). A combination of the two facets of motivation will give rise to the quality of resilience. Resilience is one of those characteristics that is exhibited by individuals who have the determination to move forward regardless of the setbacks encountered along the journey to advancement, thereby leading to the accomplishment of goals (Taylor, 2015).

Resilience and Achievement of Goals

The innate ability of educators to achieve goals is static, but the instrument of resilience is a catalyst for the achievement of those goals (Liem et al., 2011). The achievement of personal and organizational goals is dependent on the things resilient teachers do versus what they do not do. Ju and Fan (2021) highlighted seventeen things that resilient teachers do, including taking care of their health, developing professional support networks, advocating for themselves, having fun with their students, and helping students to build resiliency. On the other hand, they note four things which resilient teachers do not do, including beating themselves up over their mistakes, spending time complaining, freaking out about change, and shying away from conflict. Considering what resilient teachers do as well as what resilient teachers hardly ever do, one can observe that resilience requires teachers to make conscious decisions in critical situations in order to achieve goals (Harris, 2020). Individuals who are goal-oriented are more likely to be resilient as they would do everything within their power to achieve these goals (Jowkar, 2014; Splan, 2011).

Methodology

This research utilized a qualitative exploratory online case study design. The participants belonged to a group of educators who had attained senior status in the public school system. The phenomenon of motivation as a means to resilience which propels individuals to accomplish goals was examined through the participants experience (National University, 2023).

Sample Population

Table 2

Number of Teachers from Eight Administrative Regions in Guyana

Administrative Regions	Number of Teachers
1	0
2	2
3	2
4	4
5	4
6	2
7	0
8	2
9	2
10	2
TOTAL	20

A purposive sampling technique was utilized in selecting the sample for this study. A sample of 20 senior teachers participated in this qualitative online case study research. There were representatives from 8 out of the 10 administrative regions of Guyana. There were no representatives from Regions 1 and 7. More participants were drawn from Regions 4 and 5 because of the denser population of teachers in these regions. Senior teachers who held statuses of Graduate/Non-Graduate Senior Assistant Masters/Mistresses, Graduate/Non-Graduate Senior Masters/Mistresses and Graduate/Non-Graduate Heads of Departments formed the sample. The acquisition of senior statuses would require teachers to teach at least seven years after obtaining a Trained Teacher's Certificate or an Associate Degree in Education from the Cyril Potter College of Education. Sixteen of these senior teachers were graduates while four teachers held non-graduate senior status.

Research Instrument

The online questionnaire comprised 19 questions which were divided into four sections. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher and targeted the specialized group of participants who were senior teachers in the public school system. The questions were so

constructed to provide answers to the specific research questions in the context of the title of the research. The raw data were interpreted

Trustworthiness Criteria

The criteria of credibility, dependability, and conformability were established. Peer debriefing was conducted as a means of establishing external creditability where the raw data were compared with findings and interpretations. The research was conducted in a logical, traceable and well-documented manner. All interpretations and findings were derived from the raw data which were presented to reviewers and a rigorous thematic analysis was conducted.

Ethical Considerations

The participants were all consenting adults who provided responses to this online survey at their own discretions. The ethical principles of confidentiality, informed consent from participants, and participants' withdrawal at any point in the research guided the implementation of this research. Teachers were contacted online to seek their willingness to participate in the research. Teachers who accepted the request to be a part of the research were sent an online survey. The names of the schools remained anonymous. Teachers provided responses from their personal perspectives and were not subjected to any formal organizational setting. Raw data on the responses are available for co- researcher scrutiny of the qualitative responses.

Findings

The data was analysed by the use of the Delve software where codes were developed as well as associated themes. The responses to questions asked where selected to provide evidential data to answer the research questions.

In response to the first research question which asked, *How do senior teachers view motivation and resilience in the achievement of personal and organizational goals?* The teachers indicated that motivation is a major factor that drives resilience which collectively leads to the achievement of goals. As shown in Table 2, 95% of the senior teachers are positive that intrinsic motivation does drive resilience. They also believed that because of their internal motivation, they were able to embrace their professionalism and remained committed and persistent to achieve both personal and organizational goals by implementing coping skills to circumvent the crisis situation and to maintain their passion for their jobs as senior teachers. A greater percentage of teachers agreed that motivation

drives resilience which in turn enables educators to achieve goals (Kryshko et al., 2020; Schippers & Scheepers, 2020). Teachers stated that the reasons for their agreement are that they are professionals who are internally motivated, committed, and persistent in achieving goals because of their coping skills and passion for their job.

Table 2

Research Question 1

Questions	Analysis of Responses	Themes
1. Do you believe intrinsic motivation is a major factor that drives resilience?	Total Responses: 20 Yes: 19 No: 1	The teachers believed to a very great extent (95%) that intrinsic motivation is a factor that drives resilience.
2. Kindly explain your response to Question (1).	Total Responses: 19	1. Professionalism 2. Internal motivation 3. Commitment 4. Persistence/perseverance 5. Coping skills 6. Goal driven 7. Passion for job

Table 3 shows the themes emanating from the responses of 18 teachers who felt frustrated in teaching in the public-school system during the COVID-19 pandemic but were motivated enough to push forward and did not quit. Teachers stated that they had goals to accomplish (e.g., “Knowing that the children depended on me to take them from one level to the other academically”); they feared that there would be great learning loss (e.g., “The children are losing more than I am. They have no internet and were losing out on vital knowledge. The children need all the help they can get”); and they wanted to have a stable job because they had financial obligations (e.g., “My financial obligations and my dedication to my job”). The teachers also indicated that they had a passion for what they do and were supported by other teachers who motivated them to continue doing their best for the learners (e.g., “Support given by other teachers in the department”).

Table 3

Themes Emanating from Responses

Questions	Analysis of Responses	Themes
3. If you felt frustrated at any given time, what prompted you to push forward or what prevented you from quitting?	Total Responses: 18	1. Goals/Objectives 2. Fear of Learning Loss 3. Teachers Dedication/Motivation 4. Stakeholders Support 5. Job Security 6. Financial Obligations 7. Love for Learners

Table 4 highlights some strategies teachers implemented to deal with pedagogical and timely completion of record challenges. Teachers collaborated with other stakeholders where resources were shared, they also held meetings with parents and the wider community to garner donations coupled with their personal funding to purchase resources for the execution of the pedagogical activities. Learners were also encouraged by teachers to continue in the process of learning, and effective communication with all stakeholders was maintained.

Table 4

Strategies Implemented by Teachers

Questions	Analysis of Responses	Themes
4. What are some strategies you have implemented personally to deal with the challenges?	Total Responses: 18	1. Consultations 2. Collaboration 3. Coaching/counselling 4. Garner donations 5. Differentiated Instruction 6. Personal funding 7. Effective Communication

In answering the second research question which asked, *What strategies may be implemented to achieve organizational goals in crisis situations?* The teachers stated that they implemented several strategies to achieve organizational goals. While teachers felt

frustrated with the chaos that was happening in the public-school system during the COVID-19 pandemic, they were motivated to push forward as they had goals to achieve, they wanted to secure their jobs, they had financial obligations, they had a passion for teaching and they feared that the learners would suffer a great learning loss. Teachers did not quit, as they were encouraged by their peers who formed networks to share resources because they also had great respect for the learners under their charge. This is an indication of the strengths of teachers who are internally driven to achieve goals (, 2001). The motivation of the teachers drove them to be more resilient (Cherry, 2022; Ledford, Gerhart & Fang, 2013; Nicholls, 1989).

Recommendations

1. The Ministry of Education should provide training opportunities for administrators to deal with crisis situations through professional development where teachers can implement coping mechanisms when the need arises. The importance of training for teachers to deal with crises situations is necessary to effect change and facilitate the achievement of goals (Mansfield, 2019).
2. The Central Ministry of Education should incorporate in its policy guidelines the inclusion of the dual mode of pedagogy to a greater extent in the delivery of the curriculum, so as to have effective transitions from different modalities of pedagogy (Williams, 2020).
3. Teachers should create active networks of specialist educators for support, integration and collaboration. The creation of active networks served as an avenue for the sharing of resources and motivated teachers to push forward and not quit according to the findings of this research. In addition, active parental involvement should be fostered through the school and community with the inclusion of professional counsellors and other health personnel (Behfar, 2020; Datnow & Park, 2018).
4. Teachers indicated that they had to stand the financial expenses to prepare resources to teach students during the pandemic and even after their return to the public school setting. All necessary resources should be made available to all schools within the country based on needs analyses. Grants should be provided to schools to cater for additional expenses (Carsana & Jolibert, 2017).

Conclusion

A comparative analysis of this qualitative case study involving the responses of 20 senior teachers from 20 public schools of different grades highlighted similar findings across the administrative regions. Teachers were faced with similar challenges in the execution of their duties and responsibilities, but they utilized many strategies to achieve personal and organizational goals. To deal with the many challenges faced, teachers indicated that their intrinsic motivation such as being goal-driven, committed and the ultimate desire for students' success (Reeve & Deci, 1996; Sheldon & Kasser, 1995) drove them to be more resilient. The participants in this study were from eight regions in Guyana who shared their thoughts via their documented responses. There were no participants from regions 1 and 7, thus the findings of this study would not be reflective of those regions. Additionally, generalizations cannot be made as the thoughts of all seniors were not gathered. It must be noted that the specific regions were not analyzed separately to gain insights from the teacher who do not share the belief that motivation and resilience have great influence on the achievement of school goals. Further, research can be done at the level of each region to gain a better understanding of the situations teachers were faced with and what may have contributed to those situations in a contextualized manner.

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Detail from: Akima McPherson. *Study in Blue I - In My Divine Cradle.* Mixed-media on water-colour paper, 122 x 45cm, 2006.

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