

**Reflecting Racial Diversity: Elementary School Demographics and
Picture Book Collections**

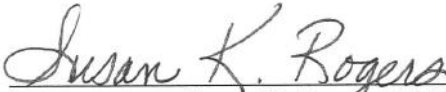
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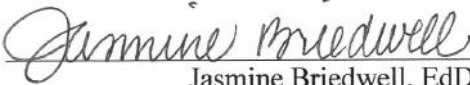
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Abstract

In this study, the challenge of evaluating and understanding the representation of racial diversity in picture books within school libraries relative to the demographic diversity of the student population is addressed. The objective of this research was to investigate this relationship, considering variations based on purchase year and the level of diversity in schools. The study followed a quantitative research design, utilizing archived data from School District X, with variables including the race of main characters in purchased picture books, the race of the student population, school years, and the level of school diversity. Results of the study indicate that the low-diversity school library consistently purchased picture books with more racially diverse main characters compared to the student population over the three years that were observed. In contrast, the high-diversity school library showed greater variability in main character representation, with changes observed across the three years. The study identifies the importance of tailored collection development strategies that consider both literary representation and student demographics. The crucial role of educators and librarians in using quantitative data to guide collection decisions, promoting equitable access to diverse literature, and fostering an inclusive learning environment reflective of students' identities is emphasized in this study. Future research should be conducted to provide comprehensive assessments of library collections and explore text quality and inclusivity through mixed-method approaches, incorporating qualitative insights from librarians and evaluating the impact of diverse main character representation.

Dedication

As Jessie Redmon Fauset (1920, p. 32) said:

“To Children, who with eager look
Scanned vainly library shelf and nook,
For History or Song or Story
That told of Colored Peoples’ glory,--”

I dedicate my dissertation work to my village. It is their love and support that has gotten me here today. A special note of gratitude to my eternally devoted parents, David and Suzann Hayes, whose words of encouragement and standards of excellence are the soundtrack of my life. To my sister, Cassie, for her constant reminders of who I am. And to my ancestors, for whom I know I am the physical manifestation of their wildest dreams. To my husband, Brian, whose love and support allowed me to hyper-focus on my own dreams brought to life. To Zetta, Hayes, and Rockne, who believe in my potential, my skills, and my talents and are willing to share me with the world; your patience during this process is a reminder of the capacity of children to love out loud. I also dedicate this dissertation to my many friends who have filled in the blanks, bridged the gaps, and stood in the void to support me throughout this process. I will always be grateful that our paths crossed. I dedicate this work and give special thanks to my 26B Cohort members, especially my Climb & Drag crew; thank you for never letting me forget the goal and for dragging me along, when the climbing wore me out. To my entire village, who has supported me along this journey and stoked the embers of my identity when all that was left was smoke, I am forever grateful for your faith in the fire within me.

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I would like to acknowledge and thank my school district for supporting me and encouraging me along the way, allowing me to conduct my research, and providing any assistance requested. Special thanks go to the library panel members and librarian collection expert for their continued support and willingness to share their expertise.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Storytelling and literature have been used throughout history to build connections and community. Children's literature is critical in helping young children develop their outlook on the world (Bishop, 1990). Libraries have policies and practices that ensure intentional text selection and acquisition of resources. These processes are designed to protect and encourage library collections that reflect a diverse society (Bulatowicz, 2017). Librarians nationwide are working hard to create and maintain diverse and equitable library collections for children. However, they often struggle to find a measurement tool that can help them track their progress toward their diversity goals and assess how well their collections reflect the diversity of their school communities.

The U.S. Census Bureau (USCB) developed criteria to ensure that the 2020 Census was fair and representative of the United States population. The USCB formed a Disseminating Diversity Working Group in 2019 in preparation for developing a strategy to produce statistics on race and ethnic diversity in the 2020 Census (Jensen et al., 2021). The Simpson Diversity Index utilized by the USCB is a measure of how diverse a population is in terms of race and ethnicity. It is calculated by finding the probability that two randomly chosen people will be from different racial and ethnic groups (Menchaca et al., 2023). A higher Diversity Index score indicates a more diverse population. Results from the 2020 census report that the population of Americans under age 18 had a diversity index score of 68.5% (USCB, 2021). This score is more than 10% higher than the diversity index score for Americans 18 and over. This change in diversity among the

population under eighteen indicates an increase in the diversity of young Americans (Stokes, 2023).

According to Bishop (1990), reading books representing characters from diverse racial backgrounds benefits students. In comparison, library collections remain predominantly White. Data from the Cooperative Children's Book Center (2022) indicate that in 2022, 29% of books evaluated featured a White character, whereas the second most popular demographic was 22% of books featuring animals. Racial demographics vary across districts, as do the needs of each library. Based on Bishop's research, the diversity of the books students are exposed to in elementary school can be used as a data point to measure the alignment between the building's racial demographics and the demographics of the picture book collection. Bishop (1990) has been widely quoted and credited with the concept that books can function as windows, mirrors, and doors for students to see into the lives of those who are like them and those who have lived a unique experience.

Background

To protect the identity of the school district featured in this study, the district is referred to as District X, a suburban public school district located in a Midwestern state. This school district has one early childhood center, eleven elementary schools, four middle schools (Grades 6-8), two high schools (Grades 9-12), one innovation studio (Grades 9-12), and an alternative school (Grades K-12). The district serves 12,000 students. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) indicates that the total enrollment for the district as of October 2022 was 12,024, with a composition of 66.1% White, 12.7% Black, 10.4% Hispanic, 5.9% Multiracial, 3.1% Asian, 1.2% Pacific

Islander, and 0.5% American Indian. Table 1 provides comprehensive demographic information for District X. The elementary schools range from 384 to over 600 students per building (DESE, 2022).

Table 1

Demographics of District X and Selected Buildings

Race	District X	Building Y	Building Z
Asian	374	8	7
Black	1,652	20	93
Hispanic	1,358	53	59
American Indian	44	1	2
Multiracial	743	32	44
Pacific Islander	197	3	28
White	7,694	370	254

Note: Adapted from *School District X Demographic Table* by School District X 2023, p. 48 (<https://www.████████████████████/about/access-and-inclusion2023>).

The research on collection diversity in District X’s elementary libraries resonates with the ethical principles enshrined in the American Library Association (ALA), allowing both adults and children, regardless of background or viewpoint, to access a diverse range of ideas and information. By examining the closeness between student demographics and book purchase years, the study sheds light on potential biases or omissions in collection development, ensuring children have access to stories and perspectives that mirror their experiences and foster their intellectual growth. Analyzing

how collection diversity changes over time via purchases within different school demographics further aligns with the emphasis on continuous self-evaluation and commitment to providing inclusive resources for all.

District X adopted a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Drivers, Narratives and Glossary (DEIB Drivers and Narratives) in August of 2022 (Director of access and inclusion District X, personal communication, August 1, 2022). The District X Board of Education (2023a) approved the DEIB Drivers and Narratives. The glossary of terms that support these appears on the district website (see Appendix A).

This adoption was the result of a focused effort to increase the access and inclusion of all students in District X that began in 2015, with a discussion about the diversity of library collections becoming a central discussion in Library Service Department meetings during the Fall of 2020 (Director of library services, personal communication, October 18, 2018). Anecdotal evidence of non-diverse collections began to emerge as librarians were tasked with analyzing the diversity of their collections, utilizing Titlewave analysis, an electronic program that analyzes books in a library collection by using their Machine-Readable Cataloging (MARC) Records (Follett Learning, 2023). MARC records allow computer algorithms to look at the content of a given book in a short and manageable way (Library of Congress, n.d.). MARC records enable computers to assist in the sorting, organizing, and retrieval of books and articles based on a wide variety of needs. MARC record keyword searches and observational analysis are all used in the collection audit process. Anecdotal evidence has suggested that elementary library collections did not align with the building and district demographics. In Spring of 2021 an attempted library audit turned up issues with

utilizing the district electronic library catalog to assess diversity in books. These issues led to further discussion about the need to identify a metric that would allow librarians to consider the diversity of purchases and to identify goals and standards for collection development. During the 2021-2022 school year specific professional development was provided for librarians. This professional development focused on utilizing diverse book recommendations to make purchases, using diverse book award lists for purchase recommendations, and analyzing collection diversity strategies. Librarians were provided funding to develop these collections. During the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years, librarians developed diversity collection development goals and purchased books to meet those goals. However, no standard metric existed for measuring these goals (District X, 2018).

Amid this development, issues with Missouri Senate Bill 775 began to impact school libraries. As a result of SB 775, District X's legal counsel met with district librarians (Director of library services, personal communication, March 22, 2023) and district administrators about the implications of this bill. Emphasized in this meeting was that this policy is about visual content, not the written word. Information was also developed at the district level to support a challenge process outside of the typical library challenge process targeted specifically to handle SB 775 complaints since these specific complaints come with legal implications. District X adopted a policy in October 2022 requiring teachers to "guarantee" that the materials in their classroom libraries held no materials that violated SB 775 (District X Legal Counsel, personal communication, October, 17, 2022).

This law is very much like many laws initially about one topic and has other policies nested inside. This law is about sexual assault and sex trafficking. However, these components about schools, and specifically libraries, echo the messages that have been alive for the last several years about tightening the policies that guide what students read and what librarians purchase.

Statement of the Problem

Play and storytelling are a substantial portion of the work of being a child. Bishop (1990) stated that children use media, such as books, to make sense of their world. Picture book goals and lists labeled “diverse” have appeared in ALA (2023a) publications. The diversity of school libraries is a critical issue to consider, as it can impact the learning experiences of all students in a school community. Providing access to a wide variety of books and resources that reflect the racial diversity of the student population, allow libraries to promote equity and inclusion, build self-esteem and confidence, and support the development of critical thinking skills (ALA, 2023a).

Neuman and Celano (2001), found students who have access to diverse books are more likely to develop strong literacy skills, positive attitudes towards people of different backgrounds and to have positive social-emotional development. Bishop (1990) found that exposure to diverse literature can lead to increased self-awareness, empathy, and understanding of others. Exposure to diverse viewpoints enables students to cultivate critical thinking skills, encouraging them to explore various perspectives and question entrenched stereotypes.

Despite recognizing the importance of diversifying library collections, challenges exist. Measuring the diversity of a school library allows librarians to identify and address

gaps in the library collection (American Association of School Librarians, 2018).

Measurement of a library collection can be done through a variety of methods. These methods can range from conducting surveys of students and staff, analyzing circulation data, and reviewing the collection against existing diversity standards. Once librarians have identified gaps, they can develop a plan to address them, by purchasing new books. Diversity audits can be used to develop a reflective collection. However, developing strategies to successfully conduct an audit requires evaluating the criteria that are used (Voels, 2022).

District X recognized that librarians should build comprehensive library collections that mirror their communities (director of library services, personal communication, November 4, 2020). However, while the district has established the objective of diversifying library collections, there is currently no uniform metric available for librarians to appraise their progress in this regard. The director of library services (personal communication, October 18, 2018) acknowledged the necessity for robust library collections that reflect their communities but lacks a consistent metric for librarians to assess their efforts toward diversity goals. The professional development aligns with the ongoing emphasis and initiatives to develop systematic evaluation and measurement in the pursuit of diverse and inclusive school library collections.

Purpose of the Study

District X has established collection goals for elementary library collections. The first purpose of this quantitative research study was to determine to what extent the diversity of picture books purchased for a low-diversity school library and the diversity of the students in a low-diversity school differ based on the purchase year (2018-2019

and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years). The second purpose of the study was to determine to what extent do the diversity of picture books purchased for a high-diversity school library and the diversity of the students in a high-diversity school differ based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years). The final purpose of the study was to determine to what extent the difference in the distribution of purchased picture books and the distribution of the diversity of the students based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years) is affected by the level of diversity in the school.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study could extend the research on library collection diversity audits and collection analysis. Library departments could use the results from this study to guide the action plan and decisions related to analyzing library collections, developing diverse audit policies, and guiding decisions about library funding. Additionally, the results of this study could help District X analyze the state of current library collections with a tool that would allow librarians and library directors to make selection and acquisition decisions based on quantitative data.

Delimitations

According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), delimitations are “self-imposed boundaries set by the researcher on the purpose and scope of the study” (p. 134). This study was limited to one school district’s elementary library collections in a suburban community in the Midwest. Utilizing the district 2022-2023 Demographic Profile, all elementary schools in District X (11) were analyzed for their Diversity Index. Once this

was done, one school was selected that represented a school with a high-diversity index score, and one school was chosen that represented a low-diversity index score. This analysis only addressed a sample of books in a specific collection. Because these books were selected from specific genres during specific purchase years, some titles selected featured inanimate objects and featured no human characters. These books were marked as ‘Not Applicable’ and excluded from the sample. The final delimitation was that the book collection data was from the 2018-2019, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years.

Assumptions

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) defined assumptions as “postulates, premises, and propositions that are acknowledged as practical foundations within the context of research” (p. 135). The following assumptions apply to this study:

- All selected readers on the librarian panel were trained to analyze books objectively and comprehensively through district professional development.
- The calculations of the Shannon Diversity indices used to determine schools with low and high-diversity index scores within District X were correct.

Research Questions

Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated that research questions serve the function of honing the study’s focus by translating the research purpose into predictive statements about anticipated study outcomes that would be addressed by the study’s findings.

RQ1

To what extent does the diversity of picture books purchased for a low-diversity school library and the diversity of the students in a low-diversity school differ based on

the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years)?

RQ2

To what extent does the diversity of picture books purchased for a high-diversity school library and the diversity of the students in a high-diversity school differ based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years)?

RQ3

To what extent is the difference in the distribution of purchased picture books and the distribution of the diversity of the students based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years) affected by the level of diversity in the school?

Definition of Terms

Creswell and Creswell (2018) identified defining terms as one of the first tasks of communicating the study's findings. Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated "that a reader does not read ahead in the proposal operation with one set of definitions only to find out later that the author is using a different set" (p. 40). To ensure clarity of information, this section includes definitions of key terms.

Diversity

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2021), diversity is used to identify the demographics of populations, curricula, and resources. Analysis of USCB data by Menchaca et al. (2023) identified that "diversity is maximized when all groups are

represented in an area and have equal shares of the population.” In this study, diversity was specifically used to describe the variety of representation among a demographic.

Diversity Indices

A diversity index is a statistical tool that can be used to measure the variety within a population or dataset and the distribution of different groups or categories. Diversity indices are widely used in ecology, sociology, and business to assess the diversity of species in ecosystems, demographic representation in communities, and workforce diversity in organizations (University of Idaho, 2009).

The USC used the Simpson Diversity Index to evaluate the results of the 2020 Census. According to a blog post on the USCB website by Menchaca et al. (2023), to analyze the extent of racial and ethnic diversity in a population, the USCB’s Population Division developed tools utilizing research and collaborative discussions by the authors, as well as input from external experts and advisors. The Simpson Diversity Index utilized by the USCB for the 2020 census involved the identification of seven major racial and ethnic groups, including Asian American, Black, Latinx, Pacific Islander, Mixed Race, Native American, and White.

The 2020 Census was presented utilizing several tools to communicate the diversity of the U.S. population. One of these tools is the Simpson Diversity Index. The Simpson Diversity Index is a measure utilized in presenting the 2020 Census results (Jensen et al., 2021) to indicate the probability that two randomly chosen individuals will belong to different races or ethnic groups. The index ranges between 0 and 1, with zero denoting uniformity in racial and ethnic characteristics across the entire population, while a value near one suggests maximum diversity (NIST, 2011). The Simpson Diversity

Index focuses on measuring dominance within a population. This index is particularly suited for scenarios where a few groups or categories might dominate, providing insights into the concentration or prevalence of specific attributes within a given dataset (University of Idaho, 2009).

The Shannon Diversity Index, also known as the Shannon-Wiener Index or Shannon Index, is a metric that can quantify the diversity within a given biological community (University of Idaho, 2009). This index was designed to identify species richness and evenness by providing a comprehensive perspective on the complexity of the community being analyzed. The formula for the Shannon Diversity Index integrates the number of a group and the proportion of individuals belonging to each group within the community (Dykstra, 2021; National Institute of Standards and Technology [NIST], 2011; Statology, 2021). The Shannon Diversity Index (see Equation 1) involves the use of n_i to represent the number of individuals of the i th groups, n is the total number of individuals in the entire sample, and the logarithmic function is applied to each group's proportion to the total population. The index value ranges from 0 to 5, typically falling between 1.5 and 3.5 (University of Idaho, 2009). A higher Shannon Diversity Index symbolizes a more diverse community, which indicates both a greater number of different groups and an even distribution of individuals among those species. This measurement tool allows the researcher to account for both the species richness and evenness, permitting a deeper understanding of the diversity of a community (NIST, 2011).

$$H' = \log n - \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^k n_i \log n_i \quad (1)$$

Note: Adapted from the *Shannon Diversity Index*, by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, 2011(<https://www.itl.nist.gov/div898/software/dataplot/refman2/auxillar/shannon.htm>).

In this research, the Shannon Diversity Index was used by the researcher to examine the distribution of picture book collections within the specified timeframes. The Shannon Diversity Index was used to complete a comparative analysis between the diversity of the student population and the diversity of purchased picture books in both low-diversity and high-diversity school libraries. This method provided insights into potential correlations or disparities between the diversity of the student population and the variety of available purchased picture books. Furthermore, the use of the index allowed the researcher to evaluate the impact of distribution on diversity. The researcher assessed how the distribution of purchased picture books and the diversity of the student population change by the purchase year; the researcher was able to gain insights into the relationship between representation in literature and student demographics. This analysis contributes to a holistic understanding of the impact of collection practices on both the distribution of picture books and the diversity of the student population.

Picture Book

According to Penguin Books (2017), a picture book is around 32 pages long and between 500 and 1000 words. Specifically, Penguin Books (2017) explained that picture

books are “designed for preschoolers and children the first few years of primary school” (para. 3). Picture books were the focus of this study as they target students who are both readers and pre-readers.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 included the background, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance, delimitations, assumptions, research questions, the definition of terms, and the study’s organization. In Chapter 2, a comprehensive literature review addresses factors of literature diversity, historical context for census collection, text selection, and diversity auditing and text analysis. Chapter 3 includes the research design, selection of the sample, measurement, data collection procedures, data analysis and hypothesis testing, and limitations. The results of the hypothesis testing are presented in Chapter 4. Finally, presented in Chapter 5 are a study summary, findings related to the literature, and the conclusions.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Examined in this study was the closeness between the increasingly diverse racial population of the United States under 18 (USCB, 2021) and the diversity of the library collections these students can access in their schools. Chapter 2 focuses on various aspects of diversity in literature by exploring the changing racial demographics of the United States, drawing insights from the 2020 United States Census. This chapter serves to provide a historical perspective on diversity and representation in children's literature. The diversity in library collection development and the benefits of incorporating a variety of literature into elementary instruction were highlighted. Furthermore, the current climate surrounding diversity in elementary literature is addressed. The influence of the publishing industry and public libraries on diversity and representation within library collections is addressed. The chapter provides information on the analysis of diversity in library collections, offering insights into understanding and evaluating the inclusivity of literary resources.

Changing Population of the United States (Based on 2020 Census Data)

American classrooms are comprised of students from various ethnic cultures, religions, and lived experiences. A diverse makeup of the student population can benefit students in many ways, including exposing them to different cultures, perspectives, and experiences, as well as improving their academic performance and civic engagement (Hurtado & DeAngelo, 2012; Phillips, 2014). According to the 2020 Census data (USCB, 2021), the United States has undergone significant demographic shifts. The "White alone" demographic on the census was an 8.6% decrease from the 2010 Census to the

2020 Census, while the category of two or more races saw an increase of 275.7%. As reported in census data, this change marks a noticeable change in the U.S. population and the ability of Americans to self-identify accurately.

While these changes are significant, the 2020 Census also marked a shift in data tracking that began with the introduction of the Measuring Racial and Ethnic Diversity Working Group by the USCB (Menchaca et al., 2023). Traditionally, the Census classified individuals into racial categories such as White, Black, Asian, Native American, and Pacific Islander. However, the growing diversity within the United States population necessitated a reevaluation of these established categories (USCB, 2021)

The Measuring Racial and Ethnic Diversity Working Group worked to define the representation of race and ethnicity in the 2020 Census and all future Census measures. The working group comprised “experts in race and ethnicity, demographers, statisticians, and specialists in data visualization” (Menchaca et al., 2023, p. 24). Through collaborative discussions, research, and consultations with additional experts and advisors, the group developed strategies to ensure the accuracy and inclusivity of racial and ethnic diversity statistics for the 2020 Census.

The changes to the 2020 Census represented a milestone in recognizing and celebrating the diversity of the American population by official offices within the United States government. Jensen et al. (2021) identified ongoing efforts by the USCB to refine and advance the methodologies used to measure race and ethnic diversity. When working to represent the faces of the U.S. population, the working group developed criteria for the 2020 Census and specifically worked to find a balance between inclusivity and accuracy.

In the 2020 Census, data collection and calculation of race and ethnicity adhered to standards set by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in 1997 (Jensen et al., 2021). The census gathered information on Hispanic origin and race through two separate questions and tabulated responses based on standard categories as defined by OMB; race includes these categories: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and a sixth category, Some Other Race, for those not identifying with the OMB race categories. The census distinguishes between individuals reporting only one race in the “race alone” categories and those reporting multiple races in the “Multiracial” or “Two or More Races” population. Ethnicity is categorized as either “Hispanic or Latino” or “Not Hispanic or Latino,” with the term “Hispanic” used interchangeably with Latino (Menchaca et al., 2023).

Based on Statology (2021), the Shannon Diversity Index, also known as the Shannon-Wiener Index, is a quantitative measure used to assess the diversity of species within a community. Represented as H , the index is calculated based on the proportions of different species in the community. A higher H value indicates greater species diversity, while a lower value suggests lower diversity, with $H = 0$ signifying a community consisting of a single species (Statology, 2021).

U.S. government agencies have a history of using the Shannon (Shannon-Wiener) Diversity Index to better understand the diversity of populations. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development utilized the Shannon Diversity Index in 2007 to evaluate diversity in neighborhoods, offering a perspective beyond simple racial percentages. While the Shannon Index offers valuable insights into diversity, it is

important to acknowledge its limitations. The index primarily focuses on richness (the number of different groups present) and evenness (how equally those groups are represented) (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2007). It does not directly address other facets of diversity, such as cultural heritage, socioeconomic backgrounds, or linguistic diversity. Understanding and measuring diversity is crucial in a multicultural society. It informs policy planning and resource allocation and helps foster social cohesion. However, debates continue about the best ways to measure diversity and its role in public policy decisions.

Considering Diversity Through Multiple Lenses

Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2023b) defined diversity as “the condition of having or being composed of differing elements” (para. 2). However, in American culture, the term diverse has taken on different meanings. Ravishankar (2021), stated that “One in five also use the word “diverse” as an umbrella term while referring to people of different races, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, genders, or disabilities” (para. 3). This kind of use of a term can be an issue because as Ravishankar mentioned it erases the specific identities of marginalized groups. In discussions of elementary picture books, an increase in diversity as a coded term for specific racial, religious, and other groups may be used; however, Ravishankar’s research has been focused on diversity as the idea that a library collection is most impactful when it is made up of books that represent a truly diverse collection of voices. Ravishankar mentioned that overusing the term diversity to speak about specific groups erases the specific identities of these marginalized groups. In discussions of elementary picture books, an increase in diversity as a coded term may be used. This research focuses on diversity as the idea that a library

collection is most impactful when it comprises books that represent a truly diverse collection of voices and lived experiences.

History of Diversity in Children's Literature

Attempts at diversifying children's literature began over a century ago, with the development of W.E.B. Du Bois's *The Brownies' Book*, a magazine developed to cater to children of color (Tucker, 2022), and the hiring of librarians of color with the intent of ensuring that libraries in larger diverse communities were serving all patrons (Horning, 2015). *The Brownies' Book* began circulating in 1920 and was inspired by the annual children's edition of *The Crisis* published by the NAACP, for which DuBois served as the editor starting in 1910 (Herman, 2023; McGee, 2023; Tucker, 2022). *The Brownies' Book* was designed to target the needs of children of color. The magazine featured photos and stories: fictional, factual, and aspirational. As referenced in the dedication of this study, the first volume of the magazine featured a poem by Fauset (1920) titled *Dedication*, reiterating the magazine's goal,

To Children, who with eager look
 Scanned vainly library shelf and nook,
 For History or Song or Story
 That told of Colored Peoples' glory,--
 We dedicate THE BROWNIES' BOOK. (p. 32)

This call resonated with its author in 1920 and continues to resonate with the researcher of the current study. The journey of readers to find history, songs, and stories that speak to the lived experiences of many people is ongoing.

The Brownies' Book highlighted the voices of Brown children, parents, and journalists. Langston Hughes and other notable Brown writers were published in the *Brownies' Book* along with other notable Brown writers (McGee, 2023; Tucker, 2022). For \$1.50 a year, children could see characters like themselves at the center of stories and adventure.

In the early 1920s, *The Brownies' Book* was not the sole initiative aimed at diversifying literary content. Pura Belpré, an Afro-Puerto Rican educator who became the first Puerto Rican librarian in New York City, was employed by the New York Public Library in 1921. Her pioneering work in bilingual storytelling and library services marked one of the initial endeavors to enhance diversity, representation, and access for children of all races (Anderson, 2021; Horning, 2015). She was also known as the author of the first children's book published in the United States by a Puerto Rican author.

In 1932, the Chicago Public Library brought Charlemae Hills Rollins onto their staff. Despite efforts to promote equality through initiatives like *Brown v. Board of Education* in schools, it became apparent that true equity required a more comprehensive inclusion of diverse voices, helping to develop collections and programming. Simply addressing the inequality was insufficient in ensuring representation for those actively pursuing equity.

While this was true for public schools, it was also true for public libraries and the literature. Specifically, this can be seen in the insufficient representation of diverse experiences in picture books. Gladwell (2017) purported that the rulings of the court in *Brown v. Board of Education's* flawed understanding of the psychological effects of segregation on Black children mirrors a broader issue in today's context. Gladwell's

argument extends to contemporary discussions on diversity and representation in children's literature. Gladwell found that by attributing feelings of inferiority solely to segregation, the Supreme Court that ruled on *Brown v. Board of Education* failed to acknowledge the deeper structural inequalities embedded in society, which were the actual underlying problems that made this an issue. The true desire would be to place less emphasis on merging voices and a stronger emphasis on ensuring that a diverse range of voices had an equal opportunity to articulate their perspectives.

Gladwell's (2017) perspective gains relevance when considering the impact of limited diversity in children's literature on young readers' identities. Rucinski et al.'s (2021) results support Gladwell's (2017) argument that the absence of diversity in educational materials and settings can hinder the academic experiences of children. Considering the increasing diversity of the elementary school population in the United States, Rucinski et al. (2021) argued that actively promoting and maintaining racial and ethnic heterogeneity at the classroom level may have academic and social-emotional benefits. Rucinski et al. (2021) suggested that interracial social interactions facilitated by a diverse classroom composition could positively impact children's development of social competence and reduce behavior problems, irrespective of the overall quality of classroom interactions.

When tackling contemporary challenges related to diversity in picture books, Gladwell's (2017) plea to address and eliminate structural inequalities while fostering more equitable inclusion emerges as a vital measure toward establishing a more inclusive and fairer educational environment. Recognizing the impact of systemic barriers, his perspective addresses the need for proactive initiatives that go beyond surface-level

diversity, delving into the roots of inequality within educational systems. This approach, rooted in Gladwell's advocacy, encourages a comprehensive transformation that addresses the symptoms and the underlying structural issues hindering true inclusivity.

Diversity in Library Collections

Libraries must constantly purchase and weed texts to better allow their collections to reflect the diversity of the population they serve and the world. Libraries respond by curating collections that reflect a broad range of perspectives. This commitment is essential for recognizing the significant role libraries play in championing diverse narratives (Voels, 2022).

Fox and Short (2003) explored the complexities of cultural authenticity in children's literature. Their key finding was that stories matter. Specifically, the cultural authenticity of children's literature is an important consideration for educators, parents, and librarians as they select texts and build collections. For this reason, it is equally important to ensure a wide representation of text, and that representations "accurately and respectfully represent the cultural experiences, perspectives, and practices of a particular group of people" (Fox & Short, 2003, p. 23). These experiences allow students to develop a positive sense of cultural identity, learn about different cultures, challenge stereotypes and prejudices, and develop empathy and understanding for others.

The ALA (2012) revisited the examination of gender, race, age, and disability within the library profession in 2012, building on the original 2006 study conducted by ALA in collaboration with Decision Demographics. The initial study, titled *Diversity Counts* (ALA 2006a), was released in October 2007 and revised in January 2007 and served as a benchmark tool for ALA's initiatives, documenting the state of the profession

before diversity recruitment initiatives like the Spectrum Scholarship Program.

Recognizing the need for continuous evaluation, ALA (2012) collaborated with Decision Demographics to update the study using American Community Survey data from 2009 and 2010. This updated data provided a snapshot, considering changes and developments in the profession since the original report, and sought to address the evolving composition of the library workforce, acknowledging the impact of ongoing initiatives and demographic shifts in the broader population (ALA, 2012).

Diverse literature brings educational and social benefits to students, emphasizing the importance of representation. Gangi (2008) asserted that prevailing literature used in literacy instruction lacks diversity, highlighting the necessity for a more inclusive educational approach to enhance students' engagement and proficiency in reading. Gangi discussed the lack of diversity in literacy instruction, particularly in using literature written by White authors and featuring White characters.

The presence of literature catering to children influences reading achievement and reading motivation, which are “personal stories, a view of their cultural surroundings, and insight on themselves” (Heflin & Barksdale-Ladd, 2001, p. 810). Continuous exposure to engaging literature in which children find characters from a wide variety of contexts they can recognize and relate allows reading to become an appealing and successful activity (Bell & Clark, 1998; Gangi, 2008; Heflin & Barksdale-Ladd, 2001). Gangi (2008) emphasized that students are more likely to become proficient readers when they can relate to characters resembling themselves. To enhance students' reading and learning experiences, Gangi (2008) concluded by advocating for more diverse literacy instruction,

specifically incorporating books written by authors of color with characters from various backgrounds. This approach adds an authentic layer to the student's educational journey.

Hughes-Hassell and Cox (2010) considered the role that picture books and board books played in developing a fundamental understanding of the world for young children. The researchers examined the portrayal of people of color in children's board books from 2003 to 2008. Hughes-Hassell and Cox shed light on the persisting scarcity of board books featuring people of color in the United States, emphasizing not only their rarity but also the inauthentic depictions presented. The researchers revealed a stark statistic: a mere 2% of board books published during their sample included people of color as main characters. This scarcity of representation in board books, considered a precursor to picture books, aligns with the central questions of this research, probing the impact of school diversity on student demographics and the diversity of books in school libraries. The research conducted by Hughes-Hassell and Cox (2010) underlined the rarity of board books portraying people of color, a trend that persists despite the increasing diversity in the U.S. The researchers scrutinized the representation in board books, emphasizing the critical need for accurate and diverse portrayals in children's literature. Notably, the study focused exclusively on board books and did not extend its analysis to the representation in picture books.

Justifying the significance of their work, Hughes-Hassell and Cox (2010) emphasized the influential role of board books in shaping children's self-concept. They argued that the insufficient representation in these early-stage books deprives children of color of a vital resource for building a positive self-image. The overarching implication of Hughes-Hassell and Cox's research is the pressing need for greater inclusivity and

accuracy in board books, considering their pivotal role in early literacy development for children from diverse backgrounds. The authors called for publishers to make concerted efforts to create board books that authentically represent the diverse population of children in the United States.

Bulatowicz (2017) explored diverse literature within elementary school libraries, focusing on the selection of titles. Bulatowicz reported the perspectives of librarians in the mountain region, drawing upon survey and interview data collected from five different states. Bulatowicz highlighted the intricate decision-making processes librarians navigate in promoting diverse texts, revealing that librarians walk a delicate balance of internal and external factors when acquiring and weeding literature. This balancing act can lead to a lack of diversity on library bookshelves if not monitored closely, as competing influences play a role in the librarian's perspective in curating diverse collections.

Diversity in Children's Library Collection Development

While the library collection serves as the delivery mechanism providing access to communities, a substantial amount of work is conducted behind the scenes to facilitate the development and maintenance of these collections (Wood, 2021). Librarians are responsible for acquiring, removing, and evaluating texts across the collection (Garrison, 2012). This ongoing and significant task may engage multiple librarians in larger library systems or just one librarian or library assistant in smaller systems (Voels, 2022).

Concerns about diversity and representation in libraries have existed for almost as long as libraries have existed, as mentioned previously, with the creation of the Brownie's book and the hiring of Pura Belper. As early as 1973, the ALA Convention

Keynote Speaker, Clara Jones (1973), spoke of the importance of developing library collections and staff that can truly meet the needs of a wide variety of patrons. The need for diversity in text and staff in library systems has led to a desire to better understand the experiences of library science students in master's and doctoral programs.

As noted by Danky (1994), while trends, analytics, and data provide valuable guidance for collection development, librarians must also be mindful of whose voices remain unheard and which topics have yet to be part of the discussion. Danky emphasized the significance of not only concentrating on popular and notable authors, topics that appeal to patrons, and well-received subjects but also considering underrepresented voices. This approach encompasses content that may be deemed radical or controversial, offering unique perspectives on “human and social conditions” or holding relevance for diverse populations.

Danky (1994) expressed concern about the diminishing subject expertise among librarians, emphasizing that informed collection development necessitates a profound understanding of subjects. Although elementary school libraries may benefit from their niche collections, Danky warned of the prevalence of outsourcing practices seen by electronic aggregators like Titlewave, School Library Journal List, and Mackin. Specifically, Danky called for reorienting collection-development practices, encouraging librarians to embrace a non-exclusionary approach. The inclusion of diverse and overlooked materials, challenging the prevailing model that deems only pretty and easy-to-digest works worthy of inclusion, was also advocated by Danky.

The ALA (2004) outlined that librarians prioritize access, confidentiality/privacy, democracy, diversity, education and lifelong learning, intellectual freedom, preservation,

the public good, professionalism, service, social responsibility, and sustainability. These principles are reiterated throughout ALA communication and bylaws. Librarian policies focus on consistency with the significance of cultivating a varied library collection through purposeful collection development. These processes highlight the importance of granting access to information to everyone, irrespective of their background or beliefs. For this reason, the process of collection and development plays a critical role in ensuring equitable representation in library collections (Voels, 2022). The items selected, purchased, weeded, and removed, and the criteria used to guide decision-making play a significant role in the development of collections (Wood, 2021).

In their 2014 study, Virginia and Deyoe investigated the representation of diversity within school, public, and academic library collections in the United States, particularly focusing on titles catering to children, young adults, and pre-service teachers. The researchers aimed to assess the extent to which these libraries reflected the diverse families and life experiences in the communities they served. By reviewing library catalog records across the United States, the researchers systematically identified titles meeting predefined checklist criteria for diversity, shedding light on the landscape of representation in libraries. Virginia and Deyoe (2014) sought to determine how effectively libraries connect patrons with titles that authentically represent the diverse fabric of their communities. They examined how well a library reflects the diversity of its community, highlighting the need for collections that connect with the different experiences of library users. Virginia and Deyoe justified their approach by highlighting the significance of libraries serving as a delivery method for diverse narratives, and their study investigated the tools and resources available to librarians when curating texts that

center around diverse characters and families. The results of their research illuminated the efficacy of libraries in providing resources that mirror the diversity of their communities, setting the stage for an exploration of the existing tools and challenges facing librarians as they work to curate inclusive collections.

Library collections do not simply exist; these books are selected and purchased. These collections are built and curated by library professionals. For this reason, it is important to understand the demographics of the library professionals. ALA (2023b) and Davis and Hall (2007) reported on the diversity in the library profession and found that the library profession had become more diverse since 2006. However, ALA (2012b) pointed out that there is still room for improvement. ALA (20212b) indicated that the librarian profession remains predominantly White and female. ALA identified that in their sample, roughly 24% of the librarian workforce included people of color, and it is important to note that they are underrepresented in leadership positions. The ALA (2012b) found in their 2010 Diversity Counts report that the number of librarians with disabilities has increased slightly since 2006, but this group is still underrepresented in the profession. ALA (2012b, 2023b) reinforced the significance of diversity within the library profession and stressed the need to enhance recruitment and retention efforts to achieve a more diverse librarian workforce.

Merriam-Webster (2023a) defined cultural competency as, “the ability to effectively interact with people from cultures different from one’s own, especially through a knowledge and appreciation of cultural differences” (para. 2) is critical for librarians. Cultural competency allows librarians to work effectively with people from diverse backgrounds, as well as plan, purchase, and consider the needs of these people.

However, Mestre (2010) acknowledged that only a limited number of librarians have received training that specifically addresses these efforts in diversity awareness.

Mestre (2010) emphasized the evolving role of librarians and the need for embracing cultural competency. Libraries serve communities with diverse cultural backgrounds. Librarians are expected to navigate and respond to these differences, as they uphold the ALA's core goals of providing access to all people (ALA, 2012). A key aspect is the importance of understanding and appreciating cultural nuances when considering collection development. Librarians must acquire the skills to foster an inclusive environment. Mestre (2010) specifically affirmed the positive impact of diversity training on librarians' ability to display cultural competency within their libraries. Librarians who underwent diversity training demonstrated a heightened awareness of their own cultural biases in daily interactions and collection development. Specifically, they displayed an increased ability to identify and address cultural barriers that impacted their ability to serve patrons. This increased awareness created a more welcoming and inclusive environment for all library patrons (Mestre, 2010).

Establishing a diverse work force of librarians is not enough to diversify libraries, as shown by the results of both the 2007 and 2010 Diversity Counts Reports. Libraries must intentionally create culturally competent and inclusive material selection and acquisition practices to ensure that libraries remain relevant and meaningful for large populations of patrons (ALA, 2012). The Diversity Counts Study by the ALA (2012) highlighted the changing demographics of America. The 2010 projections that Latinos and African Americans would outnumber White and Asian Americans were in line with the recent 2020 Census result reported earlier in this chapter.

Jaeger et al. (2011) evaluated how the library sciences can increase their emphasis on diversity inclusion and under representation. The researchers identified several areas of focus to increase the prevalence of diversity in library development efforts. Jaeger et al. suggested areas of focus range from addressing representation among students, staff, faculty, and professionals, framing diversity initiatives to include all populations that are diverse and underrepresented in terms of information and increasing research about the impact of diversity, inclusion, and representation. Ultimately, the research done by the ALA (2006, 2012a, 2012b, 2023a) over the last several years through the diversity counts research has stated that without intentional action, library science as a profession and libraries as accessible within our society risk becoming viewed as exclusive instead of inclusive, which prevents them from executing their core value which is to connect all patrons with information.

The award lists selected by Virginia and Deyoe (2014) were specifically designed to identify a diverse representation of families. The researchers were specifically trying to identify the extent to which libraries collect youth literature that included characters from racial and ethnic minorities, characters with disabilities, and characters who identify as LGBTQ. Virginia and Deyoe found a variance in the access to a diverse variety of text through library collections that was determined by their region. The researchers also found a slight relationship between titles that met the requirements of race/ethnicity, disability, and LGBTQ titles held and collection size. Virginia and Deyoe provided great insight into trends across a region, which continues to direct how district or library collection can be analyzed.

Lafferty (2014) found that despite educators expressing the importance of engaging their diverse student population through diverse fiction, there is still a predominance of White authors and protagonists in the library collections at their schools. These findings highlight a discrepancy between the expressed beliefs and the actual availability of racially diverse literature in these school libraries. Lafferty found that the most common choices for full-length fiction books selected by these students were written by White authors and featured White protagonists. Lafferty asserts that there could be several reasons why this is true, including the emphasis on these titles as required texts and the prevalence of these same titles appearing in on-screen depictions such as *Hunger Games* and *Twilight*. While Lafferty investigated the representation of circulated books and their racial representation, the current researcher is attempting to identify if the titles available in the collection align with the diversity of students' racial demographics.

Gregory (2019) provided a clear framework to support librarians as they develop collections. Gregory highlighted the importance of intentional practices in collection development, specifically how data-driven collection development can allow libraries to utilize their circulation analytics to determine what needs to be purchased and the importance of having policies that support collection development criteria. These criteria allow libraries and librarians to have a clear vision that they are following to ensure that the libraries meet the needs of all users, no matter the perspective of a specific librarian (Jahnke et al., 2022). However, policies alone cannot determine how collection development is executed. Librarians need to be provided with a rich amount of professional learning and resources to make decisions for their collection.

While representation and inclusive practices are an important part of maintaining diverse library collections and collection development, there are still issues with self-censorship impacting libraries. National Coalition Against Censorship and the National Council of Teachers of English conducted studies and reported similarities and differences when considering how self-censorship impacted the books educators selected. Participants reported that topics such as sexual content or profanity were significant concerns for librarians and teachers when choosing texts (as cited in Bertin & Davis, 2016). While this research was conducted before Missouri implemented Senate Bill 775, with similar bills being implemented in neighboring states, it supports reports from the ACLU (ALA, 2021b; Fortino & Grumke, 2023) that teachers and librarians are very concerned that text could be misinterpreted as sexual or profane, despite their intentions.

Creating clear criteria and expectations for selecting new text can ensure that collection development meets the needs of all stakeholders. Abarquez-New (2021) utilized a mixed-methods approach to investigate the language employed in state standards and how the term “culturally diverse literature” is perceived within those standards. The research involved a qualitative analysis of the Common Core State Standards and a quantitative evaluation utilizing a survey designed by the researcher to assess teachers’ perceptions of culturally diverse literature. The survey was sent to sixth through 12th-grade educators in Tennessee. Abarquez-New determined that the Common Core State Standards regarding culturally diverse literature are vague and interpreted differently by different educators. As a result of this study, a multicultural text selection rubric was created to guide future efforts. Creating clear criteria when determining which texts are selected and included is important. The ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom

(ALA OIF) tracks data on book banning attempts (ALA, 2023b). The ALA utilizes reports from library professionals and news stories published across the U.S. Between January 1 and August 31, 2023, ALA OIF reported 695 censorship attempts over 1,915 unique titles. This change is a 20% increase in challenges compared to 2022 reports during the same time is significant, because it is also the highest number of book challenges reported since the beginning of tracking book challenges by the ALA 20 years put into place since 2003. While 695 attempts were recorded, they targeted 3,923 titles, meaning that attempts often included multiple texts being challenged by one person. In contrast, in the past, most challenges only sought to remove or restrict a single book (ALA, 2023b). Director of the ALA OIF, Deborah Caldwell-Stone, expressed concerns about the relationship between these large challenge campaigns and the organizations communicating political agendas, over established policies, and First Amendment rights (ALA, 2021a, 2021b, 2023b).

While public and school librarians do not typically consider buying materials considered sexually explicit for minors, the debate about what is “sexually explicit” became part of this discussion. During this presentation about policies a librarian asked these questions: Who determines what is sexually explicit, what is informational, what is artistic expression and what reflects the lives of students? (ALA, 2021b). ALA reported that librarians viewed this as a very fine line; creating a policy that labels these purchases as a Class A Misdemeanor felt like a tactic designed to scare teachers and librarians.

These recent legal events form the foundation for the culture and climate libraries are currently operating within. ALA (2023b) noted, “The vast majority of challenges were to books written by or about a person of color or a member of the LGBTQIA+

community” (ALA, 2023b, para. 5). Books that center marginalized cultures and identities are challenged at a much higher level, and for this reason being aware of the role that gender, race, and sexual identity play in book challenges is an important part of the information related to this topic (ALA, 2023b).

Bertin and Davis (2016) found that both teachers and librarians are more likely to avoid purchasing, recommending, and utilizing books that contain sexual content or profanity. When considering the purchases and title usage, Bertin and Davis found that librarians relied heavily on reviews to determine their purchases. In contrast, 67% of teachers considered the diversity of their student population and community when making purchases.

Schools and libraries have had to consider what this increase in book challenges means for their collection development and programming. National organizations support the right-to-read policies (ALA, 2006). The ALA has supported the Right to Read statement since June 25, 1953. In the Right to Read statement, the ALA (2006b) outlined the vital role of publishers and librarians in providing diverse and differing views to the public. The ALA (2006b) asserted that suppression of nonconformist ideas and the act of stifling such thoughts would undermine the democratic process. The ALA (2006b) statements support those individuals, including children, having the freedom to choose from conflicting opinions, emphasizing that publishers and librarians should not impose their political, moral, or aesthetic views. The ALA (2023a) has advocated for the freedom to read without prejudice or labeling, rejecting the idea of individuals or groups determining what is suitable for others. While families can and will decide what is

appropriate or suitable for their families and children, it is the job of libraries to provide a wide collection of options from which families can choose (ALA, 2023a).

Why Do Diverse Collections Matter?

The rise in book challenges over the past several years has heightened librarians' and schools' apprehensions when acquiring titles for their collections (ALA 2023b). This surge in concerns extends to the potential for self-censorship among librarians during the collection development process (Voels, 2022). Such self-censorship has the potential to affect librarians' ability to offer access in accordance with the ALA's (2006b) right-to-read. For this reason, the role of diverse collections must be identified.

Frank (1979) researched the representation of people of color in the Caldecott Award books from 1938 to 1978. Frank aimed to evaluate the qualitative and quantitative portrayal of African Americans in illustrations and content on the Caldecott Award Books and Honor Book list from 1938 to 1978. Utilizing content analysis and an analytic instrument based on specific criteria, Frank focused on identifying patterns, changes over time, and the quality of representation. The findings indicated a pervasive issue of racism in the Caldecott books at the time, with Black Americans either omitted or depicted in stereotypical and demeaning roles.

Key areas of concern for Frank (1979) were limited representation; from 1938 to 1947, only 3% of the books contained Black characters, often portrayed as enslaved people or in negative roles, and none were deemed anti-racist. Continued stereotypes from 1948-1957, with only 1% of books having Black characters, often portrayed negatively, and no anti-racist books were identified. Incremental change occurred from 1958 to 1967, with less than 1% of books depicting Black characters, with minimal

improvement. However, two books appeared on the list noted as anti-racist. Minimal progress was made from 1968-1978, with less than 1% of books featuring Black characters, and only one was anti-racist appearing on the list, while stereotypical portrayals continued, reflecting life in the ghetto. Frank identified a decline in the quality and quantity of Black representation over time. The researcher reported that the Caldecott books did not keep pace with societal changes occurring at the time. Frank expressed concern about the negative consequences of having books that perpetuate racism recognized as Caldecott Award nominees and winners. Frank's findings emphasized the need to address racism in children's literature, especially in an award as prestigious as the Caldecott, to shape children's perceptions and correct biases in children's literature.

Overall, Frank's findings included the following: Only 3 out of 177 books were anti-racist. Black Americans appeared in 21.5% of the books, but 73% were deemed racist, contributing to a predominantly white portrayal. A decline in both the quality and quantity of Black representation was identified over time. The Caldecott books did not keep pace with societal changes. Frank purported that the perpetuation of racism in children's books, particularly in the Caldecott Award Books, has negative consequences on the self-concept of Black and White children, potentially hindering reading achievement. Frank called for specific criteria in book selection, increased representation of Black authors and illustrators, and heightened awareness among educators, parents, and administrators.

Frank's (1979) findings stress an immediate necessity to address racism in children's literature, particularly within prestigious awards such as the Caldecott, aiming to cultivate a more inclusive representation of America's diverse society. Frank

highlighted the significant influence literature holds in shaping children's perceptions. Additionally, she emphasized the crucial importance of rectifying biases to foster positive self-concept and enhance achievement in reading.

Frank (1979) observed a positive shift in the selection committee's inclination towards increased inclusivity of African Americans in both book content and illustrations. Despite this positive change, Frank emphasized the ongoing issue of persistent underrepresentation of African Americans and other minority groups within the collection. The findings point out the need for continued efforts to address diversity gaps in children's literature.

Bishop (1990) used a to emphasize the multifaceted role of literature in shaping children's perceptions of self and the world. Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors serve as powerful symbols, highlighting the importance of diverse representation in children's literature for the holistic development of young readers. This literature review explores further research in the field, building upon Bishop's foundational work to understand the ongoing impact and challenges in promoting diversity in children's books.

Within the broader context, the significance of diversity in school libraries becomes evident as it plays a crucial role in promoting equity, fostering inclusion, building self-esteem, and nurturing critical thinking skills. Neuman and Celano (2001) revealed a correlation between access to diverse books and the development of robust literacy skills, positive attitudes towards diverse backgrounds, and positive social-emotional development. These findings point out the essential role that diverse literature in school libraries can play in shaping a well-rounded and inclusive educational experience.

Franzak (2001) explored the theme of racial identity in young adult literature, specifically focusing on the intersection of hopelessness and healing. Franzak researched the portrayal of racial identity in literature targeted at young adults, aiming to understand how these narratives contribute to shaping perceptions of race. While the focus of this study is on young adult literature, the broader implications for identity formation and representation in all literature can be drawn upon to support the argument for diverse library collections, particularly in fostering inclusivity and providing a rich learning experience at any grade level (Franzak, 2001). Together, these findings emphasize the ongoing importance of fostering inclusivity and representation in the field of librarianship.

Furthermore, Darby (2005) highlighted the challenges posed by stereotypes within the library profession, emphasizing the need for proactive measures in recruitment and retention to counteract these prevalent misconceptions. Darby emphasized the importance of addressing stereotypes as part of efforts to enhance the overall dynamics of the library profession. Advocating for proactive strategies, Darby highlighted the significance of fostering an inclusive and stereotype-free environment within the field.

Stanley (2007) provided an examination of the perceptions of librarianship among collegiate students and librarians from historically underrepresented racial groups. Stanley, a librarian of color, revealed differing perspectives on the path to librarianship. Both students and librarians of color expressed a lack of targeted recruitment and communication about the steps required on the path to librarianship within communities of color. Participants identified a lack of mentoring programs designed to support librarians of color. The findings of Stanley's research serve as a reminder of the

importance of representation and mentorship in shaping diverse identities within the field of librarianship.

Adichie (2009) argued, in her now famous TED Talk with over 12 million views, “The Danger of a Single Story,” against the danger of reducing diverse experiences to a singular narrative, emphasizing the importance of multiple perspectives. Applied to libraries, her message reinforces the necessity of diverse voices and stories in collections and the roles of library professionals making these purchases. Adichie’s words serve as a reminder that a single narrative, or a lack of diverse representation, perpetuates stereotypes and limits the richness of the learning experience.

Kurz (2012) explored public libraries, using a mixed-methods approach to assess the selection processes for multicultural books catering to African American and Latino youth. The study’s two main questions focused on the extent of accurate and authentic representation in public library collections and the identification of best practices for acquiring such books. Kurz revealed that South Carolina libraries generally met expectations regarding the number of racially diverse youth books collected, considering factors like youth populations, collection holdings, and budget constraints.

Tschida et al. (2014) argued that preservice teachers need critical tools to select diverse and equitable children’s literature for their future classrooms. Inspired by Bishop (1990), the concept of children’s books as both “windows” into new worlds and “mirrors” reflecting familiar experiences, the researchers combine this with Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s critique of “single stories.” Tschida et al. (2014) reported that single stories present limited and often inaccurate narratives about particular groups, limiting understanding and empathy.

To address the concerns of a single story, Tschida et al. (2014) proposed using diverse texts alongside critical analysis to disrupt single stories and offer multiple perspectives. They illustrate this approach with historical events and cultural narratives across different subject areas. Tschida et al. emphasized the importance of moving beyond simply incorporating diverse titles into the curriculum. Tschida et al. encouraged preservice teachers to be critical of existing representations, consider power dynamics within narratives, and actively seek out voices from marginalized groups. Ultimately, the researchers advocated for using children's literature as a tool to promote awareness, empathy, and social justice, challenging single stories.

Bishop (1990) proposed that exposure to diverse literature not only enhances self-awareness, empathy, and understanding of others but also empowers students to develop critical thinking skills and challenge stereotypes. Hammond's (2015) research was focused on culturally responsive teaching and is in harmony with the objective of offering materials that resonate with the diverse backgrounds of students, fostering an inclusive learning environment. Both perspectives emphasize the educational benefits of incorporating diverse content to promote holistic development and understanding among learners. Diverse collections offer readers a multiplicity of voices, perspectives, and narratives that contribute to a more comprehensive and nuanced worldview. Hammond's (2015) work on culturally responsive teaching and the brain is a resource for districts and educators reflecting on education and inclusivity. Hammond provided insights into the approaches employed to create a culturally responsive learning environment. The link between culturally responsive teaching and the contents of diverse library collections becomes evident as library collections can become instrumental in providing students

with materials that reflect their backgrounds and expose them to a wide array of cultures, promoting a sense of belonging and understanding.

Brown (2017) conducted a research analysis of the Caldecott Award and Honor books from 1979 to 2009 to replicate the work of Frank (1979). Brown (2017) identified a continued need for more realistic and inclusive portrayals, advocating for characters that represent multiple ethnic groups and engage in respectful relationships within the storyline. Notably, Brown (2017) found that the examined books showed no negative racial overtones in illustrations or text. Brown's research marks the shift in representation in award-winning books from 1979 to 2009 and supports the current research to determine if this change has begun to significantly impact the wider selection pool.

Diverse books have the power to ignite positive change and foster connections between different cultures. López-Robertson (2017) exemplified this through the exploration of cultural diversity. López-Robertson identified that when children see themselves reflected in the pages, it fosters self-acceptance and understanding, laying the groundwork for empathy and inclusivity. Beyond personal growth, López-Robertson found that diverse books can illuminate social justice issues and inspire young minds to become agents of change in their communities. By actively seeking and promoting diverse voices, individuals and society can be empowered to embrace the richness of the human experience and work collaboratively towards a more equitable future.

Exploring diversity in children's literature is fundamental to fostering positive self-identity and cultivating a broader understanding of the world for young readers. Bishop's influential metaphor, introduced in her 1990 essay, serves as a foundational concept in the discourse on diversity within books. Bishop extended her metaphor to

include windows, offering glimpses into other cultures and worlds. These books broaden a child's understanding of diverse experiences, cultivating empathy and appreciation for the richness of human diversity. The metaphor further encompasses sliding glass doors, symbolizing books that invite children to step into and experience other worlds firsthand. An immersive encounter with diverse narratives fosters empathy, allowing children to appreciate the unique perspectives and experiences of others. Bishop's metaphor has achieved widespread recognition and adoption within the realm of children's literature. The incorporation of windows, mirrors and sliding glass doors into discussions about diversity has emphasized the significance of providing children with access to literature that mirrors their lived experiences and introduces them to the richness of having a global perspective.

DiAngelo's (2018) exploration of White fragility highlights the importance of addressing challenging racism-related topics through literature, contributing to an informed and empathetic readership. The researchers collectively identify how bias manifests in decision-making processes, directly influencing the selection of texts by librarians and contributing to the broader narrative that diverse library collections play a pivotal role in promoting inclusivity, understanding, and empathy. This insight highlights the transformative potential of literature in shaping perspectives and fostering a more inclusive and empathetic society.

Reese (2016), a Nambé Pueblo scholar dedicated to promoting accurate representation of Native American cultures, extends Bishop's (1990) metaphor by introducing the concept of "curtains." In this metaphorical expansion, Reese emphasizes narratives. The addition of curtains by Reese (2016) recognizes addition the right of

communities to maintain control over their narratives, “curtains” symbolizing privacy. This metaphor specifically addresses literature about marginalized communities, such as Native Americans. The introduction of “curtains” empowers these communities to reclaim their narratives and determine what they want to share with the world and what they want to keep private.

Reese’s (2016) metaphorical extension adds depth to the discussion. It provides a nuanced understanding of the dynamics involved in representing marginalized communities, offering insights into the complexities of cultural sharing, privacy, and agency. Acknowledging the concept of “curtains” adds a richer perspective on the challenges these communities face in controlling their narratives. This extension prompts a deeper exploration of how literature can empower communities to resist harmful stereotypes and decide what aspects of their culture they want to reveal. It reinforces the need for respectful and accurate representation, aligning with the broader goals of promoting diversity and inclusion in literature (Reese, 2016).

DiAngelo (2018) contributes to the literature on racism and diversity with the study of White fragility. DiAngelo explores the challenges White individuals face in engaging in conversations about racism and unpacks the concept of “White fragility.” Defining White fragility as the defensive reaction White people experience when their understanding of the world is challenged. In the context of library collections, DiAngelo’s work highlights the necessity of including literature that addresses race and racism. Diverse collections that incorporate works like “White Fragility” provide readers, both White and non-White, with the tools to engage in meaningful conversations about race, promoting awareness and fostering empathy.

Why Data is Needed to Support Libraries

Evidence-based decision-making serves as a foundational pillar in education. The ability to justify and support library efforts to enhance inclusivity provides support to librarians who are concerned (ALA, 2023b). Leveraging quantitative and qualitative data, libraries can identify gaps in representation, evaluate the effectiveness of current diversity initiatives, and make informed choices to enhance the inclusivity of their collections. PEN America (2016) offered insights into the challenges librarians encounter in promoting diversity. PEN America (2016) shed light on instances of book challenges and the persistent lack of diversity in children's literature. By examining these challenges, libraries can gain a nuanced understanding of the external pressures they may face in their quest for diverse collections.

The Publishing Industry and Public Libraries

The landscape of children's literature is connected to the dynamics of the publishing industry. Children's literature influences the diversity available in materials. Lee and Low Books's (2015) findings illuminate the disparities in representation within published children's books. Lee and Low Books dissected the underrepresentation of authors and characters from diverse backgrounds. By understanding the existing gaps, public libraries can gain valuable insights into the challenges posed by the limited availability of diverse literature and tailor their collection development strategies accordingly. As the publishing industry evolves, so too does its approach to diversity. Examining shifts in this approach provides a lens through which public libraries can comprehend the industry's role as a driver of change (Lee & Low Books, 2015).

Analyzing Diversity in Libraries

Evolving perspectives on diversity are a critical aspect of shaping the landscape of library services. Public libraries have responded to changing dynamics, shedding light on the practical implications of these adaptations. The commitment to advancing diversity initiatives in libraries encompasses multifaceted strategies, ranging from the establishment of diversity goals to the evolution of diversity auditing practices (Voels, 2022). The evolution of diversity auditing practices represents a shift in how libraries approach the selection and acquisition of their collections. Jensen (2017) introduced the concept of a diversity audit. Jensen (2017) used this information to create the “Teen Librarian Toolbox.” Since then, diversity audits have emerged as pivotal tools for librarians to develop more inclusive and representative collections.

Vercelletto (2019) administered a survey to analyze the diversity initiatives of 357 libraries in the United States and present an understanding of the status of diversity work in public libraries. The researcher gathered information about collection diversity efforts undertaken by libraries, revealing key insights into their practices and challenges. Vercelletto’s survey was distributed via email to U.S. public libraries and employed a robust methodology to ensure a representative sample. Responses were weighted to reflect the breakdown of public libraries in the U.S. The findings revealed that only 8% of respondents felt their library served the needs of diverse community members “very well,” while 46% deemed their library’s efforts as “adequate.”

Vercelletto (2019) cited various factors driving libraries’ diversity initiatives, with 42% attributing changes to the demographics of their communities over the last five years. This finding highlighted the impact of community shifts in shaping library

collection development efforts. The survey identified how library location and demographics influenced the likelihood of seeking materials about transgender or gender-nonconforming characters. Vercelletto provided insight into the current state of diversity initiatives in public libraries, highlighting both efforts and areas for enhancement. As public libraries navigate the complexities of serving diverse communities, understanding these findings is important.

A diversity audit is a systematic examination of a library's collection to evaluate the representation of diverse voices, perspectives, and experiences (Jensen, 2017).

Diversity audits are designed to provide more information than a quantitative analysis of titles by analyzing the qualitative aspects of texts. An audit can consider factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and other dimensions of diversity.

Diversity audits assess the current state of diversity within a collection and identify areas for improvement for future purchases. Systematically reviewing library materials allows librarians to gain insights into the strengths and weaknesses of collections. This information would provide librarians with clear qualitative data for writing goals. This process enables libraries to identify gaps, address potential biases, and make informed decisions about future acquisitions (Jensen, 2017).

Diversity auditing practices have evolved to incorporate more nuanced and sophisticated approaches. Libraries now consider intersectionality, recognizing the overlapping and interconnected nature of various aspects of diversity (Voels, 2022). Contemporary diversity audits often involve community input, ensuring that the perspectives and preferences of library patrons are considered.

Clarke and Schoonmaker's (2019) research involved assessing the representation of diverse voices and perspectives in the adult biography section of a library. The diversity audit method used in this context was used to evaluate the inclusivity of the collection, considering factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and other dimensions of diversity. Clarke and Schoonmaker found that current library metadata can identify diversity in limited ways and provide a gap in being able to represent deeper identities. The lack of specific and detailed metadata prevents library users from accessing diverse materials, assessing diversity, inclusion, and representation, and erasing marginalized identities.

In the pursuit of comprehensive diversity audits within library collections, understanding the available metadata in library collections allows for reflection on processes. Clarke and Schoonmaker (2019) researched the use of metadata to analyze diverse library resources. Clarke and Schoonmaker identified potential access points for diverse library resources through an in-depth analysis of 13 metadata schemas. Metadata is data that allows researchers to sort and identify attributes of information. Focused on understanding how metadata elements impact access to diverse reading materials, Clarke and Schoonmaker acknowledged the scarcity of materials representing historically marginalized populations and highlighted the importance of analyzing metadata to ensure broad access to diverse texts while cautioning against unintentional erasure of specific demographics. The results of this work provided insights for librarians seeking to enhance the inclusivity of their collections through effective metadata strategies.

Unlike many examples that predominantly concentrate on children's books, Wood's (2021) audit extended the examination to materials aimed at adult readers, addressing an important gap in the literature. Wood (2021) analyzed the strategies used to determine collection diversity in elementary collections, focusing on books in a collection across varying genres. Wood's understanding of methods, challenges, and insights were gleaned through diversity audits. By exploring Wood's experiences, libraries can glean practical considerations for implementing diversity audits across various library materials.

Wood's (2021) findings highlight the importance of diversity audits in assessing representation in library materials. Wood addresses the term "Own Voices," referring to authors from underrepresented groups writing about their own experiences. Wood details the process of conducting a diversity audit, and the process of identifying diversity in subject headings, and physically evaluating books in the library collection. Wood also identified the troubles when carrying out diversity audits of using Library of Congress Subject Headings and the importance of evaluating author credibility and representation in the collection. Wood found the difficulty of addressing the impact and evaluation of a diversity audit, highlighting the need for continued efforts to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive library collection (Wood, 2021).

Motivated by Jensen's (2017) work, Voels (2022) embarked on a scholarly investigation into the critical role of diversity audits in the evaluation and enhancement of library collections. Voels developed an audit methodology spanning three years, underscoring a patron-based orientation and pragmatic measures congruent with users'

interactions with library materials. The outcomes of this exploration have impacted the current study's emphasis on user experience within library settings.

Voels (2022) identified the need for qualitative evidence to measure the diverse voices in literature. Additionally, Voels articulated the challenges confronted by libraries in acquiring diverse materials. Voels recommended including collaborative endeavors with smaller publishing entities and leveraging data to substantiate budgetary allocations as steps that would improve the library collection development process. Of particular significance is Voels' advocacy for the integration of diversity audit data into many areas of library functions, spanning collection development, readers' advisory, book displays, and programming. Voels emphasized the necessity for intentional and purpose-driven practices, urging the consistent promotion of diverse collections throughout the entire year rather than restricting such efforts to particular months or events.

Summary

Chapter 2 included a comprehensive exploration into the historical dimensions of diversity in children's literature, establishing a foundational understanding of the contextual landscape and the historical perspective on diversity and representation in children's literature. The chapter further addressed the evolving racial demographics in the United States, drawing insights from the 2020 Census. A particular focus was given to the role of diversity in the development of library collections, with a specific emphasis on the benefits associated with integrating diverse literature into elementary library development.

Chapter 3

Methods

The first purpose of this quantitative research study was to determine to what extent the diversity of picture books in a low-diversity (School Z) school library and the diversity of the students in the low-diversity school differ based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2022 and 2021-2023 school years). The second purpose of the study was to determine to what extent the diversity of picture books purchased in the high-diversity (School Y) school library and the diversity of the students in a high-diversity school differ based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years). The final purpose of the study was to determine to what extent the difference in the distribution of picture books and the distribution of the diversity of the students based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years) is affected by the level of diversity in the school.

Chapter 3 includes an explanation of the design of the study. This explanation allows the reader to have a clear understanding of the research process. The researcher used quantitative research that involved the use of document analysis as she worked to develop a broader understanding of the closeness of racial representation between the collection of picture books purchased in two school libraries over three years and the racial diversity of the student populations in both schools. The researcher explains the research design, an explanation of the selection of the sample, and a description of measurement and data collection procedures. Finally, this chapter includes an overview of the data analysis and hypothesis testing, study limitations, and a summary.

Research Design

Quantitative research involves the collection of numerical data to explain a particular phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This study followed a quantitative research design, conducted using archived data from School District X. The variables of interest were the race of the main character in the purchased picture books (Latino, White, Black, American Indian, Pacific Islander, Asian, Multi-Racial), race of the student population (Latino, White, Black, American Indian, Pacific Islander, Asian, Multi-Racial), school years (2018-2019, 2021-2022, 2022-2023), and the level of school diversity (low, high).

Selection of the Sample

This research was focused on one district and its elementary library picture book collections. At the time the study was conducted, District X operated 11 elementary schools. Of these 11 schools, the schools with the highest and lowest Shannon Diversity Index calculated using the student population race from the 2018-2019 school year were selected to be the study setting. The formula for Shannon's Diversity Index was input into a spreadsheet. Each building's racial demographics were used to calculate the Shannon Diversity Index. The buildings were rank ordered based on the value of the index. The buildings categorized as the most and least diverse were selected for inclusion in this study.

Criterion sampling was used to select books for this study. Criterion sampling is the method of selecting participants based on their relevance to the research question (Nikolopoulou, 2023). Books selected for the sample met the specific criteria of being picture books, with a human main character purchased during the 2018-2019, 2021-2022,

and 2022-2023 school years at the high-diversity and low-diversity schools. Each elementary library collection is made up of between 7,000 and 10,563 books, and between 150 and 350 picture books are purchased annually. District racial demographic data for the 2018-2019 school year were collected for each elementary school in District X. Using the Follet Destiny program, a report was run, which included all titles purchased for the library between 2018 and 2023. The titles were then sorted by purchase year. Each collection year has specific purchase dates as established by the library media department of the district. A window parameter of June 1, 2018, to May 30, 2019, was used for the 2018-2019 school year. A window parameter of June 1, 2021-July 30, 2022, for the 2021-2022 school year. These dates were based on delayed delivery times during the 2021-2022 school year because of supply chain issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the 2022-2023 school year, the Window parameter was set as May 30, 2022-June 1, 2023. These purchase dates were used to determine in which year each title was purchased. The titles of all the books purchased in the libraries of the two buildings selected for the study were sorted by call number. This process involved removing books with the call number FIC (fiction), popularly called chapter books, and books with the call number 000 AA- 999.99 ZZ, nonfiction books. After removing these selections, the remaining titles were books with the call number E (Everybody) picture books. The picture books were then sorted by the year they were acquired.

A school library collection expert was informed of the research. First, the library collection expert was asked to use the criteria of picture books purchased during the 2018-2019, 2021-2022, and 2022-23 school years at the high-diversity school to run a collection report in Follett Destiny. The expert was then asked to eliminate any titles that

did not have the call number E (everybody, picture books). The expert was asked to use the window of the purchasing parameters for the 2018-2019 school year provided above to refine the title list. This title list was compared to the title list created by the researcher using picture books purchased during the 2018-2019, 2021-2022, and 2022-23 school years, at the high-diversity school. The lists were found to match. This validation allowed the researcher to duplicate this same process for both the high-diversity and low-diversity schools during the 2018-2019, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023 school years to create six title lists.

Next, the library collection expert was asked to use the same criteria provided above to verify the sample list the researcher had created. This list eliminated purchased picture book titles from the sample that did not feature human main characters on the cover and or in the publisher description. The expert was given a sample title list matching the criteria above for 2018-2019 for the high-diversity school. The expert was asked to use the Follett Destiny database to view the book titles on the provided list (see Appendix B). The library collection expert was asked to view the cover and publisher description for each title on the sample list. Using the criteria provided above, the library collection expert was asked to determine whether the books on the sample list had humans as main characters. The library collection expert indicated these findings by marking a one in the human column character for titles that had human characters and a zero in the human column character for titles that did not have human characters. After completing this, the expert found that their report for titles matching the criteria was the same as the researcher's report. The expert also found that when using the provided

criteria to evaluate the sample title list, their findings aligned with the researcher's findings.

Finally, the expert was asked to view a sample survey form intended for use by three librarians who were selected to serve on a librarian panel. The expert was asked to review the form and share insight regarding the ease of use, the completeness of the questions being asked, and any modifications that may be needed for clarity. After viewing the sample survey (see Appendix B), the library collection expert found it clear and concise and suggested no revisions. After receiving feedback from the expert, the researcher replicated the same process on all title lists for all three school years at both schools to remove non-human characters and create surveys. Below (see Table 2), the table includes the original count of purchased picture books for the 2018-2019, 2021-2022, and 2022-23 school years at the high-diversity (School Y) and low-diversity schools (School Z).

Table 2

Picture Book Count by School and Year

School/Titles	2018-2019	2021-2022	2022-2023
High Diversity School			
Total Picture Books Purchased	121	194	168
Human Main Characters	53	75	68
Low Diversity School			
Total Picture Books Purchased	209	375	391
Human Main Characters	104	195	214

Next, each list of picture books was checked for duplications of titles across purchase years and school buildings. When duplication of titles was found, the titles were recorded in the duplication column with a one, as well as noting in which year and for which school there was a duplication. When duplication of a title was noted across collection years or schools, it was included in the survey list for the high diversity school year in which it was purchased first. If a duplication was only purchased by the low diversity school, it was included in the survey list for the year in which it was purchased first at the low diversity school. This data was used when creating the survey for the librarian panelists. Duplicated titles were marked to ensure that the librarian panel only reviewed a title one time. However, they were included in the results for all schools and school years in which they were purchased.

Measurement

This section provides an overview of the measurement of variables in the study. The variables of interest were the race of the main character in the purchased picture books (Latino, White, Black, American Indian, Pacific Islander, Asian, Multi-Racial), race of the student population (Latino, White, Black, American Indian, Pacific Islander, Asian, Multi-Racial), school years (2018-2019, 2021-2022, 2022-2023), and the level of school diversity (low, high).

In RQ1, the variables of interest were the race of the main character in the purchased picture books (Latino, White, Black, American Indian, Pacific Islander, Asian, Multi-Racial) at a low-diversity school, race of the student population (Latino, White, Black, American Indian, Pacific Islander, Asian, Multi-Racial) at a low-diversity school, during the school years (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2019 and 2022-

2023 school years). In RQ2, the variables of interest were the race of the main character in the purchased picture books (Latino, White, Black, American Indian, Pacific Islander, Asian, Multi-Racial) at a high-diversity school, the race of the student population (Latino, White, Black, American Indian, Pacific Islander, Asian, Multi-Racial) at a high-diversity school, during the school years (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years). In RQ3, the researcher explored how the difference in the distribution of purchased picture books and the distribution of the student population is affected by the level of diversity (high-diversity, low-diversity) based on varying purchase years. The filter for sampling the two buildings, based on the criterion, diversity level, is used as a variable when addressing RQ3 to find if the difference between distributions across the years was affected by the level of diversity in the building.

The researcher collected district racial demographics and applied Shannon's Diversity Index (NIST, 2011) to compute the Diversity Index for each elementary school for the 2018-2019, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years. The Shannon Diversity Index quantified the diversity within a collection and offered an understanding of the distribution of different student races. This index was calculated with the equation detailed in Chapter 1 (see Equation 1, p. 12). The use of the Shannon Diversity Index allows for a detailed interpretation of the racial composition within each school's library collection over time (University of Idaho, 2009). The decision to focus on schools with the highest and lowest diversity index scores was informed by the need to explore and compare collections that serve students with varying levels of racial diversity.

To assess the race of main characters in picture books, the researcher analyzed a librarian expert's previous review of book titles, authors, covers, publisher synopses, and

identified main character races (see Appendix C). This information was then used to create separate surveys for each school and year (see Appendix C). These surveys, distributed to panel librarians, asked them to identify the main character's race for each picture book listed in reports gathered from Follett Destiny. Picture book titles that appeared on several purchase lists were accounted for and included on the final data analysis form for the purchase year and location they were acquired. The race of the main character for each book included in the survey was compiled and recorded in a single Excel workbook. The information from the form was then entered into an Excel spreadsheet, and the diversity distribution for the picture books for each year and each building was constructed based on the data in the form. The same library collection development expert utilized earlier was asked to review a survey sample (Appendix C) created by the researcher. The library collection development expert was asked to review the form and share their insights regarding its ease of use, completeness, and any modifications they might suggest.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher received approval from District X on October 18, 2022 (see Appendix D) to conduct research utilizing library and student racial demographic records. Since the racial composition of the student population of two buildings, as well as collecting and analyzing picture book covers and descriptions, did not involve human participants the Institutional Review Board Chair indicated on September 5, 2023, that no approval was needed from the Baker University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix E). Although student circulation records are recorded and tracked by the

libraries, this information is not included in this study. Library collection data was retrieved without connection to student circulation records.

Librarians of varying personal demographics were identified as panel members. Panel members had all attended district-provided trainings on collection development. The library panel members were contacted and asked to participate and to attend a kickoff meeting via Zoom on November 1, 2023 (see Appendix F). During this meeting, panel members were introduced to the research, a list of expectations and a timeline (see Appendix G).

Library professionals who had been selected for the library panel were asked to use the survey to identify the race of the main character of the purchased picture books. Each panel member was assigned a survey that included a collection of picture book titles to review and record the main characters' racial demographics (see Appendix C). Due to the volume of books being reviewed, a rotating pattern was created. Each picture book title was assigned to two library panelists in a randomly rotating order. Marking the reviewers with Y (Yes) and N (No) for the researcher to determine who would be assigned each title (see Appendix H). The librarian panel entered their findings into the survey. The survey results were reviewed by the researcher to pinpoint any inconsistencies or missing details. When two panelists disagreed about the racial demographics of one title, the researcher determined the racial demographics to report. When one panelist provided a racial demographic and one panelist reported that the race could not be identified, the researcher recorded the race identified by a panelist as the result.

Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

The research questions (RQs) were addressed using Chi-square tests for goodness of fit. This statistical approach allowed the researcher to determine to what extent the diversity of picture books in each school across each year by identifying the relationships between variables. The Shannon Diversity Index is presented as a descriptive statistic.

RQ1

To what extent does the diversity of picture books purchased for a low-diversity school library and the diversity of the students in a low-diversity school differ based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years)?

H1. The diversity of picture books purchased for a low-diversity school library and the diversity of the students in a low-diversity school differ based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years).

Two chi-square tests for goodness of fit were conducted to test H1 because the frequency distribution for one categorical variable was analyzed for picture books purchased for a low-diversity school library during the 2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years. A frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies was constructed for the categorical variable, book diversity. The distribution of student diversity was used to calculate the expected frequencies for each of the tests. The observed frequencies were compared to the expected frequencies for each chi-square test. The level of significance was set at .05. The results of the two chi-square tests were compared to evaluate H1. The Shannon's Diversity Index was calculated to accompany the results of each test. The Shannon's Diversity Index is reported for each distribution.

H2. The diversity of picture books purchased for a low-diversity school library and the diversity of the students in a low-diversity school differ based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years).

Two chi-square tests for goodness of fit were conducted to test H2 because the frequency distribution for one categorical variable was analyzed for picture books purchased for a low-diversity school library during the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years. A frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies was constructed for the categorical variable, book diversity. The distribution of student diversity was used to calculate the expected frequencies for each of the tests. The observed frequencies were compared to the expected frequencies for each chi square test. The level of significance was set at .05. The results of the two chi square tests were compared to evaluate H2. The Shannon's Diversity Index was calculated to accompany the results of each test. The Shannon's Diversity Index is reported for each distribution.

RQ2

To what extent does the diversity of picture books purchased for a high-diversity school library and the diversity of the students in a low-diversity school differ based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years)?

H3. The diversity of picture books purchased for a high-diversity school library and the diversity of the students in a low-diversity school differ based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years).

Two chi-square tests for goodness of fit were conducted to test H3 because the frequency distribution for one categorical variable was analyzed for picture books

purchased for a high-diversity school library during the 2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years. A frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies was constructed for the categorical variable, book diversity. The distribution of student diversity was used to calculate the expected frequencies for each of the tests. The observed frequencies were compared to the expected frequencies for each chi-square test. The level of significance was set at .05. The results of the two chi-square tests were compared to evaluate H3. The Shannon's Diversity Index was calculated to accompany the results of each test. The Shannon's Diversity Index is reported for each distribution.

H4. The diversity of picture books purchased for a high-diversity school library and the diversity of the students in a low-diversity school differ based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years).

Two chi-square tests for goodness of fit were conducted to test H4 because the frequency distribution for one categorical variable was analyzed for picture books purchased for a high-diversity school library during the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years. A frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies was constructed for the categorical variable, book diversity. The distribution of student diversity was used to calculate the expected frequencies for each of the tests. The observed frequencies were compared to the expected frequencies for each chi-square test. The level of significance was set at .05. The results of the two chi-square tests were compared to evaluate H4. The Shannon's Diversity Index was calculated to accompany the results of each test. The Shannon's Diversity Index is reported for each distribution.

RQ3

To what extent is the difference in the distribution of purchased picture books and the distribution of the diversity of the students based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years) affected by the level of diversity in the school?

H5. The difference in the distribution of picture books and the distribution of the diversity of the students based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years) is affected by the level of diversity in the school.

The results of the analyses that were used to test H1 and H2 using data for the low-diversity school and H3 and H4 using data for the high-diversity school were compared between the two elementary schools.

Limitations

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) defined limitations as factors that may influence how the findings of a study are interpreted or how the results of a study can be generalized to other populations. Limitations to this study include:

- Although there are over 10,000 titles in a library collection, only approximately 3,000 or fewer are picture book titles.
- Research questions are focused on racial diversity in picture books. By focusing on racial representation as presented on the book cover, other aspects such as gender, ability, or sexual orientation were not considered.

- The study may not provide a comprehensive understanding of the diversity of picture books available in the library due to the focus on specific purchasing years and the arrival of new titles.

Summary

In Chapter 3, the research design for this study was included. The process for the selection of the picture books for inclusion in the study was outlined. In this chapter, the measurements used to measure the variable, including student race, picture book purchase year and school diversity level of each collection, were identified. The data collection, limitations and analysis procedures were explained for each of the hypotheses identified.

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent the diversity of picture books in a low-diversity and high-diversity school libraries and the diversity of the students in a low-diversity and high-diversity schools differ based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2022 and 2021-2023 school years). The second purpose of the study was to determine the extent the difference in the distribution of picture books and the distribution of the diversity of the students based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years) is affected by the level of diversity in the school. Chapter 4 includes the descriptive statistics and the results of the hypothesis testing.

Descriptive Statistics

The study sample consisted of 697 picture book titles. These picture book titles came from an original picture book title list that consisted of 1,458 picture book titles. The 697 titles represent picture books that featured human characters depicted on the cover. Picture books were selected from two sites (high-diversity and low-diversity elementary schools) within District X over the 2018-2019, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023 school years.

The racial diversity for students at the identified high-diversity and low-diversity schools within District X over the 2018-2019, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023 school years was calculated. The frequency of the student population's race at each site for each year can be found in Table 1. The original data included the races Asian, Black, Latino, Multi-Racial, Pacific Islander, American Indian and White. Due to the low frequency of

students in the categories of Pacific Islander and American Indian, these categories were combined into the category of other. The racial make-up of these buildings in all three years was predominantly White. In the school year 2018-2019, the low-diversity school had the second highest frequency of Latino ($n = 59$), followed by Black ($n = 46$). However, during this same year, the high-diversity school had the second highest frequency of Black students ($n = 87$), followed by Latino ($n = 71$). Over all three school years included in this study, the low-diversity school maintained the frequency of a large White population followed by Latino, then Black. However, the high-diversity school maintained the frequency of a large White population followed by Black and then Latino (see Table 3).

Table 3*Frequency of Student Population's Race by Year and Building*

Year/Race	Low-Diversity		High-Diversity	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
2018-2019				
Latino	59	9.7	71	14.73
White	459	75.49	257	53.32
Black	46	7.57	87	18.05
Asian	0	0	23	4.77
Multi-Racial	38	6.25	26	5.39
Other	6	0.99	18	3.7
2021-2022				
Latino	52	8.52	75	14.85
White	468	76.72	274	54.26
Black	43	7.05	82	16.24
Asian	8	1.31	27	5.35
Multi-Racial	35	5.74	27	5.35
Other	4	0.66	20	3.96
2022-2023				
Latino	57	9.48	66	14.29
White	453	75.37	251	54.33
Black	42	6.99	81	17.53
Asian	8	1.33	22	4.76
Multi-Racial	35	5.82	27	5.84
Other	6	1.00	15	3.25

Hypothesis Testing

The following subsections contain results from chi-square tests for goodness of fit analysis conducted to determine the relationship between the purchased picture book collections and student population demographics over three school years. The questions and corresponding hypotheses are listed. The methods for statistical analysis and results of the tests are provided.

RQ1

To what extent does the diversity of picture books purchased for a low-diversity school library and the diversity of the students in a low-diversity school differ based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years)?

H1. The diversity of picture books purchased for a low-diversity school library and the diversity of the students in a low-diversity school differ based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years).

Two chi-square tests for goodness of fit were conducted to test H1 because the frequency distribution for one categorical variable was analyzed for picture books purchased for a low-diversity school library during the 2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years. A frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies was constructed for the categorical variable, book diversity. The distribution of student diversity was used to calculate the expected frequencies for each of the tests. The observed frequencies were compared to the expected frequencies for each chi-square test. The level of significance was set at .05. The results of the two chi-square tests were

compared to evaluate H1. Shannon's Diversity Index was calculated to accompany the results of each test and is reported for each distribution below.

The results of the first chi-square test using the distribution of picture books from 2018-2019 indicated a statistically significant difference between the observed values for the distribution of race depicted in the picture books and the expected values calculated from the distribution of the race of the students, $\chi^2(5) = 35.693, p = .000$, Shannon's Diversity Index for books = 1.332, Shannon's Diversity Index for students = 0.853. The picture book frequency for Black characters ($n = 19$) is higher than the frequency for Black students ($n = 6.95$). The picture book frequency for Asian characters ($n = 6$) is higher than the frequency for Asian students ($n = 0.00$). The picture book frequency for Multi-Racial characters ($n = 12$) is higher than the frequency for Multi-Racial students ($n = 5.74$).

The results of the second chi-square test using the distribution of picture books from 2021-2022 indicated a statistically significant difference between the observed values for the distribution of race depicted in the picture books and the expected values calculated from the distribution of the race of the students, $\chi^2(5) = 185.472, p = .000$, Shannon's Diversity Index for books = 1.263, Shannon's Diversity Index for students = 0.821. The picture book frequency for Black characters ($n = 44$) is higher than the frequency for Black students ($n = 10.43$). The picture book frequency for Asian characters ($n = 11$) is higher than the frequency for Asian students ($n = 1.94$). The picture book frequency for Multi-Racial characters ($n = 18$) is higher than the frequency for Multi-Racial students ($n = 0.97$).

See Table 4 for the observed and expected frequencies. A comparison of the results of the two tests does not support the hypothesis of a difference based on purchase year. For both the 2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, the distribution of race in the picture books purchased for the library includes higher frequencies for picture books with Black, Asian, and Multi-Racial main characters. The Shannon Diversity Indices for the 2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years indicate that the main characters in the purchased picture books are more diverse than the student population in a low-diversity school.

Table 4

Frequencies and Shannon Diversity Indices for H1

Race	2018-2019		2021-2022	
	f_{books}	f_{students}	f_{books}	f_{students}
Latino	8	8.92	4	12.62
White	46	69.38	69	113.55
Black	19	6.95	44	10.43
Asian	6	0.00	11	1.94
Multi-Racial	12	5.74	18	8.49
Other	0	0.00	2	0.97
Diversity Index	1.332	0.853	1.263	0.821

H2. The diversity of picture books purchased for a low-diversity school library and the diversity of the students in a low-diversity school differs based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years).

Two chi-square tests for goodness of fit were conducted to test H2 because the frequency distribution for one categorical variable was analyzed for picture books purchased for a low-diversity school library during the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years. A frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies was constructed for the categorical variable, book diversity. The distribution of student diversity was used to calculate the expected frequencies for each of the tests. The observed frequencies were compared to the expected frequencies for each chi-square test. The level of significance was set at .05. The results of the two chi-square tests were compared to evaluate H2. Shannon's Diversity Index was calculated to accompany the results of each test and is reported for each distribution below.

The results of the first chi-square test using the distribution of picture books from 2018-2019 indicated a statistically significant difference between the observed values for the distribution of race depicted in the picture books and the expected values calculated from the distribution of the race of the students, $\chi^2(5) = 35.693$, $p = .000$, Shannon's Diversity Index for books = 1.332, Shannon's Diversity Index for students = 0.853. The picture book frequency for Black characters ($n = 19$) is higher than the frequency for Black students ($n = 6.95$). The picture book frequency for Asian characters ($n = 6$) is higher than the frequency for Asian students ($n = 0.00$). The picture book frequency for Multi-Racial characters ($n = 12$) is higher than the frequency for Multi-Racial students ($n = 5.74$).

The results of the second chi-square test using the distribution of picture books from 2022-2023 indicated a statistically significant difference between the observed values for the distribution of race depicted in the picture books and the expected values

calculated from the distribution of the race of the students, $\chi^2(5) = 465.875$, $p = .000$, Shannon's Diversity Index for books = 1.509, Shannon's Diversity Index for students = 0.846. The picture book frequency for Black characters ($n = 45$) is higher than the frequency for Black students ($n = 11.67$). The picture book frequency for Asian characters ($n = 29$) is higher than the frequency for Asian students ($n = 2.22$). The picture book frequency for Multi-Racial characters ($n = 17$) is higher than the frequency for Multi-Racial students ($n = 9.73$).

See Table 5 for the observed and expected frequencies. A comparison of the results of the two tests does not support the hypothesis of a difference based on purchase year. For both the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years, the distribution of race in the picture books purchased for the library includes higher frequencies for picture books with Black, Asian, and multi-racial main characters. The Shannon Diversity Indices for the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years indicate that the main characters in the purchased picture books are more diverse than the student population in a low-diversity school.

Table 5*Frequencies and Shannon Diversity Indices for H2*

Race	2018-2019		2022-2023	
	f_{books}	f_{students}	f_{books}	f_{students}
Latino	8	8.92	20	15.84
White	46	69.38	54	125.88
Black	19	6.95	45	11.67
Asian	6	0.00	29	2.22
Multi-Racial	12	5.74	17	9.73
Other	0	0.00	2	1.67
Diversity Index	1.332	0.853	1.509	0.846

RQ2

To what extent does the diversity of picture books purchased for a high-diversity school library and the diversity of the students in a high-diversity school differ based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years)?

H3. The diversity of picture books purchased for a high-diversity school library and the diversity of the students in a high-diversity school differs based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years).

Two chi-square tests for goodness of fit were conducted to test H3 because the frequency distribution for one categorical variable was analyzed for picture books purchased for a high-diversity school library during the 2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school

years. A frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies was constructed for the categorical variable, book diversity. The distribution of student diversity was used to calculate the expected frequencies for each of the tests. The observed frequencies were compared to the expected frequencies for each chi-square test. The level of significance was set at .05. The results of the two chi-square tests were compared to evaluate H3. Shannon's Diversity Index was calculated to accompany the results of each test and is reported for each distribution below.

The results of the first chi-square test using the distribution of picture books from 2018-2019 indicated a statistically significant difference between the observed values for the distribution of race depicted in the picture books and the expected values calculated from the distribution of the race of the students, $\chi^2(5) = 22.784, p = .000$, Shannon's Diversity Index for books = 1.210, Shannon's Diversity Index for students = 1.352. The picture book frequency for White characters ($n = 29$) is higher than the frequency for White students ($n = 26.66$). The picture book frequency for Asian characters ($n = 4$) is higher than the frequency for Asian students ($n = 2.39$). The picture book frequency for Multi-Racial characters ($n = 9$) is higher than the frequency for multi-racial students ($n = 2.70$).

The results of the second chi-square test using the distribution of picture books from 2021-2022 indicated a statistically significant difference between the observed values for the distribution of race depicted in the picture books and the expected values calculated from the distribution of the race of the students, $\chi^2(5) = 10.624, p = .031$, Shannon's Diversity Index for books = 1.183, Shannon's Diversity Index for students = 1.223. The picture book frequency for White characters ($n = 38$) is higher than

the frequency for White students ($n = 36.35$). The picture book frequency for Black characters ($n = 13$) is higher than the frequency for Black students ($n = 10.88$). The picture book frequency for Asian characters ($n = 8$) is higher than the frequency for Asian students ($n = 3.58$).

See Table 6 for the observed and expected frequencies. A comparison of the results of the two tests supports the hypothesis of a difference based on purchase year. For both the 2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, the distribution of race in the picture books purchased for the library includes higher frequencies for picture books with White main characters. However, the distribution of race in picture books purchased for the library during the 2018-2019 school year included higher frequencies of picture books with Asian and Multi-Racial main characters and in the distribution of race in picture books purchased for the library during the 2021-2022 school year included higher frequencies of picture books with Black and Asian main characters. The Shannon Diversity Indices for the 2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years indicate that the main characters in the purchased picture books are similar in diversity to the student population in a high-diversity school.

Table 6*Frequencies and Shannon Diversity Indices for H3*

Race	2018-2019		2021-2022	
	f_{books}	f_{students}	f_{books}	f_{students}
Latino	2	7.37	4	9.95
White	29	26.66	38	36.35
Black	6	9.02	13	10.88
Asian	4	2.39	8	3.58
Multi-Racial	9	2.70	3	3.58
Other	0	1.87	1	2.65
Diversity Index	1.210	1.352	1.183	1.223

H4. The diversity of picture books purchased for a high-diversity school library and the diversity of the students in a high-diversity school differs based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years).

Two chi-square tests for goodness of fit were conducted to test H4 because the frequency distribution for one categorical variable was analyzed for picture books purchased for a high-diversity school library during the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years. A frequency table containing the observed and expected frequencies was constructed for the categorical variable, book diversity. The distribution of student diversity was used to calculate the expected frequencies for each of the tests. The observed frequencies were compared to the expected frequencies for each chi-square test. The level of significance was set at .05. The results of the two chi-square tests were

compared to evaluate H4. Shannon's Diversity Index was calculated to accompany the results of each test and is reported for each distribution below.

The results of the first chi-square test using the distribution of picture books from 2018-2019 indicated a statistically significant difference between the observed values for the distribution of race depicted in the picture books and the expected values calculated from the distribution of the race of the students, $\chi^2(5) = 22.784, p = .000$, Shannon's Diversity Index for books = 1.210, Shannon's Diversity Index for students = 1.352. The picture book frequency for White characters ($n = 29$) is higher than the frequency for White students ($n = 26.66$). The picture book frequency for Asian characters ($n = 4$) is higher than the frequency for Asian students ($n = 2.39$). The picture book frequency for Multi-Racial characters ($n = 9$) is higher than the frequency for Multi-Racial students ($n = 2.70$).

The results of the second chi-square test using the distribution of picture books from 2022-2023 indicated a statistically significant difference between the observed values for the distribution of race depicted in the picture books and the expected values calculated from the distribution of the race of the students, $\chi^2(5) = 12.838, p = .012$, Shannon's Diversity Index for books = 1.354, Shannon's Diversity Index for students = 1.226. The picture book frequency for Asian characters ($n = 8$) is higher than the frequency for Asian students ($n = 2.76$).

See Table 7 for the observed and expected frequencies. A comparison of the results of the two tests supports the hypothesis of a difference based on purchase year. The distribution of race in picture books purchased for the library during the 2018-2019 school year included higher frequencies of picture books with White, Asian, and Multi-

Racial main characters and in the distribution of race in picture books purchased for the library during the 2022-2023 school year included higher frequencies of picture books with Asian main characters. The Shannon Diversity Indices for the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years indicate that the main characters in the purchased picture books are similar in diversity to the student population in a high-diversity school.

Table 7

Frequencies and Shannon Diversity Indices for H4

Race	2018-2019		2022-2023	
	f_{books}	f_{students}	f_{books}	f_{students}
Latino	2	7.37	6	8.29
White	29	26.66	29	31.51
Black	6	9.02	11	10.17
Asian	4	2.39	8	2.76
Multi-Racial	9	2.70	4	3.39
Other	0	1.87	0	1.88
Diversity Index	1.210	1.352	1.354	1.226

RQ3

To what extent is the difference in the distribution of purchased picture books and the distribution of the diversity of the students based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years) affected by the level of diversity in the school?

H5. The difference in the distribution of purchased picture books and the distribution of the diversity of the students based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years) is affected by the level of diversity in the school.

As was found above in the chi-square analyses that compared the purchased picture books between the 2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years and the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years for the low-diversity school library and the high-diversity school library, the distribution of the main character's race in the picture books was significantly different than the distribution of the student population's race. However, when the low-diversity and high-diversity school library picture book purchases were compared, the high frequency of the main character's race in the low-diversity school library stayed approximately the same across the three years; however, the picture book purchases in 2022-2023 with Latino main characters were also high frequency. In contrast, the high frequency of the main character's race in the high-diversity school library changed across the three years (see the results of the tests of H1-H4). This contrast indicates that the difference in the level of diversity in the two schools could have affected the results of the previous hypothesis tests. The Shannon Diversity Indices for the 2018-2019, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023 school years indicate that the main characters in the purchased picture books in the low-diversity were higher than the student population, whereas in the high-diversity school, the purchased picture book main characters were closer in representation to the diversity of student population.

Summary

The descriptive statistics included in the study began Chapter 4. The results from the hypothesis testing by school and school year are also found in this chapter. Chapter 5 includes the study summary, the findings related to the literature, and conclusions.

Chapter 5

Interpretation and Recommendations

District X's library department has focused on increasing the diversity in library collections (District X coordinator of media and instructional services, personal communication, October 18, 2018). In the current study, the researcher utilized purchased picture book collections and student population demographics from two schools over three years to determine the differences in their representation. Chapter 5 includes the study summary, findings related to the literature, and conclusions.

Study Summary

This section provides a summary of the research conducted. The summary provides an overview of the problem, which is an insight into the challenge faced by District X in recognizing the importance of creating library collections that reflect their communities, acknowledging a need for a consistent metric for librarians to gauge their advancements in diversifying collections. Also included in this section are the purpose statement and research questions, a review of the methodology, and the major findings.

Overview of the Problem

Students with access to diverse books are more likely to develop strong literacy skills, positive attitudes toward people of different backgrounds, and positive social-emotional development (Neuman & Celano, 2001). The coordinator of media and instructional services (personal communication, October 18, 2018) in District X tasked librarians with building comprehensive library collections. The goal for librarians was that moving forward, there would be considerations and efforts to ensure that library collections mirror their communities (Bishop, 2015). However, at the time of this

directive, and still to date, no standard metric is available for librarians to appraise their progress toward this goal. The ALA (2018) supports diversity audits to measure a library collection's status. However, a standardized process or goal-setting metrics do not exist.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The first purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the extent the diversity of picture books purchased for a low-diversity school library and the diversity of the students in a low-diversity school differ based on purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years). The second purpose of the study was to determine the diversity of picture books purchased for a high-diversity school library and the diversity of the students in a high-diversity school differ based on purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years). The final purpose of the study was to determine the extent the difference in the distribution of purchased picture books and the distribution of the diversity of the students based on purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years) was affected by the level of diversity in the school. To address the purposes of the study, three research questions were developed, and five hypotheses were tested.

Review of the Methodology

The current study involved a quantitative research design. District X's student population demographics were analyzed using the Shannon Diversity Index to determine the school with respectively the highest and lowest diversity. Criterion sampling was used to select the books in this sample. Picture books purchased during the 2018-2019, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023 school years were identified, and the sample consisted of the

picture books in these collections with human main characters. After identifying the books involved in this sample, a library expert evaluated the criterion used and the sample recording document for clarity. A panel of three librarians was tasked with identifying the race of the main characters on the picture books in the sample, allowing librarian panelists to note when the books from the sample's main character's race was non-identifiable or no human characters appeared, for example, characters on the cover were perceived as mythical creatures. The librarian panel reviewed lists of books that included the purchased picture book title, author, cover, and publisher synopsis. The researcher collected and organized this information. Librarian panelists then reviewed picture book title lists based on researcher-determined criteria using the provided forms. The diversity indices for the purchased picture book collection were calculated for each site across all three years. Six chi-square goodness of fit tests were compared to address the research questions.

Major Findings

This study was conducted with three research questions, designed to determine to what extent the diversity of picture books purchased for both low-diversity and high-diversity school libraries differ based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2022 and 2021-2023 school years). The study was also designed to find out to what extent the difference in the distribution of purchased picture books and the distribution of the diversity of the students based on the purchase year (2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years) is affected by the level of diversity in the school. These findings are summarized and organized according to the hypotheses.

A comparison of the results of the two tests for the first hypothesis does not support a difference based on purchase year. The distribution of race in the picture books purchased for the library in a low-diversity school includes higher frequencies for picture books with Black, Asian, and Multi-Racial main characters for both the 2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years. The Shannon Diversity Indices for the 2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years indicate that the main characters in the purchased picture books are more diverse than the student population in the low-diversity school.

A comparison of the results of the two tests for the second hypothesis does not support a difference based on purchase year. The distribution of race in the picture books purchased for the library in a low-diversity school, for both the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years the distribution of race in the picture books purchased for the library includes higher frequencies for picture books with Black, Asian, and multi-racial main characters. The Shannon Diversity Indices for the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years indicate that the main characters in the purchased picture books are more diverse than the student population in a low-diversity school.

A comparison of the results of the two tests for the third hypothesis supports a difference based on purchase year. The distribution of race in the picture books purchased for the library in a high-diversity school for both the distribution of race in the picture books for the 2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years includes higher frequencies for picture books with White main characters. However, the distribution of race in purchased picture books during the 2018-2019 school year also included higher frequencies of picture books with Asian and Multi-Racial main characters, while books purchased for the library during the 2021-2022 school year included higher frequencies of picture books

with Black and Asian main characters. The Shannon Diversity Indices for the 2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years indicate that the main characters in the purchased picture books are similar in diversity to the student population in a high-diversity school.

A comparison of the results of the two tests for the fourth hypothesis supports a difference based on purchase year. The distribution of race in the picture books purchased for the library in a high-diversity school during the 2018-2019 school year included higher frequencies of picture books with White, Asian, and Multi-Racial main characters and in the distribution of race in picture books purchased for the library during the 2022-2023 school year included higher frequencies of picture books with Asian main characters. The Shannon Diversity Indices for the 2018-2019 and 2022-2023 school years indicate that the main characters in the purchased picture books are similar in diversity to the student population in a high-diversity school.

When the low-diversity and high-diversity school library picture book purchases are compared, the high-frequency races of the main characters in the low-diversity school library stayed approximately the same across the three years; however, the picture book purchases in 2022-2023 with Latino main characters were also high frequency. In contrast, the high frequency races of the main characters in the high-diversity school library changed across the three years. This contrast indicates that the difference in the level of diversity in the two schools could have affected the results of the previous hypothesis tests. The Shannon Diversity Indices for the 2018-2019, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023 school years indicate that the main characters in the purchased picture books in the low-diversity school were higher than the student population, whereas in the high-

diversity school the purchased picture book main characters were closer in representation to the diversity of student population.

Findings Related to the Literature

In 2023, limited research existed on the effective use of diversity audits to establish connections between the race of main characters in library collections and the racial composition of the student population in the corresponding schools. Existing studies focused on the racial makeup of award-winning book lists (Brown, 2017; Frank, 1979) and librarians' perceptions of library collection development challenges (Payne, 2023; Voels, 2022). Chapter 2 provided an in-depth review of the literature relevant to the current study, examining research on diversity in award-winning books and collection development analysis in libraries.

The result of the current study supports Voels's (2022) findings that school population demographics can serve as a valuable tool for assessing library collection development efforts and reflecting on purchasing trends. In the current study, the researcher identified that in the low-diversity school during the 2018-2019, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023 school years, purchased picture books exhibited higher frequencies for Black, Asian, and Multi-Racial main characters than the corresponding student populations. The Shannon's Diversity Index for purchased picture book main characters surpassed that for students, indicating greater main character diversity. These findings support findings by Payne (2023) that librarians are aware of the diversity of their collections and are making intentional purchases to change or sustain the racial demographics of their collections.

During the 2018-2019 school year, the main characters in purchased picture books showed a statistically significant difference in racial depiction compared to the expected values based on the distribution of student race. During this purchase year, books depicted higher frequencies of main characters identified as White, Asian, and Multi-Racial than the respective student populations, with the Shannon's Diversity Index slightly lower than that for students.

During the 2021-2022 school year, purchased picture books continued to exhibit a statistically significant difference in racial distribution compared to the expected values based on the student population. Books purchased during this period showed a higher frequency of main characters of diverse races, White, Black, and Asian, compared to the corresponding student populations. However, Shannon's Diversity Index for books remained slightly lower than that for students, indicating that the students' racial demographics were more racially diverse than the books purchased.

During the 2022-2023 school year, there was a difference in the racial depiction of main characters in purchased picture books. Purchased picture books exhibited higher frequencies for Black, Asian, and Multi-Racial characters than the corresponding student populations. These findings support the research of Voels (2022) and Payne (2023), whose findings emphasize the importance of examining the alignment between school library purchases, collections, and purchase goals concerning the diversity of the student body across different years.

The current study's findings support Clarke and Schoonmaker's (2019) findings that libraries do not have comprehensive data to evaluate the inclusion and representation of their collections. While the current study can identify trends in racial holdings in their

purchased picture book collections, other intersections of diversity were not accounted for in this study because accessing the information was not available.

One hypothesis in the current study addresses the change in collection over time. The findings of the study identifying the ability to use the Shannon Diversity Index to measure change over time supports the findings by Lee and Low Books (2015) that the inconsistencies in representation in published picture books require that attention be paid to ongoing change over time. The results that indicated that purchased picture books were more racially diverse than that of the students' racial demographics in the current study support the research by Frank (1979), stating the importance of evaluating the representation of all minorities in book collections to determine which children are being represented and which children are not being represented. The results of the current study were able to provide evidence that the racial representation of main characters in purchased picture books represents the student population of a building over time, identifying changes in representation and gaps in representation of the purchased picture books.

Frank (1979) found that Black main characters were only identified as main characters in 1% of Caldecott award books between 1968 and 1978 and in only 3% of Caldecott award books between 1938 and 1947; Brown (2017) found that between 1979 and 2009 Black main characters were identified in 14% of Caldecott award-nominated books. While the findings of the current study indicated that in 2018-2019, the high-diversity school purchased picture book collection only included 12% of the main characters that were identified as Black, the low-diversity school's picture book collection contained 21% of main characters identified as Black. The current study

supports the findings by Frank (1979) and Brown (2017), identifying a need for continued emphasis on monitoring racial diversity across collections over time to ensure that all racial groups are represented in literature collections. Additional findings supporting the research of Frank (1979) and Brown (2017) include the current studies' discovery that in 2021-2022, both high-diversity school population (of main characters with Black representation at 19%) and low-diversity school population (of main characters with Black representation at 30%) purchased picture book collections contained titles featuring Black main characters. Furthermore, the current study also revealed that in 2022-2023, both high-diversity (Black = 19%) and low-diversity (Black = 27%) purchased picture books continued this trend.

Finally, the findings of the current study support both Fauset's (1910) assertion that no child should scan the shelf looking for stories that tell their story and Bishop's (1990) claim that books can serve as windows, mirrors, and doors, allowing students to see their own cultures and cultures of others through exposure to diverse literature. The findings for the high-diversity school in the current study show that a library collection could be as diverse as the student population of that building, a representation where children are just as likely to see books with main characters who reflect the racial identity of the student population, as identified by Fauset (1910) and Bishop (1990). These findings contribute valuable insights into the alignment between the diversity depicted in purchased picture books and the diverse student population in high-diversity schools, highlighting the nuanced variations over different purchase years. The findings further support Payne's (2023) findings, which identified that awareness of collection diversity is

a key factor for librarians in collection development. Payne found that the diversity of a collection significantly influences collection patterns and trends over time.

Conclusions

This section includes conclusions from this study as they relate to the racial demographics of purchased picture book collections and the connection to the racial demographics of the student populations. In this section, the practical implications for action are included. Additionally, the recommendations for future research and the concluding remarks are provided.

Implications for Action

School District X has actively begun professional development and implementation of collection reviews to analyze and improve library collection development. The findings of this study indicate that both the low-diversity and high-diversity schools have increased the purchase of specific racial categories of picture books with human main characters. However, the findings would indicate that while these efforts may be aligned with the existing picture book collection and the student population in some places, they are not clearly identifiable through purchases. The first recommendation for District X is to implement the use of a metric that allows analysis of the racial diversity of picture books by their existing collection. Findings in the current study indicated trends in purchasing by building; however, there are no clearly identifiable patterns between buildings. An audit of the existing collection, beginning with one identified category, would allow librarians to set clear goals for weeding and future purchases and utilize tools like the Shannon Diversity Index to monitor progress toward their goals. Using the Shannon Diversity Index would allow librarians to use these

same metrics to set purchase goals across the district to align their collections with a specific goal.

This researcher examined the connection between the Shannon Diversity Index of the student population and the Shannon Diversity Index of purchased picture book main characters within a single purchase year. However, district leaders should consider whether utilizing the Shannon Diversity Index for the district, the county, or the country would better align with their overarching goals and vision for elementary libraries. Although the initial goal might be to synchronize collections with the population of individual buildings, it is noteworthy that, even in the school with the highest comparative diversity within this suburban district, the student population is 54.33% White. In contrast, according to the 2020 Census data, the U.S. is 57.8% White, and Missouri is 75.8% White (USCB, 2020).

The variation in diversity across the district and the broader scope warrant consideration. Establishing collection goals based on student diversity as a minimum requirement at the district level would facilitate a cohesive approach to diversification and reporting. Consequently, it allows for a more comprehensive and unified effort to align elementary library collections with the diverse demographics present in the district and across the country. District X could use these metrics to determine the distribution of representation in their libraries over time.

Recommendations for Future Research

The current study examined the extent there was a difference between the race of the main characters in purchased picture books and the race of the student population of a

high-diversity and low-diversity school in District X across three years. The following additional research is recommended to address the limitations of this research study.

- The first recommendation for future research would be to replicate the current study and expand its focus to encompass all picture book titles within all existing elementary library collections, in targeted sections or its entirety.
- A second recommendation would be to replicate this study at the secondary level, addressing the fiction collection. This broader perspective would offer a larger-scale understanding of existing racial diversity representation across all library collections.
- A third recommendation for future research would be to account for variations in racial diversity representation and collection curation. The current study could be replicated in school libraries situated in diverse school districts, including rural and urban settings, using the Shannon Diversity Index or varying Diversity Indices.
- The fourth recommendation for future research would be to develop a complementing mixed-method approach to provide insights into the decision-making processes of librarians. Utilizing methods such as interviews or surveys would help explore the thought processes behind selecting diverse picture book titles and the statistics reported.
- The fifth recommendation for future research would be to develop this study with varying variables, such as analyzing the impact of the author's race, main character's gender, and main character's disability representation on the

collection diversity. This exploration would help to determine whether these specific types of diversity are represented in the collection.

Furthermore, future consideration of the quality and inclusive nature of the text represented at a deeper level through a mixed method study, utilizing qualitative questions for librarians about their collection goals and collection development strategies. Reviewing the presence and impact of the diverse main character representation would build upon prior studies while incorporating the current Census.

Concluding Remarks

The results of this study contribute to a topic that is still in the early stages of development. Identifying patterns and trends in racial representation in purchased books contributes to the research on collection development and goal setting. The findings of this study shed light on the crucial role of building representative library book collections. A diverse library collection not only reflects the multifaceted nature of society, but also serves as a way to ensure an inclusive and culturally diverse understanding of the global community students belong to. By analyzing purchasing patterns through the lens of diversity indices, this research emphasizes the significance of considering the demographics of the community being served when developing and tracking collection development goals. This research underscores the need for libraries to be proactive in curating titles that represent a wide range of backgrounds and lived experiences, thereby fostering a more inclusive learning environment. The findings of this research showed patterns, but without the context of the librarian's entire collection and the collection goals driving their purchases, there is more research needed. In

conclusion, this study underscores the importance of proactive and informed collection development strategies to ensure truly inclusive learning environments for all students.

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Appendices

Appendix A: District X Diversity Driver's and Narratives Glossary of Terms

Glossary of Terms

As they pertain to the School District X Drivers and Narratives:

All People: this includes all dimensions of diversity, age, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and cognitive ability, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status

DEIB: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Diversity: the practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of different representations: age, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and cognitive ability, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status

Equity: the practice of removing barriers and providing people access and opportunities based upon what they need

Inclusion: the action of intentionally providing equitable access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized

Belonging: a feeling of safety in the establishment of high trust/low stress environments; the notion of feeling as if you can be/display your authentic self without the risk of embarrassment, rejection, hurt, or harm

Inclusivity/Inclusive- the practice or policy of providing equitable access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized

Learning Opportunities: an area or opportunity to grow and be challenged; something that allows individuals to acquire new skills, knowledge, and/or practices

School District X Community: the staff, students, families, community members, and vendors served by the School District X

Purposeful Learning: focused learning on topics and concepts that support the demonstration of our DEIB commitments and practices.

Restorative Practices: a social science that studies how to strengthen relationships between individuals as well as social connections within communities; When people engage in inappropriate behavior, they must be empowered to make things right, which may include experiencing natural consequences Stakeholders- staff, students, families, community members, and vendors.

Uncomfortable Conversations: conversations that invite us to learn more about different perspectives and viewpoints; dialogue that stretches us and causes us to grow and learn. (District X, 2022, p.1)

Appendix B: Request for Professional Assistance: Picture Book Survey Analysis

Dr. [REDACTED],

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Ashley Van Horn, and I am a doctoral candidate at Baker University. I am reaching out to you to seek your professional assistance with a crucial aspect of my doctoral research.

I have gathered a list of picture books purchased by two elementary libraries over three school years. This quantitative study has two main purposes. The first is to determine if the match between the distribution of the race of the students enrolled in a low diversity or a high diversity elementary school and the distribution of race in the books purchased for that school varies based on purchase year. The second is to determine if that variation is affected by the level of diversity in the school (high or low).

I am asking you to use the criteria below to access the Destiny database, search for the book title listed, find the book cover and publisher description in the listing, and using the criteria below, determine whether the book has humans as the primary characters. Indicate your choice by writing a 1 in the human column for titles that have human characters and 0 in the human column for titles that do not on the *Title List for Human Selection Validity* sheet (click here to complete: Title List for Human Selection Validity).

Criteria to be used for determining that the primary characters are human:

- Picture books
- Purchased during the 2018-2019, 2021-2022 & 2022-2023 school years
- Has humans as primary characters on the cover
- Human characters are identified in the publisher's description

I have developed a form intended for use by three librarians who will aid in determining the race of the main human characters in the selected books (click here to access the Resource for Library Panel: School Y 2018-2019 Picture Book Titles Purchased).

To assist me further, I would greatly appreciate it if you could review the form and share your

insights in an email, regarding its ease of use, completeness, and any modifications you might suggest.

It is important to note that while your feedback will not be directly used in my research, your feedback will play a crucial role in validating the methods employed. Please be assured that any feedback you provide will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and will only be accessible to me, my major advisor, and my research analyst.

Your expertise is invaluable to the success of this project, and I sincerely appreciate your time and consideration. I am requesting your response by Wednesday October 25th. Thank you for your willingness to contribute to this research.

Best wishes,
Ashley Van Horn
Doctoral Candidate Baker University

Sample:

Title List for Human Selection Validity

If the character on the cover is a human please score 1 if no humans are present please score 0.					
Call Number	Date Acquired	Author	Title/Subtitle	Count	Human
E AND	8/21/2018	Anderson, Laurie Halse.	The hair of Zoe Fleefenbacher goes to school	1	
E ANT	10/2/2018	Antony, Steve.	Unplugged	2	
E ARN	2/25/2019	Arnold, Tedd.	Fly Guy meets Fly Girl!	3	
E ARN	2/25/2019	Arnold, Tedd.	Fly Guy vs. the flyswatter!	4	
E ARN	2/25/2019	Arnold, Tedd.	Shoo, Fly Guy!	5	
E BAR	8/21/2018	Barnes, Derrick D.	Crown : an ode to the fresh cut	6	
E BEG	1/29/2019	Begin, Mary Jane.	Under the sparkling sea	7	
E BEN	8/1/2018	Bender, Mike, 1975-	The book about nothing	8	
E BLA	2/25/2019	Blabey, Aaron.	Pig the fibber	9	
E BLA	2/25/2019	Black, Michael Ian, 1971-	I'm sad	10	
E BLE	8/21/2018	Blevins, Wiley.	The Bremen Town ghosts	11	
E BLE	8/21/2018	Blevins, Wiley.	Cinderella and the vampire prince	12	
E BLE	8/21/2018	Blevins, Wiley.	Goldilocks and the three ghosts	13	
E BLE	8/21/2018	Blevins, Wiley.	Jack and the bloody beanstalk	14	
E BLE	8/21/2018	Blevins, Wiley.	Little Dead Riding Hood	15	
E BLE	8/21/2018	Blevins, Wiley.	The princess and the poison pea	16	
E BLE	8/21/2018	Blevins, Wiley.	Snow White and the seven trolls	17	
E BLE	8/21/2018	Blevins, Wiley.	Ten missing princesses	18	
E BLO	8/21/2018	Blomgren, Jennifer.	Where do I sleep? : a Pacific Northwest lullaby	19	
E BRO	8/21/2018	Brooke, Samantha.	Meet the class	20	
E BRU	1/29/2019	Bruel, Nick.	A Bad Kitty Christmas	21	
E CAT	9/5/2018	Cathon.	Poppy & Sam and the leaf thief	22	
E CLA	8/21/2018	Clanton, Ben, 1988-	Rot, the cutest in the world!	23	
E COO	10/2/2018	Cooper, Elisha.	Big cat, little cat	24	
E COX	8/27/2018	Cox, Lisa.	Not yet	25	
E CUM	8/21/2018	Cummings, Troy.	Can I be your dog?	26	
E DAY	8/21/2018	Daywalt, Drew.	The legend of rock paper scissors	27	
E DAY	11/12/2018	Daywalt, Drew.	BB-8 on the run	28	

Dissertation: Diversity in Elementary Picture Books

Librarian Code:

Librarian Validation Viewer ▾

Directions:

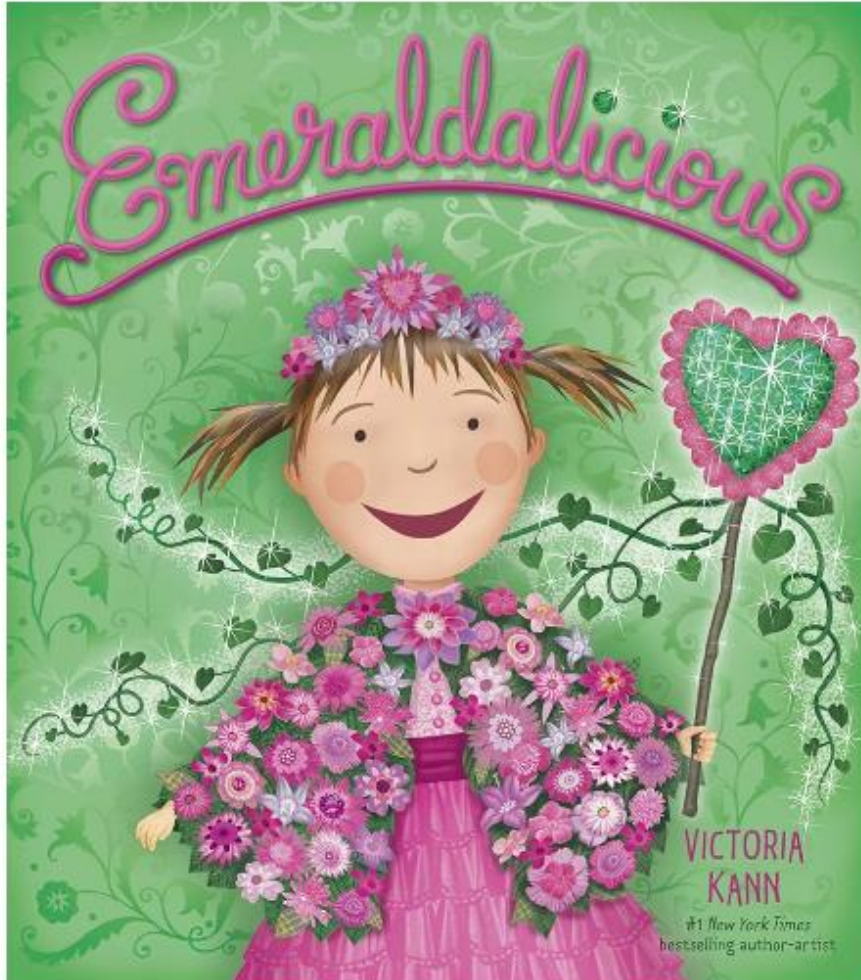
Panel members will be responsible for viewing publisher synopses and covers for titles selected and evaluating the assigned books, focusing on identifying the racial identity of the main character. Please select the race you would identify using the information above.

Submit

Clear form

Book One

Title: Emeraldalicious by Victoria Kann


Publisher's Description:

Pinkalicious and Peter visit their favorite park, but on the way Pinkalicious's wand breaks. She isn't worried at all, because she knows just what to do. She takes a stick, some vines, and a very special flower to make a magical wand.

When Pinkalicious and Peter finally arrive at the park it's covered in stinky trash! But never fear, Pinkalicious is here with her magical wand, lots of love, and pinktastic rhymes to turn the trash into an Emeraldalicious paradise.

Race of Main Character:

- Latino
- White
- Black
- American Indian
- Pacific Islander
- Asian
- Multi Racial
- N/A: Animal & Inanimate Object
- Non Identifiable

Additional Comments

Your answer _____

[Back](#)[Next](#)[Clear form](#)

Appendix C: Library Panel Evaluation Form

Dissertation: Diversity in Elementary Picture Books

Librarian Code:

Librarian A

Directions:

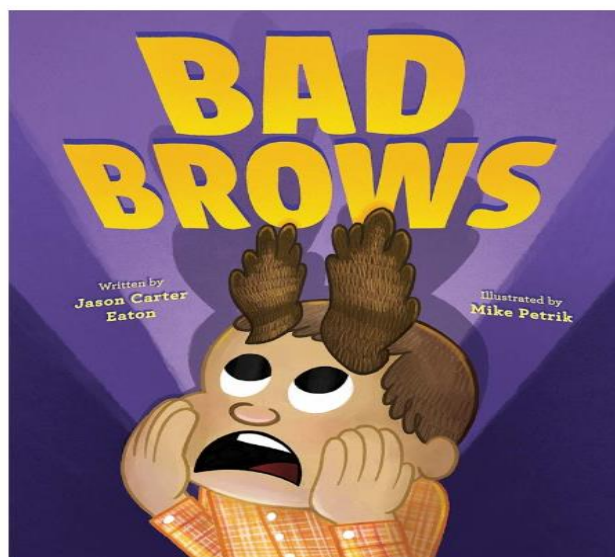
Panel members will be responsible for viewing publisher synopses and covers for titles selected and evaluating the assigned books, focusing on identifying the racial identity of the main character. Please select the race you would identify using the information above.

Submit

Clear form

Book 66

Title: Bad Brows by Jason Carter Eaton



Publisher's Description:

The team behind the Newbery Medal winner and Caldecott Honor book *Last Stop on Market Street* and the award-winning New York Times best seller *Carmela Full of Wishes* once again delivers a poignant and timely children's book that's sure to become an instant classic.

Milo is on a long subway ride with his older sister. To pass the time, he studies the faces around him and makes pictures of their lives. There's the whiskered man with the crossword puzzle; Milo imagines him playing solitaire in a cluttered apartment full of pets. There's the wedding-dressed woman with a little dog peeking out of her handbag; Milo imagines her in a grand cathedral ceremony. And then there's the boy in the suit with the bright white sneakers; Milo imagines him arriving home to a castle with a drawbridge and a butler. But when the boy in the suit gets off on the same stop as Milo - walking the same path, going to the exact same place - Milo realizes you can't really know anyone just by looking at them.

Race of Main Character:

- Latino
- White
- Black
- American Indian
- Pacific Islander
- Asian
- Multi Racial
- N/A: Animal & Inanimate Object
- Non Identifiable

Additional Comments *

Your answer _____

Appendix D: District X Approval to Conduct the Study

School District

Research Checklist and Approval

Date: 10/18/2022

Submitted to: Director of Research, Evaluation & Assessment

Submitted by: Ashley Van Horn

Research Proposal Title by: What We See We Can Be: A Study of Census Data & Library Selection Opportunities

Principal Investigator(s): Ashley Van Horn


Checklist

- ✓ Completed "Application to Conduct Research in _____"
- ✓ Copy of "Informed consent" letter to study population/parents
- ✓ Copies of measurement instruments
- ✓ Approval from university human subjects committee (IRB) if applicable
- ✓ Copy of your complete application package

Approval of this research is contingent on adherence to district procedures as outlined in the document entitled "Application to Conduct Research" and the information provided with the application. The district must be notified of any substantive changes to the information contained in the application. The district reserves the right to withdraw approval of research if the research is deemed to no longer be in the best interests of the _____ students, staff, or the district.

Research Application Approved Denied Date: 11/16/23

Signatures



Director of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment

Principal _____

Principal _____

Principal _____

Appendix E: Baker University IRB Response

From: IRBProposals <IRBProposals@bakeru.edu>

Sent: Tuesday, September 5, 2023 4:24 PM

To: Ashley L Van Horn <AshleyLVanHorn@stu.bakeru.edu>

Subject: Re: Van Horn Proposal Follow Up

Hello Ashley,

Thank you for the inquiry and I apologize for the long delay in response.

After reading through your email and chatting briefly with Susan Rogers about this I see no reason why you need to submit an IRB proposal for the research you are describing. If your methodology changes or if you have further questions, please don't hesitate to reach out again.

Thank you,

Scott

Scott A. Kimball, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Biology
Dr. Roger Boyd Professor of Biology
Boyd Science Center, room MS229
Department of Biology and Chemistry
Baker University
P.O. Box 65
Baldwin City, KS 66006
Phone: 785.594.4563
Fax: 785.594.8360

Appendix F: Library Panel Invitation

Hello,

My name is Ashley Van Horn. I am contacting you as a doctoral candidate at Baker University. I am excited to invite you to be a part of a panel that will support the research for my dissertation.

My dissertation focuses on the level of racial representation in elementary library picture book collections in relation to the population of the students each library serves. This quantitative study has two main purposes. The first is to determine if the match between the race distribution of the students enrolled in a low-diversity or a high-diversity elementary school and the distribution of the race of characters in the picture books purchased for that school varies based on the purchase year. The second is to determine if that variation is affected by the level of diversity in the school (high or low). I have gathered a list of picture books purchased by two elementary libraries over three school years.

To develop a broader understanding of the closeness of racial representation between the collection of picture books purchased in two school libraries over three years and the racial diversity of the student populations in both schools, I am assembling a panel to review a curated list of elementary picture books featuring human characters. Panel members will review approximately 400 books, focusing on identifying the varying racial identities of the human characters by answering one question that utilizes the racial categories established by the US Census. Reviewing publisher synopses and book covers will take 1-2 hours.

Your expertise in elementary library collection development and passion for children's literature make you an ideal candidate for this panel. I believe your expertise will contribute significantly to the thoughtful evaluation of these works.

Key Details

Panel Overview: The panel will consist of school library professionals, each bringing a unique perspective to the research.

Book Selection: I have compiled a list of picture books from specific elementary libraries during predetermined purchase windows. These selections span different genres. Titles that feature non-human characters were removed.

Review Process: Panel members will be responsible for viewing publisher synopses and covers for titles selected and critically evaluating the assigned books, focusing on identifying the racial identity of the main character.

Panel Timeline

Kickoff Meetings: November 16, 2023, via Zoom – An introduction to the initiative, discussion of expectations, and distribution of assigned links.

Review Period: November 16, 2023, to January 5th, 2024– Panel members will have 5 weeks to review their assigned books.

I understand your time is valuable, and I truly appreciate your consideration of this invitation. Please confirm your availability and willingness to participate by November 3. Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact me at AshleyLVanHorn@stu.bakeru.edu or 816-261-8577 or my major advisor, Dr. Susan Rogers (srogers@bakeru.edu or 785-230-2801).

Thank you for your dedication to literature and commitment to promoting diversity in storytelling.

Best regards,

Ashley Van Horn
Doctoral Candidate, Baker University
AshleyLVanHorn@stu.bakeru.edu
816-261-8577

Appendix G: Transcript and Minutes from Library Panel Kickoff Meeting

[Zoom Meeting Opening Slide]

Welcome Slide: Invitation to Participate in Library Panel

[ASHLEY VAN HORN, the doctoral candidate, begins speaking]

ASHLEY VAN HORN: Hello and good [morning/afternoon/evening] everyone! My name is Ashley Van Horn, and I'm thrilled to be here today as a doctoral candidate at Baker University. I'm reaching out to you because of your outstanding expertise in elementary library collection development and your passion for children's literature. Today, I have an exciting opportunity to share with you.

[Dissertation Focus Slide]

ASHLEY VAN HORN: My dissertation revolves around an essential topic - the level of racial representation in elementary library picture book collections. Specifically, we're exploring the match between the racial distribution of students in low and high-diversity elementary schools and the distribution of characters in the picture books purchased for those schools. I've compiled a list of picture books purchased by two elementary libraries over three school years to conduct this quantitative study.

[Purpose of the Panel Slide]

ASHLEY VAN HORN: To achieve a deeper understanding of the racial representation in these collections, I'm forming a panel consisting of school library professionals like yourself. Your expertise in elementary library collection development makes you an ideal.

[Key Details Slide]

ASHLEY VAN HORN: Let's go over some key details. The panel will review a curated list of approximately 400 elementary picture books featuring human characters. These selections span various genres, and our focus is on the racial identity of the main characters, utilizing the categories established by the US Census.

Your job is to use only the information provided and information already have.

[Panel Timeline Slide]

ASHLEY VAN HORN: Now, let's talk about the timeline. We'll kick off with this Zoom meeting on [November 6, 2023]. During this session, I will introduce the initiative, discuss expectations, and distribute links to the survey. You will have from November 6 to January 5th, 2024, to review and evaluate your assigned books.

[Closing and Confirmation Slide]

ASHLEY VAN HORN: I understand your time is valuable, and I genuinely appreciate your consideration of this invitation. Please confirm your availability and willingness to participate by November 3. If you have any questions or need more information, feel free to contact me directly or reach out to my major advisor, Dr. Susan Rogers.

[Closing Slide: Thank You]

ASHLEY VAN HORN: Thank you all for your dedication to literature and your commitment to promoting diversity in storytelling. I'm excited about the prospect of working together on this important initiative.

[End of Presentation]

Transcript of Informational Zoom Meeting:

0:01 Thank you for agreeing to be part of this survey. You will have a link attached to the email sent that will provide you with the first survey.

0:09 When answering the survey, you'll note that your email address is not collected. You will start by collecting your library code listed in the email from the drop down.

0:20 After selecting your library code, you will move on to Thank you. Your next set of directions. For each book, you'll be provided with the title and author, a cover of the book, the publisher's description.

0:36 The first question will ask you to identify the race of the main character as identified on the cover. This survey is looking to gather information about a quick analysis of a book, not a detailed analysis of the entire book experience.

0:54 More of what a student or teacher would say. Experience when shopping the shelves. So that is the reason we are only using the cover in the publisher's description to get an idea, not an in-depth read of the book.

1:07 When looking at the book, please look at the main character, what you notice, what you, think you can gain from that, combined with the publisher's description.

1:17 Listed, you'll have the area to identify the races that align with the US Census data as well as NA, meaning that maybe you believe that the main character is an animal or an inanimate object that was missed by the initial selection panel or non-identifiable, meaning that you don't believe that the race.

1:36 can be identified by the cover. Under additional comments, you're welcome to add anything that might go with why you felt like it was non-identifiable, why you felt like it was an inanimate object.

1:49 Also, if this is marked as required and you do not have a comment, feel free to mark an X and move along.

1:56 Please feel free to answer these questions at your own pace and get back to me. When if you have any questions at the top, you'll notice that each book has a number of those numbers are not the number that they're listed in the survey.

2:09 Those numbers are aligned with the number that they are in the total sample. But there is a progress bar across the bottom that can be used to let you know how far along you are.

2:19 Each sample selection has anywhere from 50 to 100 books, so as you're planning and managing your time, that might be information that is interesting to you.

2:32 Again, if you have any questions, please reach out to me via email, phone call or text message, and I would love to answer your questions.

2:40 Thanks so much and have a great day.

Appendix H: Library Panel Book Survey Assignment

Code	Author	Title/Subtitle	Huma	Collection Purchase Identifi	A	B	C
1	Kann, Victoria.	Emeraldalicious	1	Y1819	Y	Y	N
2	Anderson, Laurie Halse.	The hair of Zoe Fleefenbacher goes to school	1	Y1819	Y	N	Y
3	Barnes, Derrick D.	Crown : an ode to the fresh cut	1	Y1819	N	Y	Y
4	Black, Michael Ian, 1971-	I'm sad	1	Y1819	Y	Y	N
5	Blevins, Wiley.	Cinderella and the vampire prince	1	Y1819	Y	N	Y
6	Blevins, Wiley.	Goldilocks and the three ghosts	1	Y1819	N	Y	Y
7	Blevins, Wiley.	Hansel and Gretel and the haunted hut	1	Y1819	Y	Y	N
8	Blevins, Wiley.	Jack and the bloody beanstalk	1	Y1819	Y	N	Y
9	Blevins, Wiley.	Little Dead Riding Hood	1	Y1819	N	Y	Y
10	Blevins, Wiley.	The princess and the poison pea	1	Y1819	Y	Y	N
11	Blevins, Wiley.	Snow White and the seven trolls	1	Y1819	Y	N	Y
12	Blevins, Wiley.	Ten missing princesses	1	Y1819	N	Y	Y
13	Brooke, Samantha.	Meet the class	1	Y1819	Y	Y	N
14	Cox, Lisa.	Not yet	1	Y1819	Y	N	Y
15	Depken, Kristen L.	Barbie : little lost dolphin	1	Y1819	N	Y	Y
16	Edwards, Karl.	I got a new friend	1	Y1819	Y	Y	N
17	Gonzales, Mark, 1975-	Yo soy Muslim : a father's letter to his daughter	1	Y1819	Y	N	Y
18	Heos, Bridget.	Arrr, Mustache Baby!	1	Y1819	N	Y	Y
19	Heos, Bridget.	Fairy's first day of school	1	Y1819	Y	Y	N
20	Ikegami, Aiko.	Friends	1	Y1819	Y	N	Y
21	Jordan, Apple.	Barbie : on your toes	1	Y1819	N	Y	Y
22	Kann, Victoria.	Pinkalicious : the pinkamazing storybook collection	1	Y1819	Y	Y	N
23	Kann, Victoria.	Goldilicious	1	Y1819	Y	N	Y
24	Kann, Victoria.	Purplicious	1	Y1819	N	Y	Y
25	Kensky, Jessica.	Rescue & Jessica : a life-changing friendship	1	Y1819	Y	Y	N
26	Kerascoët.	I walk with Vanessa : a story about a simple act of kind	1	Y1819	Y	N	Y
27	Kostecki-Shaw, Jenny Sue.	Same, same but different	1	Y1819	N	Y	Y
28	Leannah, Michael, 1957-	Most people	1	Y1819	Y	Y	N
29	Luebbe, Tara.	Shark Nate-o	1	Y1819	Y	N	Y
30	Maier, Brenda (Brenda J.)	The little red fort	1	Y1819	N	Y	Y

Subject: Round One Survey for Elementary Library Picture Book Diversity Panel

Hello,

I hope this email finds you well. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research.

Just a quick refresher of the objectives and the task at hand.

Overview:

I am conducting research on the racial representation in elementary library picture book collections. Your expertise is crucial to this initiative, and I invite you to participate in a unique panel experience.

Objectives:

1. Understand the correlation between the racial distribution of students in a school and the characters in picture books purchased for that school.
2. Explore how this correlation varies based on the school's diversity level and the purchase year of the books.

Panel Details:

- **Composition:** School library professionals contributing diverse perspectives.
- **Book Selection:** Lists from specific elementary libraries, spanning genres and excluding titles featuring non-human characters over three purchase years.
- **Review Process:** Evaluate books by identifying the racial identity of main characters from a quick review of the cover and publisher descriptions.

Timeline:

- **Review Period:** December 10th -January 5th onwards.
- **Survey Delivery:** The first survey will be distributed today, with additional surveys following in the coming weeks.

Your time and expertise are invaluable to this research. These surveys are designed in manageable segments to respect your schedule and commitment.

Thank you for your dedication to literature and commitment to promoting diversity in storytelling. Your insights will significantly contribute to advancing our understanding of this crucial topic.

I look forward to embarking on this journey with each of you. Together, let's make a meaningful impact on diverse representation in children's literature.

Thank you,

Ashley Van Horn
Doctoral Candidate, Baker University

Subject: Round Two Survey for Elementary Library Picture Book Diversity Panel

Hello,

Thank you for completing the first round of surveys. Below I have attached the additional information, as well as the link to the second survey.

Overview:

I am conducting research on the racial representation in elementary library picture book collections. Your expertise is crucial to this initiative, and I invite you to participate in a unique panel experience.

Objectives:

1. Understand the correlation between the racial distribution of students in a school and the characters in picture books purchased for that school.
2. Explore how this correlation varies based on the school's diversity level and the purchase year of the books.

Panel Details:

- **Composition:** School library professionals contributing diverse perspectives.
- **Book Selection:** Lists from specific elementary libraries, spanning genres and excluding titles featuring non-human characters over three purchase years.
- **Review Process:** Evaluate books by identifying the racial identity of main characters from a quick review of the cover and publisher descriptions.

Timeline:

- **Review Period:** December 10th -January 5th
- **Survey Delivery:** This is the second survey. There will be one more survey after this.

Survey Details:

- **Your Librarian Code:**
- **Information Zoom Video:**
- **Survey Link:**

Thank you,

Ashley Van Horn
Doctoral Candidate, Baker University

Subject: Round Final Survey for Elementary Library Picture Book Diversity Panel

Hello,

Thank you for completing the first round of surveys. Below I have attached the additional information, as well as the link to the second survey.

Overview:

I am conducting research on the racial representation in elementary library picture book collections. Your expertise is crucial to this initiative, and I invite you to participate in a unique panel experience.

Objectives:

1. Understand the correlation between the racial distribution of students in a school and the characters in picture books purchased for that school.
2. Explore how this correlation varies based on the school's diversity level and the purchase year of the books.

Panel Details:

- **Composition:** School library professionals contributing diverse perspectives.
- **Book Selection:** Lists from specific elementary libraries, spanning genres and excluding titles featuring non-human characters over three purchase years.
- **Review Process:** Evaluate books by identifying the racial identity of main characters from a quick review of the cover and publisher descriptions.

Timeline:

- **Review Period:** December 10th -January 5th
- **Survey Delivery:** This is the second survey. There will be one more survey after this.

Survey Details:

- **Your Librarian Code:**
- **Information Zoom Video:**
- **Survey Link:**

Thank you,
Ashley Van Horn
Doctoral Candidate, Baker University