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A study of the effect of school management upon 4th and 8th grade math and reading results in relation to market driven theory

Reginald Kirkland

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A STUDY OF THE EFFECT OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT UPON 4TH AND 8TH GRADE
MATH AND READING RESULTS IN RELATION TO MARKET DRIVEN THEORY

by

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Dissertation

Submitted to the Department of Leadership and Counseling

Eastern Michigan University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Leadership and Counseling
Concentration in Educational Leadership

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February 9, 2016

Ypsilanti, Michigan

DEDICATION

To the memories of Barbara Jean and Morris Kirkland, Jr.

Thank you for inspiring me to achieve my dreams, and paving the way for me to do so.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As described in the dedication, my parents instilled the importance and value of education into me and my siblings from the moment we were able to understand. They made countless sacrifices that resulted in all four of their children receiving college educations. My mother, until February 09, 2015, had always been my greatest cheerleader. She believed in my possibilities, talents, and abilities. She started reading to me from the womb, and took tremendous pride and joy in my successes until her transition.

To my wife, Metima Kirkland, you have been the love of my life for over eighteen years. There is no accomplishment that is more important than our union, and I thank you for serving as our family's anchor while I pursued the completion of this work. Morris and Hunter Kirkland, I thank you for your patience and support. I love you for understanding that sometimes dad had to focus on research and writing as opposed to attending some of your important events. Although I hated not always being in the present, it is my greatest hope that this journey has served as an example to you.

To my brothers and sister, Gerald, Harold, and Marcy Kirkland, you have been my confidantes and motivators. Your support has meant even more since the passing of our mother. Thank you for believing in your big brother.

To Dr. Ella Burton, thank you for keeping me focused and inspiring me to not surrender. To my committee, Dr. Jacklyn Tracy and Dr. Ron Williamson, thank you for your time, support, and scholarly expertise. To Dr. James Barrott, I thank you for challenging me to think critically about organizational theory's impact upon educational outcomes for students. You were the first person to bring systems theory to life for me. To Dr. Carolyn Carter, thank you for your mentorship, collegiality, example, and friendship. I would also like to thank Superintendent/CEO

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J. Alvin Wilbanks, and the Gwinnett County Public Schools, for allowing me to see that a large urban public schools system can not only successfully serve its students and community, but that it can be done with world-class excellence. You taught me how to be a true educational leader.

Abstract

There are several types of organizations that propose to educate students living within a large urban city in southeastern Michigan. These organizations manage portfolios of schools and differ in a variety of ways. Some of them are for-profit corporations, and others are nonprofit. There is a portfolio of schools directly managed by the traditional public school system, and yet another managed by a state agency. In addition to the aforementioned, there are several that are empowered by state law to authorize charter schools to founding boards of directors, who in turn contract with management companies or attempt to manage the schools themselves.

With this variety and complexity of educational delivery options, it would appear that parents and students have a great amount of choice. Based upon Milton Friedman's market-driven theory, this environment of choice should drive each of the organizations to improve its performance, and as a result drive excellence in the marketplace.

This study attempts to analyze the performance of the various types of educational organizations and determine which performs better. Even more importantly, the study seeks to identify whether Friedman's theory has resulted in providing families with authentic educational options. Findings from this study appear to suggest that the traditional public school district in this large urban community in Southeastern Michigan was able to produce higher standardized test scores for African American students in the 4th and 8th grades when compared to "for-profit" Education Management Organization led charter schools within the same community.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The problem with our education system is not that parents do not have a choice. The problem is that inequities continue to exist. -Patsy Mink (Former U.S. Congresswoman /Hawaii)

The promise of delivering an equitable and equal-educational opportunity for all children and youth is part of the American Dream. It is the overarching desire of parents that their children are afforded the best opportunity to learn, grow, and become productive citizens. This study considers the educational opportunities and results for students in a large urban community in southeastern Michigan through the lens of Martin Friedman's Market Driven Theory.

There are several methods by which education is provided to students living within a particular large city in southeastern Michigan. Each approach manages portfolios of schools and differs in a variety of ways. Some are for-profit corporations, and others are nonprofit. There is a portfolio of schools directly managed by the traditional public school system, and another managed by a state agency called the Education Achievement Authority (EAA). Additionally, there are several empowered by state law to authorize charter schools to founding boards of directors, who in turn contract with management companies or attempt to manage the schools themselves.

An additional element to be factored into this dynamic is the dearth of evidence supporting charter-school quality. Students in charter schools perform lower on average than public school students (Miron, Coryn, & Mackety, 2007). Eighty percent of Michigan charters perform below the 50th percentile of achievement in reading, and 84% perform below that threshold in math. According to the National Association of Charter School Authorizers, 26% of Michigan charter schools fall into the bottom 15% of the state's schools on 8th-grade math exams, and 21% in 8th-grade reading (Resmovits, 2013). Despite initial concerns to the contrary,

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Michigan Charter schools have a majority minority enrollment, most being African American. Some early charter opponents expressed fear that there would be a significant decline in the number of Caucasian students enrolled in the traditional public schools as they fled to the new charter schools (Lacireno-Paquet, 2008). The reality is that the reverse has occurred. There are more African-American students enrolled in charter schools. “The continuing expansion of even more segregated charter schools, which take funds from public schools and leave many children with special costly needs behind, only exacerbates educational inequality. The ultimate consequences occur in central cities like Washington, D.C., Detroit and New Orleans” (Orfield, Kucsera, & Siegel-Hawley, 2012, p. 2).

Leaving one poorly performing school for another is not truly an exercise in choice. For various reasons, and despite the mechanisms of market-based reform, some parents and children remain captives of low-performing schools.

With this variety and complexity of educational delivery options, it would appear that parents and students have several choices. Based upon Milton Friedman’s market-driven theory, this environment of choice should drive each entity to improve its performance, and as a result drive excellence in the marketplace (Friedman, 1955).

Statement of the Problem

In 2006, while on his “Listening and Learning Tour,” former United States Secretary of Education Dr. Arne Duncan described the state of a large traditional public school district in southeastern Michigan with blunt criticism. “I think [this district] is ground zero for education in this country,” Duncan told reporters. “[This city] is New Orleans two years ago without Hurricane Katrina, and I feel a tremendous sense of both urgency and outrage” (Dawsey, 2009). Subsequently, he toured the Michigan Education Achievement Authority (EAA), the state-run

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reform district composed of reconstituted traditional public schools, and described the visit as “encouraging” (Dawsey, 2009). Since 2009, the city school district has ousted two superintendents and a school board and has installed four emergency managers, in a city that endured a bankruptcy led by an emergency financial manager itself. Several district schools were taken away and placed into the State of Michigan-managed Education Achievement Authority.

The EAA is composed of a compilation of schools that were deemed persistently low-performing and, as a result, were taken over by the state. Only schools located within the large municipality in southeastern Michigan have been placed into the EAA. According to the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) data, the district’s average ACT score is 16.4, only 12.6% of the students in grades 3-8 are proficient in mathematics and reading, only 42.6% of students are proficient in reading by the end of third grade, and the graduation rate is only 64%.

In addition to an academic performance that is lower than the state average, the traditional school district has a significant budgetary deficit originating in the fiscal year 2009. Under the terms of four state-appointed emergency managers, the traditional school district has shed tens of thousands of students, closed dozens of schools, and struggled with persistent deficits. The district had a positive fund balance of approximately \$100 million when the state took control in 2009 (*Metro Times*, February 2015); the district recently projected its net deficit for 2015–16 to be \$166 billion (Crain’s Detroit, November 11, 2015). Last fall’s preliminary enrollment was 47,238, less than half of the 96,000 students attending the traditional school district when the original emergency manager was appointed (Khadaroo, 2015). Current Michigan Governor Rick Snyder appointed the fourth emergency manager on January 15, 2015, despite an admission that it was not his preferred option (Zaniewski, 2015).

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Along with the traditional public school district and the EAA, there are charter schools in the marketplace. Some of these charter schools are part of the traditional district's portfolio, authorized by the district, and the others are authorized by universities and a community college located in the upper peninsula of Michigan. As stated previously, the majority of these charter schools are among the lowest performing schools in the State of Michigan.

There remain seven Roman Catholic parochial schools within the city. Once there existed many more parochial school options, but many parishes closed and followed their primarily White and middle class African-American parishioners to the surrounding suburbs (Montemurri, 2013; Feuerherd, 2007).

Research Question

Is there a relationship between academic-performance levels in reading and mathematics in 4th and 8th grades at schools in a traditional public school district, charter schools, and a state-managed school district located within a large urban community in southeastern Michigan?

Purpose and Significance

The purpose of this ex post facto, quantitative study is to compare the average academic achievement of public school students attending public schools within a large urban city in southeastern Michigan. It is based upon the fourth- and eighth-grade student performances on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) in Reading and Mathematics from 2010 to 2014. The students involved in this research attended the city's traditional public schools, state-managed schools, and charter schools authorized by a variety of institutions and managed by either for-profit or nonprofit management organizations. Specifically, the goal is to investigate whether, on average, fourth- and eighth-grade students attending the city's charter schools demonstrate equivalent levels of academic achievement when compared to students educated in

traditional public schools as demonstrated by their performance on the MEAP standardized assessment from 2010 to 2014.

Conceptual Framework

Milton Friedman's market-driven based theory, often referred to in the literature as neoliberal globalization, is the conceptual framework for this study. Friedman's 1955 classic, *The Role of Government in Education*, is important for two reasons. First, it bluntly spells out the problem with the public school system in the United States, stating that schools had become monopolies that lacked consumer-driven incentives. Second, public schools were not seriously studied by many economists before 1955. Friedman's piece can be seen as an invitation for economists to study education, encouraging them to apply economic principles to this field. He thought that forcing parents to send their children to a traditional public school was "economically inefficient because it prohibits competition" (Moe, 2001).

Friedman's main premise of market-driven based theory emphasizes the concept that money should follow the student by way of vouchers. Parents should have choice by way of vouchers, according to Friedman's theory. However, vouchers have not been employed with the voracity proposed by Friedman; rather, charter schools were developed as a more acceptable avenue (Ladner, 2001).

Proponents continue to theorize, despite little supportive evidence, that charter schools could challenge traditional public schools, and they may force the traditional schools to change their instructional strategies and encourage parental involvement in an attempt to increase student achievement. These advocates believe that the inclusion of charter schools, operating like businesses, would result in market competition for traditional public schools. Charter schools and traditional public schools have the ability to create new curricula and develop new pedagogical strategies to increase or maintain their enrollment, and many experts believe that charter schools

will create “... enough competition for money and students to force traditional public schools to innovate” (Osborne, 1999).



Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

Figure 1 graphically illustrates the theoretical framework consisting of Milton Friedman’s market-driven based theory in the context of this study. The conceptual framework shows the various educational delivery options as they compete for parents and students. Parents perceive choice as they seek the highest-quality educational option.

Operational Definitions

The following definitions are used throughout this study:

Academic Achievement – Since the passage of No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), academic achievement has been the cornerstone of school reform. It means that students will be proficient in the academics: science, math, and literature. Students will possess academic skills, such as reading, writing, critical thinking, and problem solving. It is measured by grades, scores on standardized tests, graduation from high school and college, and enrollment into post-

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secondary education. This study will focus on standardized reading and math test scores to demonstrate academic achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2007).

Achievement Gap – This term refers to the disparity in standardized test scores or other measures of academic achievement between cohorts of students, such as children with disabilities, English learners, African-American children, Hispanics/Latino children, non-Hispanic white children, economically disadvantaged children, boys, and girls (U.S. Department of Education, 2007).

At-Risk Student – A student who is not performing well academically or on standardized assessment and whose environment may hinder his or her ability to succeed.

Authorizers – Pursuant to Section Michigan Compiled Law 380.502(4): “An authorizing body shall oversee, or shall contract with an intermediate school district, community college, or state public university to oversee, each public school academy operating under a contract issued by the authorizing body. The authorizing body is responsible for overseeing compliance by the board of directors with the contract and all applicable law.” In Michigan, authorizers may be universities, community colleges, intermediate school districts, and local school districts (or local education agencies [LEAs]).

Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) – CEPI coordinates *collections*, *connections*, and *reporting* of education data in Michigan. Only data required to meet a federal or state law are collected. In addition to providing research-ready data sets for evaluating Michigan’s education policies and programs, CEPI works with the Department of Education to facilitate meaningful measurement of student, school, and system performance, build technical and human capacity to use data effectively, and disseminate research results

(http://www.michigan.gov/cepi/0,4546,7-113-985_71817---,00.html).

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Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) – The Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) is committed to improving the body of empirical evidence about education reform and student performance at the primary and secondary levels. Established at the University of Rochester in 1999 and relocated to Stanford University one year later, CREDO has become a leading independent voice in the discussion of how to improve education in America, with an emphasis on rigorous program and policy analysis as the means of informing and improving education decision making (<https://credo.stanford.edu/aboutOverview.html>).

Charter Management Organization (CMO) – Charter Management Organizations (CMOs) are nonprofit entities that manage two or more charter schools. CMOs often provide back office functions for charter schools to take advantage of economies of scale, but some also provide a wider range of services including hiring, professional development, data analysis, public relations, and advocacy.

District Student – A student residing with a parent or guardian within a specific boundary.

Education Achievement Authority of Michigan (EAA) – The Education Achievement Authority of Michigan, created in June of 2011, is the governing body of the Education Achievement System, which was created to turn around the academic performance of students in the state’s lowest-achieving schools. The EAA is in its second year of operating 15 schools in Detroit, nine elementary/middle schools—three are charters—and six high schools.

Education Management Organization (EMO) – An entity that enters into a management agreement with a charter school. EMOs are typically contracted to provide management. EMOs generally charge a management fee for their services to charter schools.

Free Market Ideology – An ideology in which the role of the market is extended, and attempts are made to minimize the role of state-organized and state-funded economic activity. This

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ideology supports the privatization of nationalized industries; the outsourcing of services, formerly provided by the state, to private contractors; deregulation of industries; tax reduction; and reduction of government spending (Concise Encyclopedia of Economics, 1999).

Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) – A standardized test formerly administered to public school students in the state of Michigan from elementary school to middle/junior high school. The MEAP was replaced by the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) in the spring of 2015. The MEAP tests had high-content validity with respect to the subject-specific curriculum for the particular grade level in the State of Michigan. The participation at MEAP testing sessions was mandatory for all public school students (Schnabel, et al, 2002).

Neoliberalism – A philosophy in which the existence and operation of a market are valued in themselves, separately from any previous relationship with the production of goods and services . . . and where the operation of a market or market-like structure is seen as an ethic in itself, capable of acting as a guide for all human action, and substituting for all previously existing ethical beliefs (Treanor, 2005).

Public School Academies – In Michigan, the legal name for these schools is charter school. They are simultaneously school districts and individual schools. They must be authorized and have a board of education, but they may be privately managed by an educational-management company.

Standard Assessment – An educational instrument that consistently uses a standard procedure to administer, score, and determine what a student has learned.

Subgroup – No Child Left Behind identifies eight subgroups (White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian, Limited English Proficient, Students with Disabilities, Economically

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Disadvantaged) in addition to the All Student group. (The act defines subgroups as major racial/ethnic groups, students with Individual Educational Plans [IEP], “English Language Learners,” and economically disadvantaged students.) The largest racial/ethnic groups in Michigan are Caucasian, African American, and Latino.

Assumptions and Limitations

The researcher made a number of assumptions during the design of this study. First, the researcher assumed that the theoretical foundations accurately described the variables under consideration. The researcher further assumed the validity and reliability of the ex post facto data harvested from the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI), and that unmeasured variables would not confound the results. The researcher also assumed that the data were an accurate representation of the population under study.

The limitations of this study include:

- The MEAP is only one measure of student learning. There are many others, but for this study, fourth- and eighth-grade math and reading data derived from the 2010-2014 MEAP assessments were used.

Delimitations

- This study is limited to a single school district in southeastern Michigan.
- The study uses selected K-8 grade traditional public schools, charter schools, and Education Achievement Authority schools.
- Alternative and highly specialized schools are not included in this study.
- The research examines fourth- and eighth-grade MEAP data from 2010 – 2014.

Summary

Chapter 1 introduced the statement of the problem, research question, purpose and significance, conceptual framework, operational definitions, assumptions and limitations, and delimitations of the study. The next chapter will review the literature relevant to the study.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Introduction

Chapter 2 is a review of the literature relevant to the study. It begins with an explanation of the conditions that led to the introduction of competition and market-based factors. Chief among these were the creation of charter schools.

Previous to 1988, the concept of a chartered public school existing in a marketplace with traditional public schools was a yet-to-be-determined notion. Instead, the focus of school reform in the 1980s was primarily geared toward changing public school curriculum (Hood, 1993). During the 1980s and early 1990s, the debate surrounding school reform was launched and driven by a number of research studies that were critical of American public schools and calling for significant curricular reforms ((Pechman & Laguarda, 1993). These reports initiated national debate based upon improving schools, and eventually engaged national and state policymakers to create state and federal legislation that mandated certain school reforms. Among these was the call for charter schools (Budde, 1988). The charter school movement in America was preceded by the outcry and objections lodged at American public schools, criticizing them for being unfocused, superficial, lacking in academic rigor, varying in graduation standards, and lacking of a core curriculum that all students must complete (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). These expressed sentiments of dissatisfaction formed a context that insisted upon authentic school reform that was foundationally based upon garnering higher student-achievement results, a deeper exploration into a required core curriculum, and, among other reforms, fewer high school electives. It was within this context, at what could be called the height of the school-reform movement in 1988 that the call for charter schools came from a most

unusual advocate, a national president representing the second largest teachers' union in America, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

At the forefront of describing public schools as places that were not working for the majority of students was the then-president of the AFT, Albert Shanker. Calling public schools factories where one size fits all, where lectures dominated teaching and learning, and where students were expected to learn in the same way at the same pace and at the same time, Shanker suggested that the school system worked for only 20 percent of students. From his perspective, these conditions left the majority of public school students, but especially the minority and poor children, without viable schooling. He suggested that they needed radical and significantly different approaches to learning. Shanker disturbed the educational status quo in a speech at the Detroit Press Club on March 31, 1988, when he proposed the design of “a new type of school, in which he later referred to as a “charter school.” Shanker proposed a new way by which a small group of teachers—between six and 12—could come together with parents and propose the creation of a different type of school. In Shanker’s view, the teachers would say, “We’ve got an idea. We’ve got a way of doing something very different. We’ve got a way of reaching the kids that are now not being reached by what the [traditional] school is doing.” He viewed these as laboratory schools that would experiment with team-teaching, set greater time aside for teachers to share ideas, encourage teachers to serve as coaches rather than lecturers, and championed programs that allowed students to learn at their own pace, in cooperative learning groups in which “kids can sit around a table and help each other just as the kids help each other on a basketball team.” Shanker’s description of charter schools was markedly different from what was available at that time (Albert Shanker, “National Press Club Speech,” March 31, 1988, Walter P. Reuther Library, <http://reuther.wayne.edu/files/64.43.pdf>, 11.).

Shanker envisioned a role for teachers' unions and called for proposals for charter schools that would be reviewed, evaluated, and approved or rejected by panels that included union representatives, school board members, and outsiders. Charters would be schools of choice, no student or teacher would be compelled to be part of one, they would have independence for a five- to 10-year period to prove themselves, to ensure the needed time to nurture and cultivate the concept or theme of the charter school. Shanker outlined two critical conditions: (1) that the schools provide their teachers with strong voice, and (2) that the schools educate kids from all walks of life. Shanker foresaw union representatives as part of the authorizing board of charter schools; charter-school teachers would be represented by unions, and charter-school proposals would include "a plan for faculty decision making." He envisioned groups of teachers working with one another in teams and holding themselves accountable for performance (Albert Shanker, "National Press Club Speech," March 31, 1988, Walter P. Reuther Library, <http://reuther.wayne.edu/files/64.43.pdf>).

Though Shanker is credited with engaging the dialogue about charter schools, in reality their advent is a direct result of consistent and determined context in which research report after research report condemned American schools and raised an alarm that predicted dire consequences, even national-defense consequences, if American public schools were not reformed (National Commission on Excellence in Education 1983).

Fueling this direction were two interrelated phenomena: a series of research studies critical of U.S. schooling and the advent of charter schools that followed in the wake of the research studies. The United States school-reform agenda ignited during the 1980s and early 1990s when an unprecedented number of reform recommendations launched significant public debate about the quality of American public schools. The most widely read of these include *The*

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Paideia Proposal: An Educational Manifesto (1982), *A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform* (Nation at Risk, 1983), *High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America* (1983), *Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School* (1984), *Time for Results* (1986), *American Memory* (1987), *What Do Our 17-Year-Olds Know: A Report on the First National Assessment of History and Literature* (1987), *Madison High School* (1988), *An Imperiled Generation: Saving Urban Schools* (1988), and *Making Schools Work for Children in Poverty* (1992).

Paideia (1982) suggested that too many non-essential courses were offered in secondary schools. The report called for school courses that exposed students to experiences that promote student acquisition of organized knowledge and schools that develop students' intellectual skills and abilities to grasp important ideas and values. This report directly attacked the principle of the comprehensive high school and took an unequivocal stand in support of academic education in high school settings. Similarly, *A Nation at Risk* (1983) was a widely read report that led to a tremendous renewal of national interest in the quality of American schools. *Nation* made many recommendations for improving schools, among them (1) a call for teachers to devote more time to teaching and learning and (2) the need for a longer school day and academic year. A theme recurring in *Nation* is that the range of school offerings should be limited and that the curriculum should emphasize five basic areas: (1) English, (2) Mathematics, (3) Science, (4) Social Studies, and (5) Computers. *Nation*, like Paideia, called for more rigor and challenge in high school offerings and directly attacked the traditional concept of the comprehensive high school.

Following suit was *High School* (1983), which criticized secondary schools as offering fragmentary curricula and proposed that all students be exposed to a common core of learning experiences that promoted student development in (1) English, (2) critical thinking, (3)

appreciation for U.S. connections to other peoples and other times, (4) and interests related to the world of work, service, and a rigorous academic curriculum. These recommendations paralleled those of *Nation* and *Paideia* in that they too looked at the high school curriculum, found it lacking, and recommended certain core areas of study to remedy the fragmentation and lack of coherent focus. *Horace's Compromise* (1984), likewise, criticized the constraints schools place on teachers' behaviors and called for working conditions that allow teachers to help each learner progress. (Sizer, 1984) emphasized depth rather than breadth of content coverage and recommended that the dozens of fragmented courses in high school curricula be replaced with a program focusing on four areas: (1) inquiry and expression, (2) mathematics and science, (3) literature and the arts, and (4) philosophy and history. Sizer recommended that both required and elective courses be accommodated within these four themes.

Time for Results (1986) a report by the National Governors' Association, focused heavily on state-level policy changes as a mechanism to improve the overall quality of the nation's schools. *Time* made a strong case in support of the argument that state authorities should intervene with legislation supportive of school reform—even while the report called for a reduction in the number and complexity of regulations affecting urban schools whose challenges were acknowledged to be diverse. *American Memory* (1987) concluded that tests of teenagers' understanding of pivotal past events indicated startling knowledge gaps and suggested that this lack of information resulted from an inappropriate, fragmentary school curriculum. *American Memory* decried an overemphasis on “process” teaching that has come at the expense of “product” teaching. The report recommended a curriculum featuring more attention to solid subject matter, including a program with more traditional content from the humanities.

What Do Our 17-Year-Olds Know: A Report on the First National Assessment of History and Literature (1987) pointed to the distressing statistics regarding American students' levels of understanding of basic historical facts. The report revealed that one-third of the 17-year-olds tested by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) did not know that the Declaration of Independence marked the formal separation of the American colonies from Britain. The report cited weaknesses of the traditional curriculum and recommended a core curriculum of history and literature courses for all students. In response, *Madison High School* (1987) called for a rigorous academic high school program of studies wherein students would complete a program consisting of a prescribed amount of course work in seven core curriculum areas: English; science; mathematics; social studies; foreign language; physical education and health; and art, music, and fine arts. *An Imperiled Generation: Saving Urban Schools* (1988) revealed a number of problems associated with high dropout rates, low levels of teacher morale, and poor facilities. The report recommended governmental support for providing before- and after-school programs, upgrading physical facilities, placing more emphasis on upgrading programs, and placing more emphasis at the college/university level on training teachers to work in urban schools.

In the early 90s, the Commission on Chapter One issued *Making Schools Work for Children of Poverty: A New Framework* (1992), a document that re-examined Chapter One programs and concluded that sweeping reforms in the Chapter One programs were required to convert Chapter One from a law that was designed to teach poor children "basic skills" to one dedicated to spurring the kinds of educational changes that would result in children born into poverty acquiring high-level knowledge and skills. The measures of "high level" knowledge are that young people emerge from school qualified for college or for skilled and productive work

and that they are prepared to participate fully in the social and political life of the nation. The Commission recommended that (1) states set clear, high standards for student achievement, (2) students' progress as learners be determined based solely on student progress toward attaining state academic standards, (3) parents are included as partners in their children's learning, (4) school staff support parent literacy initiatives aggressively, (5) investment in teacher and principal development be made through partnerships with universities, (6) school funding is matched to assure equity, (7) accountability for dollars be replaced with accountability for results, (8) health and social-service support be integrated with schooling, and (9) schools that make progress are rewarded and those that do not progress are changed. Congress reauthorized Chapter One legislation (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, or ESEA) and included in the legislation a significant number of the reforms recommended by the Commission on Chapter One.

In a little more than two decades, the concept of charter schools has grown from an academic idea to a national movement and now to a regular aspect of the K-12 educational landscape. Most credit Ray Budde (Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast) for proposing the idea in 1988. Quickly thereafter, in 1989, Albert Shanker (American Federation of Teachers) endorsed the concept. The charter-school movement gained a broader audience with the publication in 1990 of *Politics, Market, and America's Schools* by Chubb and Moe (Brookings Institution). In their book, Chubb and Moe argue that what America's schools need most is organizational reform. In their view, the institutional settings of school districts run by locally elected school boards hamper effective education, and their policy prescription is to allow all schools to operate under a charter system. Minnesota passed the first charter-school law in 1991. By mid-1998, 32 states and the District of Columbia had enacted legislation allowing

the creation of charter schools. Today, approximately 800 charter schools are operating nationwide, educating slightly less than 0.5 percent of all K–12 pupils.

In Michigan, the number of charter schools and the number of pupils in those schools have grown each year. As of the 2014-15 school year, 297 charter schools are open, educating approximately 136,859 students. Still, only nine percent of Michigan’s K–12 students currently attend a charter school (National Association of Charter School Authorizers, 2014). The concept of charter schools is simple. Schools are organized as small enterprises, independent of the local school board. They are run by an appointed board of directors, operating under contract with an authorizing body. No child is required to attend a charter school. A school remains open only as long as parents choose to enroll their children there. The compromise for charters is to receive some relief from the state regulation in exchange for greater accountability for student achievement. This compromise raises a major question with which policymakers continue to struggle. Their primary questions are how to determine how much regulatory relief, and how is accountability defined and measured? The state charter-school law inserted into the Michigan School Code the following goals for charter schools (although the pertinent section of the code subsequently was repealed by the court, most observers still accept these goals as reflecting legislative intent in regard to charter schools):

- Improve student achievement for all pupils, including but not limited to educationally disadvantaged pupils, by improving the learning environment,
- Stimulate innovative teaching methods,
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers in a new type of public school in which the school structure and education program may be designed with innovation and managed by teachers at the school-site level,

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- Achieve school accountability for pupil-education performance by placing full responsibility for performance at the school-site level,
- Provide parents and pupils with greater choice among public schools, and
- Determine whether state education funds may be more effectively, efficiently, and equitably utilized by allocating funds on a per-pupil basis directly to the school.

Michigan's charter-school law had a rough beginning. The first charter-school legislation (P.A. 284 of 1993) passed in December 1993 but was replaced by a new law within weeks. One aspect of the first law that was not transferred to its replacement was a provision enabling an existing public school to convert to a charter school: Section 504 of the first act would have allowed one or more teachers of a public school to apply to convert their school to a charter. The school, including the facility, would become a charter if either 75% of the building's teachers or 75% of its students' parents voted for conversion.

The first bill was repealed because many analysts thought that it could not withstand the legal challenges it would face. It was replaced with a new statute, P.A. 362 of 1993. This new statute was immediately challenged, and in November 1994, an Ingham circuit court judge issued an opinion declaring that charter schools as they would be established under the law would be "not under the immediate, exclusive control of the state." The court further ruled that charter schools would not be governed by publicly elected bodies and therefore would be ineligible for state monies. In December 1994, the Michigan Court of Appeals affirmed the lower court's decision. At this point, Michigan was without a charter-school law.

The legislature responded by passing P.A. 416 in December 1994, which replaced part 6A of P.A. 362 of 1993 with new language, part 6B, that responded to many of the court's findings. The new law also added a provision that would negate P.A. 416 entirely and reinstate P.A. 362 if

the Michigan Supreme Court ultimately found the latter constitutional. For a time, charter schools were organized under both the original law (part 6A) and the revised version (part 6B). These two separate charter-school laws led to confusion on the part of both the schools and regulators. The final chapter in the story of legal challenges to the underlying charter-school law was written in the summer of 1997, when the Michigan Supreme Court overturned the Court of Appeals, determining that P.A. 362, including part 6A, was constitutional, thus negating the revised law (P.A. 416, including part 6B). Finally, charter schools in Michigan had a law in place for the long run. The legislature has made only one other substantive change to the charter-school law. In 1995, P.A. 289 was adopted, effective July 1, 1996. The act's provisions give charters explicit legal authority to borrow for short-term cash-flow purposes; cap the total number of charters authorized by state universities (150, after 1998), with no one university permitted to exceed 50 percent of the cap; assign additional responsibilities to authorizers; stipulate that an authorizer's decision to revoke a charter contract is final and not subject to judicial review; and require all charter schools to administer appropriate MEAP tests to its students. Important legal actions from two other sources affect Michigan charter schools. First, the Internal Revenue Service ruled in 1997 that Michigan charter schools are government units and therefore may borrow at tax-exempt rates. Second, the Michigan attorney general has issued a series of opinions clarifying the legal status of charters, including confirmation that charters may contract with an outside company to provide classroom instruction and that these contractual employees are not subject to the Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System; and validation of the law's provisions that an authorizer's decision to revoke a contract is not subject to review, and the authorizer is immune from civil liability in a decision to revoke or not renew a charter-school contract.

Consistent with the research question and the stated problem, the remainder of the literature review focuses upon (1) charter schools and charter authorization in Michigan; (2) academic performance and the achievement gap; and (3) school choice and neoliberalism/market-driven school reform theory. In the interest of chronological reasonableness, I begin this section with a review of the literature surrounding charter schools and authorizers in the State of Michigan. By 1999, the District of Columbia, and 36 states, followed Minnesota's lead and initiated approximately 2,000 charter schools, which served in excess of 500,000 students nationwide (Renzulli & Roscigno, 2005).

Theory Underlying This Study

The driving force behind a market economy is individual choice, because it permits parents to select high-quality schools that will best meet the needs of their children without regard to jurisdictional constraints (Lewis, 2008). The market-based reform theory is well suited for this study due to its alignment with much of the logic supportive of education reform in this nation. The reform reasoning has at its foundation the belief that by having a variety of private and public organizational structures from which to choose, each would have to compete with one another, and eventually this would lead to different levels of efficiency and effectiveness (Lubienski & Lubienski, 2004). Friedman argued that by increasing innovation, choice, and competition, the overall quality of schools would improve and student performance would also increase (Hoxby, 2000). These three goals are at the forefront of market-based reform that provides structuring opportunities for schools to increase achievement and advance academic outcomes (Lubienski, 2003).

Over the last twenty years, various educational reform policies based on market accountability have been adopted for the purpose of heightening school accountability and

improving the academic performance of students. These policies have focused on transforming the public school system by creating and promoting the growth of charter schools as a way of responding to customer demands and developing a system of high performing public schools (Vanderhoff, 2008). Additionally, reform policies, explicitly No Child Left Behind legislation authorized under the President George W. Bush administration, have also focused on accountability measures that hold teachers and administrators responsible for student achievement. These combined policies enable parents to use the accountability indicators for identifying failing schools, so they can make informed decisions on where to have their children educated (Jennings, 2010). Friedman, along with other proponents of school choice, have proposed that the parents' and schools' behaviors will ultimately change as a result of market-based education reforms. Parents will eventually start selecting schools of higher quality for their children to attend, and low-quality schools will be forced to improve by becoming more efficient and implementing more effective programs and school practices (Arsen & Ni, 2008). Although the school choice trend has grown over the last few years, market-based education reform has affected only a small percentage of students and schools across the United States (Rabovsky, 2011), because families living in large urban areas have had limited options, and there are greater biases that favor traditional public schools, with many schools closing due to performance or financial difficulties (Ladd, 2000).

Michigan charter schools and authorizers. In 1992, the State of Michigan became part of the next wave of states that joined the charter school movement soon after the first charter school was authorized in St. Paul, Minnesota. Governor John Engler signed Michigan's charter-school law into effect on January 14, 1994, and in August of that year, Central Michigan University (CMU) became the first university in the nation to authorize a charter school

(Goenner, 2012). At the onset, the charter legislation imposed a cap of 150 schools, but in December 2011, Michigan's legislature removed the cap restricting the number of charter schools that could be authorized by universities (Goenner, 2012). By state law, the authorizing agent has a tremendous amount of authority and power in Michigan. Authorizers are the fiscal agent for the academies, appoint and approve school board members, have the power to place academies on corrective action(s) and terminate the contracts of education-management organizations, and may terminate the academies' contracts if they fail to meet the provisions and expectations of the charter contract (Revised School Code Section 380.507). The legislation also defines charter schools in Michigan as "public school academies" and deems these to be both a school and a district simultaneously. Charter schools in Michigan have school boards, and many are managed by educational-management organizations (EMOs) that may be for-profit or nonprofit (CMOs), with the majority being for-profit. Some academies are "self-managed," meaning that they are not led by an EMO.

One of the alleged benefits of bringing charters to Michigan was the promise for introducing more innovation into the educational marketplace. Interestingly, there is almost nothing in the literature providing evidence that charter schools have discovered new ways to advance student learning more efficiently or effectively (CREDO 2013, 2009). Gerald Watkins Bracey (2002), in a study sponsored by Western Michigan University, reported that evaluators observed that significant similarities existed among charters when compared to one another as well as to traditional public schools. Bracey reports that researchers found no specific innovations in curriculum that did not already exist in traditional public schools. He also reported that parents often considered innovation with suspicion and apprehension (Bracey, 2002).

As it relates to achievement, CREDO compared the educational gains that charter students would have had in a traditional public school. Stanford's analysis shows that, on average, students in Michigan charter schools make larger learning gains in both reading and mathematics. Thirty-five percent of the charter schools have significantly more positive learning gains than their traditional public school counterparts in reading, while two percent of charter schools have significantly lower learning gains. In math, forty-two percent of the charter schools studied outperform their traditional public school peers, and six percent perform worse. These findings position Michigan among the highest performing charter school states that CREDO has studied to date.

Charter students in the city of Detroit (27% of the state's charter students), are performing even better than their peers in the rest of the state, on average gaining nearly three months' achievement for each year they attend charter schools according to CREDO.

African-American academic performance and the achievement gap. According to surveys, public education receives broad-based support amongst the citizenry (Hochschild, 2004). However, clashing with the democratic ideal of the public educational system functioning as America's "great equalizer" is a significant body of research detailing substantial inequalities in the high school graduation rates and standardized test results of White and African-American students (Coleman, 1966; Heckman & LaFontaine, 2010; Jencks & Phillips, 1998; Neal, 2006; Rivkin, 1995;Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003). The continuing differences in academic achievement outcomes between White students and their African-American peers are important since they expressly translate into grave social inequalities later in life including future earnings, employment status, and incarceration rates (Fryer, 2013; Heckman & Masterov, 2007; Lochner & Moretti, 2004). Despite the fact that African Americans have a legacy of believing in the

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promise of social mobility and social equalization, the traditional public school system has always failed to deliver on their behalf. The achievement gap existed at the inception of the system and has persisted to this day (Tyack, 1974; Spring, 2012).

It is highly likely that the achievement gap between African Americans and Whites also has ramifications for political equality. Future citizens have been prepared via the system of American public education almost since its inception (Campbell, 2006; Gutmann, 1999), and the strongest predictor of whether an individual becomes an active participant in the political process is his or her level of educational attainment (Nie, Junn, & Stehlik-Barry, 1996; Sondheimer & Green, 2010; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995; but see Kam & Palmer, 2008, 2011). Considering the unique role that public education plays in preparing citizens with the requisite incentive and tools to participate in American democracy, these educational disparities between African-American and White students certainly serve to preserve and even intensify existing inequities in the degree of political involvement for generations to come (Verba, Burns, & Schlozman, 2003).

Neoliberalism/market-driven school reform theory. As the public schools' scores on international assessments continue to decline, observers often question how students in the United States compare academically to those in other countries. The data indicate that students in the United States are not performing academically well in comparison with students from their global competitors (Fleischman, Hopstock, Petczar, & Shelley, 2010). In response to this reality, and upon entering office, President Barack Obama endorsed the entrepreneurial, market-driven educational reforms that were initiated under former President George W. Bush (Giroux, 2009). Under President Obama and U.S. Secretary of Education Dr. Arne Duncan, the federal government's approach to public education has mostly looked like venture philanthropy

strategies for apportioning funding to states, districts, and schools. Essentially, they have required competition for funding by requiring the adoption of the administration's reform agenda based upon what they deem to work (Hess, 2005). United States Department of Education initiatives, like "Race to the Top" and the "Investing in Innovation Fund," gave the opportunity to access additional funds on a competitive basis, if states and organizations agreed to adopt the reforms supported by the administration.

Relative to the Investing in Innovation awards, it was necessary for grantees to establish the ability to also secure funds from private entities. These incentives illustrated a shifting from the emphasis on standards, testing, and curriculum alignment reiterated previous administrations' approaches, the emphasis on market strategies has become much more pronounced. These initiatives have accelerated a neoliberal education-policy shift that had been underway somewhat incrementally for at least the last three decades.

These reforms have been embraced at least partially due to their perceived potential to spur more innovative and equitable schooling options, particularly for poor children and for children of color (Obama, 2009). The controversial 2010 documentary *Waiting for Superman* maintained that it was especially necessary to expand charter schools in order to better serve such populations.

Increasingly, and despite theoretical origins to the contrary, charter schools are characterized less by a grassroots organizational model and instead tend to be run by for-profit and nonprofit management organizations (education management organizations [EMOs] and charter management organizations [CMOs]; Scott & DiMartino, 2010). The notion is that these professional organizations can run schools more efficiently and effectively than the lay people and traditional bureaucrats. Yet the empirical basis asserting that such models are, in fact,

“working” is much more questioned than popular policy claims and provocative films may suggest (Center for Research on Education Outcomes, 2009; Henig, 2009; Lubienski, Weitzel, & Lubienski, 2009). Due to the fact that these policies are primarily being scaled up in urban school districts, they have particular implications for the schooling of poor students and students of color who are concentrated in such schools, and whose communities have long experienced race-based and often intergenerational educational inequality (Lipman & Haines, 2007).

This study relies upon Milton Friedman’s neoliberal globalization as a conceptual framework for analyzing how accountability and standard-based reform affect parental choice in a large urban city in southeastern Michigan. Friedman’s 1955 classic “The Role of Government in Education” was important for a number of reasons. First, it bluntly spelled out the problem with the public school system in the United States: monopolies that lack consumer-driven incentives. In short, the benefits of markets that Friedman had studied throughout his professional career were largely absent from the public-education sector. Second, public schooling was not seriously studied by many economists before 1955. Friedman’s piece can be seen as an invitation for economists to study education, encouraging them to apply economic principles to this field. He thought that forcing parents to send their children to a traditional public school was “... economically inefficient because it prohibits competition among schools...” (Moe, 2001). Although vouchers have not been employed with nearly the voracity proposed by Friedman, charter schools were developed and thought to be the institution that would provide parents with a choice of where they wanted to have their children educated. Proponents continue to theorize, despite only meager supportive evidence, that charters can challenge traditional public schools, and they may force the traditional schools to change their instructional strategies, and encourage parental involvement in an attempt to increase student

achievement. These advocates believe that the inclusion of charter schools, operating like a business, would result in market competition for traditional public schools. Mr. Friedman's idea of creating competition, via vouchers, was initially supposed to make the portfolio of traditional public schools into a stronger system (Betts et al., 2001). Charter schools and public schools have the ability to create new curricula and develop new pedagogical strategies to increase or maintain their enrollment, and many experts believe that charter schools will create enough competition for money and students to force school districts to innovate (Osborne, 1999).

Torres (2005), in direct opposition with Friedman, offered a critique of the NCLB act as a neoliberal globalization reform agenda and pointed out that neoliberal reform is essentially based on a free market ideology designed to undermine the social democratic policies that have largely benefited disenfranchised members of society. A report from the American Federation of Teachers (2002), for example, argued that many charter school authorizers have failed to hold the administrators and teachers accountable, leaving some students to suffer in low-performing schools. A 2011 study by the Center for Reinventing Public Education observed that the governing boards of charter schools often received little to no training.

Some observers believe that charters can be vulnerable to financial problems and mismanagement due to their autonomy. Certainly, there are inherent problems associated with the fiscal arrangements of charter schools, partially due to the limited access to start-up and facility funding.

Issues such as these are coming to the attention of state leaders much more often. Some states have begun reassessing their systems for managing charter schools with an interest in providing more oversight. The National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) now recommends a set of authorizer best practices for the purpose of evaluating and monitoring

charter schools. These came into being due to a series of high-profile charter closures and compliance problems.

In addition to the various management issues, some critics have noted that charters tend to be more racially segregated than traditional public schools. This effectively denies students the educational “benefits associated with attending diverse schools” (Civil Rights Project, 2010). Charter advocates assert that some charters have high concentrations of so-called minority students because demand for schooling alternatives is highest among these families. The advocates cite that these families are often poorly served by the traditional public school systems (Center for Education Reform, 2008).

In 2010, researchers at University of Colorado-Boulder and Western Michigan University discovered that the majority of charter schools were “divided into either very segregative high-income schools or very segregative low-income schools” compared to their sending districts, and that the pattern had changed little between 2000-01 and 2006-07. These charter schools also tended to enroll a smaller proportion of students with disabilities and English-language learners (Miron, Urschel, & Mathis, 2010).

Other concerns about charter schools mirror those associated with the other neoliberal platform item of school vouchers. Doubters are concerned that charters unjustly divert crucial resources and policy attention away from traditional public schools. Proponent observers respond that charters improve existing traditional school systems by introducing choice and competition (Ericson & Silverman, 2001).

In the interim, the question relative to whether charters or traditional public schools do a better job of educating students is still open to debate. The research is inconclusive, in part due to the intricacies of comparison and wide variations of performance among charters.

Illustrative of this point is another study by Western Michigan University. This time, it was their Evaluation Center which found that Michigan charter schools yielded significantly lower scores, and less-consistent gains, on state standardized tests than their traditional peer districts (Miron & Horn, 2000). Conversely, the center found in a later study of charters in Pennsylvania that “student achievement appears to be a source of modest strength” for the schools, with some making steady test-score gains. This latter study identifies best-practices evaluation and stronger accountability as means for increasing charter schools’ gains (Miron et al., 2002).

In aggregate, other studies tend to also illustrate this varied representation. The Goldwater Institute and California State University-Los Angeles studies revealed that charter school students demonstrate comparatively more growth in achievement than their traditional public school counterparts (Solmon et al., 2004; Slovacek et al., 2001). In California, a major state-commissioned study by the RAND corp. (2003) concluded that charters in that state were making concrete advances in student achievement over time and generally keeping pace with traditional public schools relative to tests scores when factoring students’ demographic backgrounds.

However, a 2003 study observed that Ohio charters schools were failing in comparison to the traditional public schools on a majority of performance measures; the researchers concluded that charter schools “were doing no better than low-performing traditional public schools with similar demographic characteristics” (Legislative Office of Education Oversight). Similarly, the North Carolina Center for Public Policy concluded, in a 2002 study of charter schools in that state, that charters were falling behind traditional public schools in achievement growth and had not proven themselves to be any “better at serving at-risk students.”

In that report, the center concedes that there are significant variations among charters: “Some schools have delivered on the charter school promise, and some clearly have not,” the center’s researchers concluded. Many charter advocates would argue that such individual examples of success validate the charter experiment, representing positive new models of schooling that may serve as a foundation for future offerings.

More recent studies continue to demonstrate that the experts hold contrasting points of view with regard to the success of charter schools. A 2010 study by Mathematica Policy Research of Princeton, N.J., found that students’ gains in mathematics after three years in a charter school run by the Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP) are large enough in about half of the 22 schools studied to significantly narrow race- and income-based achievement gaps among students. Mathematica also conducted a study commissioned by the federal government in 2010 and found that students who won lotteries to attend 36 charter middle schools across the country performed, on average, no better in mathematics and reading than their peers who lost out in the random admissions process and enrolled in nearby regular public schools.

Parents who have become dissatisfied with litigation that focused upon school desegregation and finance reform have accepted various school-choice options, such as charter schools, as a way to attain equal educational opportunity (Ryan, 2002). Advocates contend that charter schools expand the educational prospects of disenfranchised students in a variety of ways. In theory, charter schools encourage vigorous competition to force the steady improvement of traditional public districts and schools. Charter schools also allege to be more accountable than traditional public schools. This assertion is based upon the fact that charters risk being revoked should they fail to meet the academic and fiscal expectations established by the chartering authorizer, and also due to the risk of losing students based upon the possibility of

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parental dissatisfaction. Additionally, charters are able to cultivate innovative educational approaches that may not be implemented by other public schools, due to their independence from some administrative and/or statutory constraints (Green & Mead, 2004).

Early on, many observers expressed concern relative to the prospects that White parents and students may use charter schools to create segregated, public-school boundaries (Green, 2001). Historical precedence exists for this apprehension: segregationists used school choice plans as a means to circumvent desegregation decrees (Green, 2001). In 1968, the Supreme Court struck down a “freedom of choice” plan on the grounds that it failed to achieve desegregation in the school district (*Green v. County School Board of New Kent County, Virginia* 1968). Due to this relevant set of historical precedence, many state legislatures enacted racial-balancing provisions, which mandate that charter-school enrollments be a reflection of the surrounding school district’s racial population (Green, 2001). This has not been the case in Michigan.

Seeking educational quality, many parents have chosen to send their children to charter schools. Their choices are primarily based upon school performance, segregation, and fiscal realities related to achieving educational opportunity (Barnes, 1997; Ryan & Heise, 2002; Green, 2001).

Summary

This chapter reviewed the relevant literature for the study. This review commenced with an explanation of the factors leading to the creation of charter schools and the conditions that set forth the current reform movement in the United States. The origins and relevance of the market-based reform theory were also introduced in this chapter. Additionally, the existence of charter schools in the State of Michigan was discussed from a historical to contemporary view. Finally,

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the perspective of some critics of market-based reform theory was presented at the conclusion of the chapter. In the next chapter the methodology for this study will be presented.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

This study examined the fourth- and eighth-grade math and reading achievement of students located in a large urban community in southeastern Michigan between the years 2010 to 2014. The subjects of this study attended traditional and EAA public schools and charter schools with kindergarten-to-eighth-grade configurations. Yet these various schools were governed and managed by different methods. The study sought to answer the single research question: Is there a relationship between academic performance levels in reading and mathematics in fourth and eighth grades at schools within a large urban traditional school district, public school academies, and a state-managed school district located in southeastern Michigan?

To analyze the data in this study, a simple comparison of means analysis was conducted for all subgroups. Since the data are composed of the average student score for each demographic area, this is the most straightforward manner of analysis. This analysis produced a *t*-statistic, which allowed the researcher to determine whether the differences in average test scores were statistically significant, based on a 95% confidence interval. This method tests the null hypothesis that there is no difference between average test scores based on authorizing agency or management system. If the range of average student scores within the confidence interval for each group under examination intersects, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

Population

The population for this study consisted of selected traditional and charter schools based on the control variables that included location within the boundaries of the particular southeastern Michigan municipality, school configuration, governance, and management type. Students attending high schools, private, parochial, alternative, and charter schools that did not educate

students in both 4th and 8th grades were not included in this study. Also, only schools where students living within the boundaries of this southeastern Michigan municipality who took the fourth-grade MEAP or eighth-grade MEAP during the 2010–2014 school years were included. Ultimately 54 charter schools, which were authorized by ten different authorities, were studied. Additionally, 65 schools with kindergarten-to-eighth-grade configurations were studied from the traditional school district. Finally, nine schools with kindergarten-to-eighth-grade configurations were included from the EAA, and these were added to the traditional public school data-set due to the small sample size. Among these nine schools were three charter schools authorized by the EAA that were not included within the charter-school data. Amongst the charter schools, eleven were authorized by the traditional school district. Aggregately, data from a total of 125 schools and 5,959 students were included in the study.

By limiting the analysis to average performance rather than individual performance of only charter schools, the issue of selection bias was greatly alleviated. This allowed for a much simpler examination of charter-school performance since all students have self-selected into a charter school, and the comparisons are for average student performance rather than on an individual level.

Research Design

An ex post facto, quantitative study was used to focus on the analysis and comparison of the academic outcomes between charter schools and the traditional public schools in this southeastern Michigan urban community. An analysis was conducted of student performance on standardized tests for fourth-grade and eighth-grade students attending charter schools, and traditional public schools throughout a large urban community in southeastern Michigan, specifically in reading and mathematics, because they span both of the grade levels studied and are factored into the state's accountability system. Archival data were collected from the

Michigan Department of Education 2010–14 assessment reports via CEPI. Through the collection of information and data via numerical means, the author was able to observe significant differences across groups, which may have occurred in achievement. The fourth- and eighth-grade test data were selected because these represent critical transition times in student achievement, and these data were used as part of the state accountability system.

Instrumentation and Materials

An ex post facto (causal-comparative) research design was employed in this study because it involved the use of preexisting groups for exploring their differences on a dependent variable (Schenker & Rumrill, 2004). According to Nassar-McMillan and Niles (2010) and Salkind (2010), causal comparative studies are employed in an attempt to establish cause-and-effect relationships and involve comparisons. The research design was non-experimental and chosen over an experimental study because the participants could not be randomly assigned into experimental groups. In addition, the variables were preexisting and could not be manipulated (Schenker et al., 2004). However, it is important to remember that even with causal comparative research, firm causal conclusions are not possible due to the nonrandom assignment of participants to groups. Given the fact that the groups compared in this study (i.e., students from traditional public versus students from charter schools, etc.) were preexisting, an ex post facto causal-comparative research design was most appropriate.

Variables of the Study

To test the research question in this study, numerous variations of the dependent variable were examined based on the various groups. Average test scores were examined for both fourth and eighth grades in the subjects of reading and math. These scores were additionally analyzed by specific demographic groups (male, female, Black, White, not English-language learners, economically disadvantaged). The combination of these measures of the dependent variable

provide a clear picture as to whether there were any differences in average student scores based on authorizing agency or management system.

Again, it is important to note that not all schools which operated in this urban community in southeastern Michigan during the relevant span of years were examined in this study. The schools included in the sample met the configuration criteria, which allowed for a more accurate comparison, while simultaneously providing enough variation to draw conclusions. In instances where a school operated multiple locations/campuses, the average scores for all campuses were used.

Data Analysis

A statistical power analysis was conducted using the G*Power computer program to determine the sample size required for this study (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009; Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). Two analytic approaches were used in this study. In the first analytic approach, charter schools were compared with non-charter schools in this large city in southeastern Michigan. Next, four tests were performed comparing charter schools and non-charter schools in terms of mean-scaled scores for reading and mean-scaled scores for mathematics separately for the fourth-grade level and then the eighth-grade level. For the power analysis, two-tailed tests, an alpha level of .05, and desired power of .80 were specified (Wilson, Voorhis, & Morgan, 2007).

The second analytic approach consisted of multiple regression analyses in which differences between the charter schools and the traditional schools, in terms of mean-scaled scores for reading and mean-scaled scores for mathematics, were controlled statistically rather than through a school-by-school comparison process. There were a total of five predictor variables: authorizer, minorities, females, economically disadvantaged students, and English-

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language learners. Each of these variables was either continuous or dichotomous, with dichotomous variables dummy coded for analysis.

Summary

In chapter 3, the methodology of this study was considered. The population, research design, instrumentation and materials, variables, and data analysis were all topics examined within this chapter. Aggregately, data from a total of 125 schools and 5,959 students were included in the study. The following chapter will focus upon an analysis of the results from this study. The analysis will be based upon the research question.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to compare the average academic achievement of students attending the various types of public schools within a large urban city in southeastern Michigan. It was based upon the fourth-and eighth-grade-student performances on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) in Reading and Mathematics from 2010 to 2014. The students involved in this research attended the city's traditional public schools, state-managed schools, and charter schools authorized by a variety of institutions and managed by either for-profit or nonprofit management organizations.

The study was designed to answer the research question, "Is there a relationship between academic-performance levels, in reading and mathematics in fourth-and-eighth grades at schools within a large urban traditional school district, public school academies, and a state-managed school district located in a large urban city in southeastern Michigan?"

Data Analysis and Results

The first step in the analysis is an analysis of variance (ANOVA) test. An ANOVA is basically a way to compare means across more than two groups (Howell, 2002). If this study were merely considering public- vs. private-management types, then a t-test would be most appropriate. However, the study is actually considering three groups in regard to management (EMO, CMO, Public) and ten groups with regard to authorizing agent. It is not effective to run a series of t-tests on all possible combinations because it is likely to get Type I errors, which are incorrect rejections of a true null hypothesis (Peck et al., 2011).

ANOVA is used when there are more than two groups to compare. The ANOVA test assumes the null hypothesis that all groups (student scores) are the same. For this analysis, an

ANOVA is run for various groups of student scores (serving as the dependent variable). The analysis is conducted by examining all student scores, male, female, not English learners, economically disadvantaged, and African American. The ANOVA is designed to reveal whether the means for each category are statistically the same for all groups.

Looking at the summary ANOVA tables, one can see the basic analysis. The researcher can reject the null that all groups are the same only when $\text{Prob}>F$ is .05 or less. This corresponds with essentially every statistical test in existence and permits the examiner to conclude that there is a 95% chance or better that there is a real difference between student scores. Statistically significant results are in bold in the table. An example of this may be observed with the ANOVA table for Management Type, where it is apparent that there are differences in student scores based on management type, but only for African-American students in fourth- and eighth-grade reading and math.

It is essential to point out that an ANOVA simply determines whether all means are the same. It does not tell if and where differences actually exist. In order to determine where the actual differences exist, a post-hoc test must be administered. There are a great number of post-hoc tests available to researchers, and each has similar value. They all provide the same basic information, but they get to the results in slightly different ways. Bonferroni is just one of the various types of post-hoc tests, but it is one of the most popular because it is standard with most statistical software. The Bonferroni test attempts to prevent data from incorrectly appearing to be statistically significant by lowering the alpha value (Shaffer, 1995).

In the analysis for this study, the Bonferroni tables illustrate the actual differences between the specific groups. Looking at the table for management, only African-American student scores are presented. This is because the ANOVA test illustrates that African-American

students are the only student group for which the null hypothesis could not be rejected. For this table, only the statistically significant results are presented because post-hoc tests analyze all possible pairwise combinations. This is not problematic for management types, but when the analysis shifts to authorizing agents, the endeavor becomes more complex due to there being so many possible combinations. The numbers in the far right-hand column represent the difference in student scores for the comparison listed in the third column. For example, looking at fourth-grade reading scores for African-American students (first row), the observer finds that there is about an 82- point difference in scores when we compare public-run schools to EMOs, and about an 84-point difference when we compare EMOs to CMOs. The test is run by subtracting the average score of the first group from that of the second group (EMO scores minus Public scores; CMO scores minus EMO scores). The results conclude that on average, African-American students in public schools tend to score 82 points higher than African-American students in EMOs for the fourth-grade reading test. The number in parenthesis is the significance level for that comparison. As a result, it is concluded that when comparing African-American student scores for that grade and subject, students who are enrolled in public school academies managed by the traditional public school district are likely to score 82 points higher on their exams than those students in public school academies operated by EMOs. This is statistically significant at the 3.4% level, which means the researcher is 96.6% confident that this difference is not just a coincidence. The standard confidence level is usually 5%; however, this is rather arbitrary and usually is used for directional hypothesis only. Because this study is not hypothesizing a direction, the researcher can show results that have a confidence level of 10% or lower. These results illustrate a difference between CMOs and EMOs where, on average, students in CMOs score about 84 points higher on the exams than those attending EMO-managed schools, and this

difference is significant at the 8.4% level (91.6% confident there is a real difference). Note that the analysis was unable to determine whether there is a difference between the traditional district and CMO-managed schools because the post hoc test did not show a statistical difference.

Results

Table 1 presents the results of the frequency distribution for each grade level studied. The percentages suggest that there was a fairly even split between both grades, as fourth-grade students made up 51.6% of the distribution. Students in the eighth grade made up 48.4% of the distribution. In general, the grade levels allow for good comparability based on the percentage that each grade level represents of the overall distribution.

Table 1

Frequency Distribution of Responses to Grade Level (N = 5959)

Response	N	%
4 th	3075	51.6
8 th	2884	48.4
Total	5959	100.0

There was a slightly larger number of fourth-graders included in this study, but the difference is not significant.

Table 2 presents the results of the frequency distribution for type of school management. The responses range across public; charter-management organizations (CMOs), which are nonprofit organizations; and education-management organizations (EMOs), which are for-profit companies. Table 2 reveals that public management represented 19.8% of the distribution, while CMOs represented 13.3%. A total of 66.9% of the responses indicated management by an EMO.

Thus, even when combining public and CMO responses, they still represent only about half of the EMO responses at 33.1%.

Table 2

Frequency Distribution of Responses to School Management (N = 5959)

Response	N	%
Public	1181	19.8
EMO	3984	66.9
CMO	794	13.3
Total	5959	100.0

These data are representative of those students attending all types of schools, and they illustrate that there are a significant number of students in this community that actually attend for-profit managed charter schools as opposed to traditional public schools. This number becomes even more pronounced when considering the 13.3% of the population attending nonprofit managed charter schools.

Table 3 shows the frequency distribution for type of school subject. The responses range across reading, writing, math, and science. The findings show that reading and math each account for 33.3% of the responses. When looking at math and reading categories combined, we see that they make up 66.6% of the overall subject responses.

Table 3

Frequency Distribution of Responses to School Subject (N = 5959)

Response	N	%
Reading	1985	33.3
Writing	1025	17.2
Math	1983	33.3
Science	966	16.2
Total	5959	100.0

Of course, for the purpose of this study, only the results from the Reading and Mathematics assessments are pertinent. The Reading and Mathematics assessments are the only tests administered in both the fourth and eighth grades. As a result, the chosen assessments permitted direct comparisons. The information relative to the other tests is presented merely to inform the reader of all possible assessments.

Table 4 displays the frequency distribution for school groups. There are a total of 15 groups. Black/not Hispanic students compose 11.3% of the responses. The White, Asian, Hispanic, American Indian, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander groups represent a combined total of 7.1% of responses. Students representing two or more races made up 1.8% of the distribution. English language learners make up 2.5% of the distribution. Students who are not English learners make up 11.4% of the responses. Responses for the economically and not economically advantaged groups are 11.4% and 10.0%, respectively. Students with disabilities represent 10.4% of the overall distribution.

Table 4

Frequency Distribution of Responses to School Groups (N = 5959)

Response	N	%
All	678	11.4
Male	678	11.4
Female	678	11.4
Students with disabilities	620	10.4
Not English learners	678	11.4
Not economically advantaged	594	10.0
Economically advantaged	678	11.4
Black, not Hispanic	675	11.3
Asian	27	.5
White	185	3.1
Two or more races	109	1.8
Hispanic	183	3.1
English language learners	150	2.5
American Indian	18	.3
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	8	.1
Total	5959	100.0

This table represents the groups that make up the study's sample. There are 620 students with disabilities and they represent 10.4% of the overall sample.

Table 5 displays the frequency distribution for school authorizer. Central Michigan University and Oakland University represent the largest percentage of responses at 20.2% and 20.7%, respectively. The Detroit City School District and Ferris State University represent 15.3% and 15.7% of the distribution. All four schools represent a total of 71.9% of the total responses. There are a total of 10 authorizers listed.

Table 5

Frequency Distribution of Responses to School Authorizer (N = 5959)

Response	N	%
Central Michigan University	1204	20.2
Detroit City School District	910	15.3
Saginaw Valley State University	472	7.9
Bay Mills Community College	195	3.3
Oakland University	1232	20.7
Northern Michigan University	188	3.2
Ferris State University	936	15.7
Eastern Michigan University	132	2.2
Lake Superior State University	232	3.9
Grand Valley State University	458	7.7
Total	5959	100.0

Central Michigan University is the largest authorizer in the State of Michigan according to the CEPI, and this large southeastern municipality has the highest concentration of charter schools in the state.

In Table 6, the results show a one-way ANOVA comparing the differences in fourth-grade mean reading scores. These scores are compared across three school-management types of public; charter-management organizations (CMOs), which are nonprofit organizations; and education-management organizations (EMOs), which are private organizations. The results indicate a statistically significant difference of $p < .01$ for the three management types [$F(2,113) = 4.812, p = 0.010$].

Table 6

Analysis of Variance Summary of African-American Fourth-Grade Reading Scores and School Management (N = 115)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	179171.89	2	89585.95	**4.812	.010
Within Groups	2101761.08	113	18617.36		
Total	2282932.97	115			

*p < .05, **p < .01

This table indicates significant differences in 4th-grade mean reading scores when compared across the three school management types of Public, Charter Management Organizations (CMOs), which are non-profit organizations and Education Management Organizations (EMOs), which are private organizations.

Table 7 displays the Bonferroni post hoc comparisons for fourth-grade reading scores and school management. The post-hoc test indicates a public-EMO mean difference of 82.10, p = .034. The public-CMO comparison shows a mean difference of -1.46 and is statistically insignificant along with the EMO-CMO comparison, which shows a mean difference of -83.55.

Table 7

Bonferroni Comparison for Fourth-Grade Reading Scores and School Management

Comparisons	Mean Reading Difference	Std. Error	95% CI	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Public vs. EMO	82.10*	31.95	4.46	159.74
Public vs. CMO	-1.46	44.04	-108.47	105.56
EMO vs. CMO	-83.55	37.53	-174.76	7.65

*p < .05

In accordance with Table 7, as it relates to the fourth-grade reading assessment data, there exists a significant statistical difference between those students attending traditional public schools and those attending for-profit managed schools. There was no difference determined when comparing the other combinations.

In Table 8, the results show a one-way ANOVA comparing the differences in fourth-grade mean math scores. The results indicate a statistically significant difference, $p < .01$, for the three management types [$F(2,113) = 4.991$, $p = 0.008$].

Table 8

Analysis of Variance Summary of African-American Fourth-Grade Math Scores and School Management (N = 115)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	184309.23	2	92154.62	**4.991	.008
Within Groups	2086330.05	113	18463.10		
Total	2270639.28	115			

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 8 indicates significant differences in 4th-grade mean math scores when compared across the three school management types of Public, Charter Management Organizations (CMOs), which are non-profit organizations and Education Management Organizations (EMOs), which are private organizations.

Table 9 displays the Bonferroni post hoc comparisons for fourth-grade math scores and school management. The post hoc test indicates a public-EMO mean difference of 82.91, $p = .031$. The public-CMO comparison shows a mean difference of -2.35 and is statistically insignificant along with the EMO-CMO comparison, which shows a mean difference of -85.26.

Table 9

Bonferroni Comparison for Fourth-Grade Math Scores and School Management

Comparisons	Mean Reading Difference	Std. Error	95% CI	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Public vs. EMO	82.91*	31.82	5.59	160.23
Public vs. CMO	-2.35	43.85	-108.93	104.22
EMO vs. CMO	-85.26	37.37	-176.09	5.56

*p < .05

This table once again illustrates a difference between the fourth-grade students in publicly managed schools and those in schools that are for-profit managed. On this occasion, the data are reflective of the results from the mathematics assessment.

In Table 10, the results show a one-way ANOVA comparing the differences in eighth-grade mean reading scores. The results indicate a statistically significant difference, $p < .05$, for the three management types [$F(2,106) = 3.317$, $p = 0.040$].

Table 10

Analysis of Variance Summary of African-American Eighth-Grade Reading Scores and School Management (N = 108)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	390124.40	2	195062.20	*3.317	.040
Within Groups	6233987.18	106	58811.20		
Total	6624111.58	108			

*p < .05, **p < .01

This table indicates significant differences in 8th-grade mean reading scores when compared across the three school management types of Public, Charter Management

Organizations (CMOs), which are non-profit organizations and Education Management Organizations (EMOs), which are private organizations.

Table 11 displays the Bonferroni post hoc comparisons for eighth-grade reading scores and school management. The post hoc test indicates a public-EMO mean difference of 124.35, $p = .096$. The public-CMO comparison shows a mean difference of -3.19 and is statistically insignificant along with the EMO-CMO comparison, which shows a mean difference of -127.54.

Table 11

Bonferroni Comparison for Eighth-Grade Reading Scores and School Management

Comparisons	Mean Reading Difference	Std. Error	95% CI	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Public vs. EMO	124.35*	57.26	-14.94	263.65
Public vs. CMO	-3.19	81.56	-201.58	195.20
EMO vs. CMO	-127.54	70.92	-300.05	44.97

* $p < .05$

There is no statistically significant difference amongst the groups relative to the eighth-grade reading-assessment results when comparing CMO and EMO school-management types.

In Table 12, the results show a one-way ANOVA comparing the differences in eighth-grade mean math scores. The results indicate a statistically significant difference, $p < .05$, for the three management types [$F(2,106) = 3.404$, $p = 0.037$].

Table 12

Analysis of Variance Summary of African-American Eighth-Grade Math Scores and School Management (N = 108)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	388127.76	2	194063.88	*3.404	.037
Within Groups	6042956.95	106	57009.03		
Total	6431084.71	108			

*p < .05, **p < .01

This table indicates significant differences in 8th-grade mean math scores when compared across the three school-management types of Public, Charter Management Organizations (CMOs), which are non-profit organizations and Education Management Organizations (EMOs), which are private organizations.

Table 13 displays the Bonferroni post hoc comparisons for eighth-grade math scores and school management. The post hoc test indicates a public-EMO mean difference of 126.05, p = .082. The public-CMO comparison shows a mean difference of 2.27 and is statistically insignificant along with the EMO-CMO comparison, which shows a mean difference of -123.78.

Table 13

Bonferroni Comparison for Eighth-Grade Math Scores and School Management

Comparisons	Mean Reading Difference	Std. Error	95% CI	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Public vs. EMO	126.35	56.38	-11.09	263.19
Public vs. CMO	2.27	80.30	-193.05	195.60
EMO vs. CMO	-123.78	69.82	-293.62	46.07

*p < .05

Table 13 illustrates that there is no statistically significant difference amongst the groups relative to the eighth-grade mathematics-assessment results when comparing school-management types.

In Table 14, the findings show public-school management with a standardized estimate of .04 with a t-value of 3.01. Race, which focuses on minority students, indicates a standardized estimate of -.10 and a t-value of -7.88 compared to non-minorities. Gender, which focuses on females, indicates a standardized coefficient of .09 and a t-value of 7.11 as compared to males. Economically disadvantaged students display a standardized estimate of -.22 and a t-value of 16.80 when comparing test scores to students who are not economically disadvantaged. English language learners show a standardized estimate of -.06 and a t-value of -4.73 when compared to test scores of students who are not English language learners. All independent variables are statistically significant ($p < .01$).

In terms of global statistics, the results indicate an R^2 of .07 and an adjusted R^2 of .07 after adjusting for the number of independent variables in the model. The F-value is 89.51. The model overall is statistically significant ($p < .01$).

Table 14

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Test Scores (N = 5958)

Variable	B	SE B	B	t-value
Public	29.10	9.96	.04**	3.01
Race	-85.74	10.88	-.10**	-7.88
Gender	91.26	12.83	.09**	7.11
Economically Disadvantaged	-227.99	13.57	-.22**	-16.80
ELL	-120.78	25.55	-.06**	-4.73
R ²	.07			
Adjusted R ²	.07			
F	88.51**			

*p < .05, **p < .01

The regression table indicates significant effects of the independent variables on standardized-test scores in reading and math. Public schools have a significant effect on scores when compared to CMOs and EMOs. Public schools are scoring higher.

- Scores for minorities are significantly less than for non-minorities.
- Scores for females are significantly higher than for males.
- Economically disadvantaged students score significantly less than economically advantaged students.
- ELL students score significantly less than non-ELL students.

The R-squared and adjusted R-squared show that the variables explain 7% of the variation in standardized test scores. The adjusted R-squared factors in the number of independent variables used in the model while the R-squared is just a gross assessment.

The F statistic tells whether all of the independent variables together are having a significant effect on standardized test scores (and it does show significance). This is different from assessing the “individual” significance of each variable. The R squared, adjusted R squared, and F statistics are all called “global statistics” because they look at the impact of the independent variables together on the dependent variable.

Summary

This chapter revealed the analysis and results for the study. The applied ANOVA test illustrated that African-American students are the only student group in which the null hypothesis could not be rejected. The results of the post hoc test indicates a mean difference of 82.10, $p = .034$ on the fourth-grade reading test and a mean difference of 82.91 on the math test, for fourth-grade African-American students in traditional public schools when compared to African-American students attending EMO managed schools. There was also a mean difference of 124.35 when comparing African-American eighth-grade students attending traditional public schools with those attending EMO managed schools. The analysis was unable to determine whether there is a difference between the traditional district and CMO-managed schools because the post hoc test did not show a statistical difference. In the next chapter, conclusions drawn from the analysis and results will be presented.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of this ex post facto, quantitative study was to analyze the relationship between fourth- and eighth-grade MEAP results of students attending selected traditional public and charter schools within a large urban city in southeastern Michigan. This study focused upon the research question, “Is there a relationship between academic-performance levels in reading and mathematics in fourth and eighth grades at schools in traditional public school districts, charter schools, and a state-managed school district within a large urban community located in southeastern Michigan?” This question is relevant because charter schools exist to one degree or another in almost every state in the United States. With this reality, it appears to be of great importance to determine the quality of these schools. The intention of introducing charters into the equation of educational-delivery options was to create market-driven competition. It would appear to be important to identify the particular factors that influence competition and quality.

The methodology used to analyze the data in this study consisted of a simple comparison of means analysis conducted for all subgroups. The data were composed of the average student score for each demographic area. This analysis produced a *t*-statistic, which allowed the researcher to determine whether the differences in average test scores were statistically significant, based on a 95% confidence interval. In general, this method tests the null hypothesis that there is no difference between average test scores based on authorizing agency or management system. If the range of average student scores within the confidence interval for each group under examination intersects, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

Implications

The implication derived from this study suggests that EMO-managed charter schools are not yielding results that are comparable to the traditional-school district student-achievement data. The results from the applied ANOVA suggests that African-American students are the only student group in which the null hypothesis could not be rejected. This is because the researcher could conclude that there is a 95% or better chance that there exists a true difference between student scores. The results of the post hoc test indicates a mean difference of 82.10, $p = .034$ on the fourth-grade reading test and 82.91 on the math test, for fourth-grade African-American students in traditional public schools when compared to African-American students attending EMO-managed schools. There was also a mean difference of 124.35 when comparing African-American eighth-grade students attending traditional public schools with those attending EMO managed schools. The analysis was unable to determine whether there is a difference between the traditional district and CMO-managed schools because the post hoc test did not show a significant statistical difference.

The regression analysis indicated that there are significant effects of the independent variables on standardized test scores in reading and math. According to the results, traditional public schools had a significant effect on scores when compared to EMO's. Public schools scored higher relative to the following comparisons:

- Scores for minorities were significantly less than non-minorities.
- Scores for females were significantly higher than males.
- Economically disadvantaged students scored significantly less than economically advantaged students.

- English-language learning students scored significantly less than non-English language learning students.

As mentioned in the literature review, many parents choose to send their children to charter schools in search of educational quality. Their choices are primarily based upon school performance (Barnes, 1997; Ryan & Heise, 2002; Green, 2001). If the results have broader ramifications, parents from the community under study are not realizing the educational benefit sought on behalf of their children. Demographically, the studied population was markedly minority and economically disadvantaged. Also, there exists an emerging population segment that consists of English-language learners. With this said, it is feasible to suggest that the majority of parents and students of this large urban city in southeastern Michigan would be better served by the traditional public schools. Moreover, essentially half of the population consists of male students. A significant number of these males were also African American, according to the data. Based upon the results, the selected charter schools managed by EMOs were not as effective at educating African-American males as the community's traditional public school district.

The results of this one analysis exist in stark contrast to market-driven based theory to some degree. Although proponents of the theory may assert that the charters exist based upon the population's desire for higher-quality schooling options, the lower performance data do not support an assumption that these parents' choices are based upon academic performance criteria. If proponent observers are correct in assuming that charters improve existing traditional school systems by introducing choice and competition (Ericson & Silverman, 2001), the inference appears to be that the traditional district schools may be performing simply due to the existence of competition.

Critical to this point is the study's inability to capture other, more qualitative, factors that can better assess the degree to which these various types of schools support student learning. Some of these factors include culture, climate, variety of course offerings, advance placement and gifted and talented educational offerings, teacher quality and qualifications, degree of access to technology, number of discipline incidents, and the disposition of student consequences by demographic subgroup (Archibald, 2006; Jaggia and Kelly-Hawke, 1999; & Green, 2015). Perhaps parents may be making the choice to send their children to charter schools based upon other factors that were not subject to the factors studied within this research.

Modern proponents of Friedman's theory concur with his belief that compelling parents to send their children to a traditional public school is economically inefficient because it prohibits competition among schools (Betts & Loveless, 2005). Yet as critics of Friedman's theory contend, the results of this study may support their belief that charters unjustly divert crucial resources and policy attention away from traditional public schools. Perhaps the argument by Torres (2005) may have credence as cited in the review of literature. The assertion of Torres' work is that the market-driven theory is designed to undermine the social democratic policies that have largely benefited disenfranchised members of society.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study provides some evidence that for-profit managed charter schools, though the most prevalently implemented approach, are the least-effective educational option in this large urban city in southeastern Michigan. Despite this evidence suggesting poorer academic results, a significant number of parents in this community select charter options over the apparently more effective traditional public school district. The questions here are plentiful and serve as the basis for future research recommendations. What are the other variables, beyond the academic

performance results, that influence parental decisions relative to school choice? Is the clientele discerning enough to actually understand the particular factors associated with significantly effective schools? Has the market digressed to a mediocre performance mean, by basing the competition for increased enrollment solely upon factors of convenience? If EMOs have the least amount of effectiveness and accountability, why do they continue to be the most prevalent management option? These are key questions for future researchers, policymakers, school leaders, authorizers, and management organizations.

In addition, this growth of charter schools has created the perception among too many policymakers and, more importantly, the general public, that traditional public schools are innately inferior, and that charter schools can automatically offer a higher-quality of education (Ferguson, 2010). As this study illustrates, the traditional public schools do a better job of educating students in this southeastern Michigan city than EMO-managed schools. So the perception lacks supportive evidence. Furthermore, resources, time, effort, and public funds are being diverted away from already austere public school budgets in support of charter schools (Robelen, 2008). As a result, a self-fulfilling prophecy comes into effect. With fewer resources, it becomes more difficult to provide quality educational programming and service. With less quality, an increase in dissatisfaction becomes manifest. Prudence, it would appear, dictates that policymakers consider the manner in which traditional public schools are affected by charter schools before creating policies that are supportive of additional charter school growth.

Without additional research, the effectiveness of Michigan charter schools will continue to remain dubious (Berends et al., 2009). Therefore, having a clearer understanding of the relationship between traditional public versus charter schools and student achievement in

Michigan may facilitate obtaining more comprehensive information concerning school quality to support parents' decisions and inform future policy.

Traditional-school leaders and state administrators would be advised to communicate the comparably better results to the affected public. Furthermore, they would benefit from determining the factors that actually compel parents to select the poorer performing EMO-led charters so that they may derive ways to mitigate the effects of these factors.

Charter-school authorizers in Michigan, as well as other states, would be well advised to consider the performance of management types for the schools they have authorized. Before approving new contracts for new charter schools, management type should be a component of the authorizing criteria.

It is recommended that future research consist of a wider range of variables from different data types. Specifically, these variables could include perception data as well as qualitative process data. Also, qualitative studies may extract more uniquely personal results via anecdotes, authentic first-hand observations, and studies for more extended time ranges. Finally, it would be important for future studies to take place in both similar and dissimilar communities across the nation.

Summary

This ex post facto study was designed to gain insight into what influence, if any, Martin Friedman's market-driven based theory had upon school performance in a large urban community within southeastern Michigan. With so many different educational delivery options now in existence across the nation, it is important to learn more about these options, and it is equally important to learn how they affect one another when placed into direct competition. This study attempts to make an initial inquiry toward answering these questions.

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UHSRC Determination: EXEMPT

DATE: February 24, 2015

TO: Reginald Kirkland, B.S., M.A.,
Ed.S. Eastern Michigan
University

Re: UHSRC: # 716176-1
Category: Exempt category 4
Approval Date: February 24, 2015

Title: Choice but No Choice: The Dearth of Viable Educational Options for African American Males in the City of Detroit, Michigan

Your research project, entitled **Choice but No Choice: The Dearth of Viable Educational Options for African American Males in the City of Detroit, Michigan**, has been determined **Exempt** in accordance with federal regulation 45 CFR 46.102. UHSRC policy states that you, as the Principal Investigator, are responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of your research subjects and conducting your research as described in your protocol.

Renewals: Exempt protocols do not need to be renewed. When the project is completed, please submit the **Human Subjects Study Completion Form** (access through IRBNet on the UHSRC website).

Modifications: You may make minor changes (e.g., study staff changes, sample size changes, contact information changes, etc.) without submitting for review. However, if you plan to make changes that alter study design or any study instruments, you must submit a **Human Subjects Approval Request Form** and obtain approval prior to implementation. The form is available through IRBNet on the UHSRC website.

Problems: All major deviations from the reviewed protocol, unanticipated problems, adverse events, subject complaints, or other problems that may increase the risk to human subjects **or** change the category of review must be reported to the UHSRC via an **Event Report** form, available through IRBNet on the UHSRC website

Follow-up: If your Exempt project is not completed and closed after **three years**, the UHSRC office will contact you regarding the status of the project.

Please use the UHSRC number listed above on any forms submitted that relate to this project, or on any correspondence with the UHSRC office.

Good luck in your research. If we can be of further assistance, please contact us at 734-487-3090 or via e-mail at human.subjects@emich.edu. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,
Jeniffer Kellman
Fritz Chair
University Human Subjects Review Committee