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AFRICAN AMERICAN PARENTAL BELIEFS ABOUT RESILIENCY: A DELPHI STUDY

by

Vita Lynette Jones

Bachelor of Science
University of Nevada Las Vegas
2002

Master of Education
University of Nevada Las Vegas
2003

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Special Education
Department of Special Education
College of Education

Graduate College
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May 2009

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The Graduate College
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AFRICAN AMERICAN PARENTAL BELIEFS ABOUT RESILIENCY:
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ABSTRACT

African American Parental Beliefs About Resiliency: A Delphi Study

by

Vita L. Jones

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Professor of Special Education
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Resiliency is a concept that has been discussed in the fields of anthropology, psychology, sociology, and education for over 30 years. Most authors define resiliency as the ability to triumph over adversity. The term associated with children/youth who rise above negative situations is resilient. A subgroup of students who are disproportionately affected by negative perceptions from society and who often find themselves in negative situations are African American children/youth. It appears that these students encounter less social fit in school, have a higher propensity for at-risk behavior, and experience less favorable academic and social outcomes.

This study involved a Delphi inquiry concerning the characteristics of resiliency with a large group of African American parents (n=240). The parents in this study were considered experts in resiliency if they graduated from high school and had at least one child who graduated from high school. Through a series of three Delphi surveys, the parents moved toward agreement concerning what they perceived to be the most important characteristics of resiliency that contributed to their success and the success of their child and those that hindered their success and the success of their child (internal

and external). Data obtained from rounds were analyzed using descriptive statistics and qualitative analysis.

Over the course of the three Delphi surveys, six categories (spiritual/faith, positive/negative personal traits, family involvement/problems, positive/negative educational supports, inappropriate behaviors, and lack of resources) emerged as the main characteristics of resiliency defined by the participants as contributing to or hindering the success of the participants and their children both internally and externally. The six categories were related to the five research themes (questions) posed in the study (individual characteristics, relationship characteristics, community characteristics, cultural characteristic, and physical ecology characteristics). Thus, for this group of African American parents there was agreement that resiliency can be defined by one's spiritual/faith, personal traits, family involvement, educational supports, inappropriate behaviors, and a lack of resources.

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Grateful,

Vita Jones

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Resiliency is a concept that has been discussed in anthropology, psychology, sociology, and education for over 30 years (Waxman, Gray, & Padron, 2003). A common thread in the four areas of research is the human ability to triumph over adversity. It appears that for each child/youth experiencing difficulties in adverse situations there are twice as many who flourish and become productive individuals within society (Werner & Smith 1992). Researchers have labeled children/youth who rise above negative situations (e.g., home, school, community) as resilient (Patterson, 2002; Sagor, 1996; Ogbu, 2004). A variety of personal characteristics have been associated with resiliency. For example, optimism, internal affirmation, internal locus of control, intrinsic motivation, strong relationships with peers and adults, and the ability to remove oneself emotionally from unfavorable situations (Ford, 1994; Kitano & Lewis, 2005; Sagor, 1996).

A subgroup of students who are disproportionately affected by negative perceptions from society and who often find themselves in adverse situations are African American children and youth (Ogbu, 2004). It appears that these students encounter less fit in public schools, have a higher propensity for at-risk behavior, and experience less favorable academic and social outcomes (Connell, Spencer, & Aber, 1994). It is important that educators and parents working with African American children/youth utilize research-

based strategies to foster resilience (Patterson, 2002). These strategies, when incorporated into the school environment, will serve to facilitate resiliency in African American students (Eitle, 2002). The ultimate goal should be the implementation of resiliency strategies to contribute to the achievement and success of African American students within the school setting and in the world at large. Identification of the unique resiliency characteristics of this subgroup of students is warranted to ensure that educators and parents have the benefit of evidence-based information (Brown, 2001).

Resiliency Defined

Researchers continue to search for the select variables that contribute to the development of resiliency in humans (Patterson, 2002). Several disciplines have attempted to define and refine the concept of resilience. Anthropology, psychology, sociology, and education each contribute definitions of resilience that revolve around the concept of children and youth coping and thriving in modern society (Robinson, 2005; Goldstein, 2001; Ungar, 2004; Werner & Smith, 1992).

The Field of Anthropology

Over time, anthropologists have defined resilience as a dynamic process that varies between individuals and within individuals (Jarrett, 1997). Researchers maintain that resilient individuals are less susceptible to risk and exhibit a consistent pattern of successful coping (Rutter, 1987; Werner & Smith, 1992).

In an ethnographic study, Robinson (2005) defined resiliency as the ability to facilitate and infuse strength-based dialogue with families experiencing social pathology. Working with Aboriginal families in Australia, he found that communal support was key

to the creation of a resilient child. In anthropology resilience also is defined as scholastic attainment in the presence of threatening situations (Gayles, 2005). This involves the production of a positive social and academic product by children and youth after experiencing tremendous setbacks. While resiliency has been discussed repeatedly in anthropology, it is still unclear how specific factors (e.g., local context, economic status, and racial-ethnic group) influence the development of resiliency (Jarrett, 1997).

The Field of Psychology

Psychology explores the impact of parenting practices on children/youth that may impede the development of resiliency. It may be that despite good intentions parents unwittingly undermine their child's capacity for resiliency (Goldstein, 2001). This undermining weakens the child's ability to succeed in difficult circumstances (Goldstein, 2001).

Goldstein (2006) defines resiliency as the ability to deal with stress and pressure in everyday challenges. For children and youth, this involves developing clear and realistic goals as well as solving problems.

A recurring definition in psychology involves the aptitude for perseverance in difficult times (International Resilience Project, 2005). The construct of resilience evolves from an inner ability to rebound from harsh conditions. This inner ability has been defined as a protective barrier that allows the child/youth to preserve a positive self-identity (Rutter, 1987).

The Field of Sociology

The field of sociology maintains that resiliency is a multi-dimensional concept (Ungar, 2005). While resiliency is related to individual traits, relationships, community

concepts, and cultural factors (International Resilience Project, 2005), sociology defines resiliency as dependent on structural conditions, relationships, and access to social justice (Ungar, 2005). Thus, in sociology resilience is an outcome of personal capacities as well as social, cultural, and political assets (Ungar, 2003). This means that an individual's resiliency may be impacted by a lack of social justice in the situation in which they find themselves.

The Field of Education

In education resiliency is defined primarily in terms of outcomes. That is to say, educational researchers define resiliency in terms of the increased probability of academic and social accomplishments in spite of setbacks (Brown, 2001; Milstein & Henry, 2000). Education focuses on the ability of the individual to be engaged in the academic setting in spite of complicated and adverse experiences (Martin & Marsh, 2006). Resiliency in education often involves the cultivation of school engagement, school satisfaction, and scholastic competence (Sagor, 1996).

In this study, resilience was defined as a person who embodies the characteristics of resiliency and draws on his or her self-worth to be a personal advocate (Harvey, 2007). A resilient student was defined as one who is engaged in the school setting in spite of complicated and adverse experiences and who ultimately graduates from high school (Martin & Marsh, 2006).

Characteristics of Resiliency

Researchers have attempted to isolate the specific characteristics of resiliency (International Resiliency Project, 2005; Rutter, 1999; Ungar, 2005). These characteristics

are particularly important in education because practitioners require empirically-based information in order to design learning systems to offset potential risks and vulnerabilities that students may encounter (Rutter, 1999; Ungar, 2003; No Child Left Behind Act [NCLB], 2002). The identification of these characteristics may be beneficial for parents and educators as they work to support students in the development of their capacity, well-being, and sense of value in home and school settings.

Individual Characteristics

The individual characteristics of resiliency are defined as innate abilities that reside in an individual and remain centered during difficult times (Condly, 2006). These abilities can be taught and developed over time (Brooks, 1994; Hall & Pearson, 2005). The goal of teaching individual resiliency strategies to children/youth is to increase the ability to succeed (Gordon, 1995). Individual characteristics are defined in the research as: (a) assertiveness (Miller, 1995); (b) the ability to solve problems (Harvey, 2007); (c) self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997); (d) being able to live with uncertainty (Condly, 2006); (e) self-awareness (Hippe, 2004); (f) perceived social support (Brown, 2004); (g) a positive outlook (Gordon, 1995); (h) empathy for others (Hall & Pearson, 2005); (i) having goals and aspirations (Wehmeyer, Hughes, Agran, Garner, & Yeager, 2003); (j) having a balance between independence and dependence on others (Abernathy & Cheney, 2005); (k) appropriate use of or abstinence from alcohol and drugs (Hertig, Eggert, & Thompson, 1996); (l) a sense of humor (Baines, 2004); and (m) a sense of duty to others or self, depending on the culture (Wilson, 1993).

Relationship Characteristics

A sense of connectedness and fit with others has been defined as the ability to form relationships (Booker, 2004). This ability to connect is a process in which ties are formed and the child/youth engages in a positive manner with peers, parents, and teachers (Bryan, 2005; Seng, 1999). Relationship characteristics also involve the skills of the parents to foster resiliency (Booker, 2004). Relationship characteristics are defined in the research as: (a) child-centered parenting (Bryan, 2005); (b) appropriate emotional expression and parental monitoring within the family (Bhandari & Barnett, 2007; Seng 1999); (c) social competence (Harvey, 2007); (d) the presence of a positive mentor and/or role models (Broussard, Mosley-Howard, & Roychoudhury, 2006); (e) meaningful relationships with others at home and school (Booker, 2006); (f) perceived social support (Winfield, 1994;) and, (g) peer group acceptance (Nelson-LeGall & Glor-Sceib, 1986).

Community Characteristics

The community is an important context in which resiliency can develop. The research indicates that a community takes on special meaning when resiliency is discussed (Freiberg, 1994). In terms of resiliency, the community involves the joining together of people with common values, beliefs, and interests as well as people working together for the good of the children/youth (Wang & Gordon, 1994). Community characteristics involve: (a) opportunities for age-appropriate work (Zimmer-Gembeck & Motimer, 2006); (b) avoidance of exposure to violence in one's family, community, or with peers (Robins, John, Caspi, Moffitt, & Stouthamber-Loeber, 1996); (c) community provision of safety, recreation, and housing (Wright-Edelman, 1992); (d) meaningful rites of passage with an appropriate amount of risk (Prelow, Weaver, & Swenson, 2006); (e) low

tolerance of high-risk problems and/or problem behavior (Brody, et. al. 2006); (f) safety and security (Frasier, 2007); (g) perceived social equity (Brown, 2001); and, (h) equitable access to school, education, information, and learning resources (Booker, 2004).

Cultural Characteristics

Cultural characteristics are those that reside within an individual and involve the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the child/youth. These characteristics may be important resources in the development of resiliency (Wang, & Gordon, 1994). The impact of a child's culture can limit or enhance the access to learning, resources, and success (Brown, 2004). Cultural characteristics are defined as: (a) affiliation with a religious organization (e.g. spirituality) (Jones, 2007); (b) tolerance for different ideologies and beliefs (Hewitt, 2005); (c) adequate management of cultural dislocation (Brown, 2007); (d) self-betterment (Hamilton, 1980); (e) having a life philosophy (Goldstein, 2006); and, (f) being culturally grounded (e.g. knowing one's history and participating in a cultural tradition) (Ogbu, 2004).

Physical Ecology Characteristics

Physical ecology characteristics involve a student's access to a healthy and safe environment (International Resiliency Project, 2005). This has been defined as the environmental factors that influence a person's vulnerability in relation to stress (Garmezy & Rutter, 1983). Research indicates that the type of environment a child/youth lives in can be related to the development of resiliency (Appley & Trumbull, 1986). Physical ecological characteristics are defined as: (a) access to a healthy environment (Ungar, 2005); (b) feeling secure in one's community (Duffy, 2007); (c) access to

recreational spaces (Hawkins, 1992); and, (d) sports involvement (Booker, 2004; Braddock, Royster, Winfield, & Hawkins, 1991).

Impact of Resiliency on African American Children and Youth

Because so many African American children/youth suffer the consequences of chronic and profound life stress, studying resilience among this population provides needed information concerning the development of resiliency as well as the impact of a lack of resiliency on this population (Parker, Cowen, Work, & Wyman, 1990). In spite of the limited resiliency research focusing specifically on African American children and youth, it appears that resilient students display effective coping techniques and problem solving skills that are critical to their academic and social success (Wasonga, Christman, & Kilmer, 2003). However, African American students who lack resiliency often struggle with life's challenges and are predisposed to negative outcomes in life (McCabe et al., 2007).

Outcomes for Resilient Children and Youth

The literature indicates that social and academic outcomes are positive for African American students who exhibit resiliency (Patterson, 2002). For these students, resiliency is a multi-dimensional component to which situational (e.g., school, community,) and family (e.g., child- parent interactions) elements contribute (Parker, et al., 1990).

Academic. The research devoted to high-ability African American students is limited. Ford and Harris (1990) examined the relevant literature concerning African American children/youth and discovered that of 4,109 published articles on high-ability youth since 1924, less than 2% addressed African American youth. This indicates that there exists little information on academic achievement in relationship to resiliency for this

population of students (Hebert & Reis 1999). However, the research that does exist indicates that academically successful African American students require supportive systems that nurture their achievement (Floyd, 1996).

Booker (2004) maintains that academic achievement starts with the ability of African American students to remain engaged in the school process. This sense of fit enables the students who traditionally live a communal lifestyle, to belong to a scholastic community at school. This scholastic community can be instrumental in the development of resiliency in the school setting as it allows the students to form collegial relationships (Booker, 2004). Within the scholastic community the students are engaged, communicate well with adults and peers, and are well liked (Goldstein, 2006). These resilient traits augment the students' access to school resources and ultimately can lead to academic success (Hebert & Reis, 1999).

Social Emotional. Social emotional resiliency revolves around the non-instructional aspects of school. This has been defined as care, support, and opportunities for participation in activities that promote social bonding and life skills (Wasonga, Chistman, & Kilmer, 2003). It appears that the socially resilient African American child/youth has a bond with significant caring adults who have clear expectations for the student.

This social emotional resilience results in a sense of well being that is necessary for the African American child/youth to become responsible and avoid threatening behavior (Beland, 2007). Hall (2007) maintains that the socially resilient child/youth resists the pressure to conform to hostile environments. Typically, socially-emotionally resilient children/youth have a positive cultural awareness and a strong self-identity that results in pro-social development (Hall, 2007).

Outcomes for Non-Resilient Children and Youth

The outcomes for non-resilient African American children/youth are of great concern. These outcomes include lower academic achievement, increased disciplinary action, and a higher dropout rate (Smith, Schneider, & Ruck, 2005). Often these students are overrepresented in special education settings (Skiba, Poloni-Staudinger, Gallini, Simmons & Feggins-Azza, 2006). It appears that the non-resilient African American child/youth does not experience the strong sense of fit required by school-age students to be successful (Booker, 2004).

Academic. The impact of low academic performance and its relationship to resiliency cannot be underestimated (National Center on Education Statistics [NCES], 1999; Smith, 2005). This relationship includes: (a) lack of attendance, (b) low academic achievement, (c) suspension, and (d) disconnectedness from the academic process (NCES, 1999). It appears that non-resilient African American students are academically disengaged and educationally alienated from the school setting (Smith, 2005). This lack of resiliency can result in a high dropout rate for students, in some districts up to 50% (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2007).

There is a plethora of information about the educational risks that African American youth and children experience (Connell, Spencer, & Aber, 1994). The research indicates that the high negative outcomes associated with the poor academic experience for African American students necessitates exploration within the school system and the family structure (Harry, Klinger, & Hart, 2005). It appears that African American students who experience a lack of engagement with the educational setting suffer the greatest setbacks

academically. This subsequently leads to lower parental involvement, resulting in low student self- motivation (Connell, Spencer, & Aber, 1994).

Social Emotional. African American students who are perceived to be socially and emotionally non-resilient often exhibit low self-esteem and low self-confidence (Santa, 2006). These children/youth often struggle for acceptance into a social group that they admire. Often this results in rejection into positive peer groups and acceptance into negative peer groups (Brown, 2001). Acceptance into negative peer groups can lead to exposure to violence that may result in *Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder* (C-PTSD) (Jones, 2007). This disorder not only impedes social emotional resiliency, but academic resiliency as well.

Poor social practices begun during childhood may set the stage for non-resilient behavior that ultimately results in joining negative social groups (Brooks, 1994). Brooks maintains that schools that fail to motivate and encourage African-American students during this crucial time period may contribute to the lack of social/emotional resiliency in this population. The result is that the socially and emotionally non-resilient African American child/youth is marginalized and excluded in the school population (Brown, 2001).

Statement of the Problem

Although an extensive amount of research has been conducted on the importance of resiliency, limited research has explored resiliency in regards to African American students (Kitano & Lewis 2005). In the current climate of school reform, there is a need for educators to explore resiliency strategies in order to support African American students in academic and social emotional areas (Bryan, 2005). Many African American

children/youth, especially African American males, are susceptible to over-identification in lifestyles (e.g., juvenile delinquency, drug use, dropping out) and educational placements (e.g., special education) that may lead to harmful consequences in life (Bryan).

Awad (2007) maintains that some African American children/youth deliberately display non-resilient behaviors to avoid identification with the dominant culture. Conversely, African American students who exhibit resiliency within the school setting are perceived as *raceless* or *acting white* by their peers and community (Awad; Ogbu, 2004). This negative perception can lead to these students adopting inappropriate behaviors to fit in with their cultural group (Smith, 2005). Awad believes that African American children/youth require formal training in the characteristics of resiliency in order to foster resilient behavior, academic self-esteem, and raise positive racial identity.

Demographically, students from diverse backgrounds comprise 33% of the public school enrollment (NCES, 2005). Of this population 12% are African American children/youth (NCES). Yearly, African American children are expelled or suspended at twice the rate of other students from public school settings (Brown, & Brown, 2005; Fenning & Rose, 2007) and they are twice as likely than their white peers to drop out of high school (Christle, Jolievette, & Nelson, 2007).

The consequences of being pushed out of school are extremely negative for African American children/youth. The research indicates that this population can experience a high rate of drug abuse and violence (Condly, 2006); the highest murder rate of all groups (26.4 for every 100,000 people) (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006); and the highest incarceration rate, with 29% of African American males likely to go to prison at some

point in time, compared to 4.4% of white males of the same age (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2007). The limited amount of research concerning resiliency and African American children/youth has a negative impact on this population. While research indicates that African American students possess the potential for resiliency (Floyd, 1996), it appears that educators and parents do not understand the characteristics of resiliency well enough to teach them to the children/youth who reside within their care.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to conduct a Delphi inquiry concerning the characteristics of resiliency with a large group of African American parents. The Delphi method is a series of questionnaires developed around structured opinion gathering in which several rounds of data are collected from expert participants in order to create a consensus of opinion (Streveler, Olds, Miller, & Nelson, 2003). The parents in this study were considered experts in resiliency if they graduated from high school and had at least one child who graduated from high school. It was believed that the parents demonstrated their own resiliency through their graduation from high school and their ability to foster resiliency by having a child who graduated from high school (Daire, LaMothe & Fuller, 2007).

The structured questionnaire was completed three times by the parents in order to ascertain the pertinent characteristics of resiliency for African American children/youth as defined by African American parents. The ultimate goal was to create a resiliency checklist that parents and educators can use as they work to increase the academic and social resiliency behaviors of African American children and youth.

Research Questions

Specifically, the following research questions will be addressed:

Research Question 1. What roles do individual characteristics play in achieving resiliency in African American children/youth?

Research Question 2. What roles do relationship characteristics play in achieving resiliency in African American children/youth?

Research Question 3. What roles do community characteristics play in achieving resiliency in African American children/youth?

Research Question 4. What roles do cultural characteristics play in achieving resiliency in African American children/youth?

Research Question 5. What roles do physical ecology characteristics play in achieving resiliency in African American children/youth?

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the literature in terms of its solicitation from African American parents of their beliefs concerning the resiliency characteristics they believed to be important to teach their children as well as have taught to their children. This is important in that the characteristics of resiliency currently identified in the research have evolved primarily from work with white children/youth. Little research has explored resiliency in regards to African American students (Kitano & Lewis, 2005). Through the Delphi process, expert parents defined resiliency in terms of the African American experience that in turn provided verification that resiliency was a vital component for the life success, academic strength, and social parity of African American children/youth.

The results of the Dephi conducted in the study are the first step in the creation of a resiliency checklist for educators and parents to use as they work to instill resilience in African American children and youth. The identification of resilient characteristics specific to this population may better equip these students to thrive and combat deleterious events in their respective environment (Gordon, 1995). The knowledge of resiliency characteristics specific to African American children/youth contributes to the growing body of literature indicating that this population of students benefit from research-based resiliency strategies (Martin & Marsh, 2006). Because research-based information is critical as educators and parents work with students, the information generated from this Delphi study is one step forward in building resiliency in African American children/youth. The more interventions and information parents and educators have at their disposal, the greater the probability of building resiliency in this population of students.

Limitations

The limitations of the study included the following:

1. Studies that utilize self-reporting data tend to be limited in nature because participants may give socially correct answers. This may be further impacted because the survey questionnaire was distributed and collected in church settings.
2. For purposes of this study, only the resilience of African American students was explored. Resiliency may be problematic for other diverse populations and may differ in nature. Thus, the results of this study cannot be generalized to other diverse groups.

3. The sample of parents in this study was non-random. Only African American parents at the churches located in a large southwestern city participated. Results may differ when a randomized sample is used.
4. It may be that the information gathered in this Delphi was specific to this region of the country. Thus, the results of this study cannot be generalized to other regions of the country.

Definition of Terms

Abstinence from alcohol and drugs. Abstinence involves the non-use of alcohol and drugs (Hertig, Eggert, & Thompson, 1996).

Access to a healthy environment. Access to a healthy environment involves a lack of barriers to an environment in which all who want it have access to adequate shelter, health care, clothing, and counseling (Ungar, 2005).

Access to recreational spaces. Access to recreational spaces involves community recreation (e.g., athletic, swimming, painting) provided, without artificial barriers, to all who want it (Hawkins, 1992).

Adequate management of cultural dislocation. Cultural dislocation involves the ability to exist in two diverse cultural structures (Piert, 2007). The ability to move between two cultures is described as managing cultural dislocation.

Appropriate emotional expression. The ability of a child/youth to voice inner feelings and sentiments appropriately is considered a characteristic of resiliency (Seng, 1999).

Assertiveness. Assertiveness is defined as a student's ability to be an active participant in goal setting, decision making, and dictating the direction of a situation (Miller, 1995).

Balance between independence and dependence. The ability to balance independence from and dependence on adults (e.g., parents, teachers) is defined as a characteristic of resiliency (Abernathy & Cheney, 2005).

Child-centered parenting. Child-centered parenting revolves around the interactions between the child and parent focusing on the needs and concerns of the child (Bryan, 2005).

Delphi study. A Delphi Study involves asking series of questions developed around structured opinion in which several rounds of data are collected from expert participants in order to demonstrate a consensus of opinion (Streveler, Olds, Miller, & Nelson, 2003).

Empathy for others. Empathy is considered a sensitive emotional response, resulting from the recognition of another's emotional state or experience (Eisenberg, et al., 1996).

Equitable access to resources. Equitable access to resources is defined as equal opportunities and rights in all situations for all persons (Booker, 2004).

Exposure to violence. Exposure to violence is defined as stressful situations in which personal or psychological harm is encountered that may result in traumatic, emotional, or physical injury (Robins, et al. 1996).

Family involvement. Family involvement is the support and connection provided by parents and family members in all facets of a child's life (e.g., school, social) (Seng, 1999).

Feeling secure in one's community. Security is the sense of well being as well as feeling protected and shielded from adverse conditions (Yonas, O'Campo, Burke, & Gielen, 2007).

Goals and ambition. Goals and ambition are the ability to focus on an aim or objective coupled with the strong desire for a successful outcome (Wehmeyer, Hughes, Agran, Garner, & Yeager, 2003).

Having a life philosophy. A life philosophy is defined as a set of basic principles or concepts by which one lives life (Goldstein, 2006).

High-risk behavior. High-risk behavior for children/youth involves the use of alcohol and/or chemicals coupled with aggressive and/or problematic behavior (Brody, et al., 2006).

Job opportunities. Job opportunities are considered the equitable access to gainful employment (Zimmer-Gembeck & Mortimer, 2006).

Knowing one's history and cultural tradition. Personal history and cultural traditions are group and family based and typically result in a sense of communal bonding and pride in one's heritage (Ogbu, 2004).

Living with uncertainty. Uncertainty refers to the variability of experiences children/youth may experience on a regular basis (Condly, 2006). Typically, uncertainty leads to unpredictability in life situations.

Meaningful relationships. The ability to form meaningful relationships is defined as a person's ability to connect in a significant manner with others as well as maintain that involvement over time (Booker, 2004).

Peer group acceptance. Acceptance by peers involves the formation of bonds that provide a sense of fit and camaraderie with others similar to oneself (e.g., age, interests, gender) (Nelson-LeGall & Glor-Scheib,1986).

Perceived social equity. Social equity is a perception of parity within the social, educational, and communal system in which the child/youth lives (Brown, 2001).

Perceived social support. Social support is the perception of positive social/emotional interactions with community, school, parents, teachers and peers (Winfield, 1994).

Positive mentoring. Mentoring involves positive adults in the school, community, or home who focus on the student's social and academic success (Broussard, & Mosley-Howard, 2001).

Positive outlook. A positive outlook involves a child/youth viewing of his/her destiny with a hopeful sense of purpose and motivation (Gordon, 1995).

Problem solving. Problem solving is the ability to respectfully move through the collaboration process until a problem is resolved (Harvey, 2007).

Rites of passage. Rites of passage are culturally and communally defined and involve the ceremonial transfer of cultural and social information to children and youth (Kessler, 2000).

Safety and security. Safety and security involve the protection from or non-exposure to dangerous situations in the home, school, and community (Frasier, 2007).

Self-awareness. Self-awareness is defined as a person's ability to understand the world around them and their impact on that world. This involves a consciousness of strengths and boundaries coupled with empathy for others (Hippe, 2004).

Self-betterment. Self-betterment is defined as a personal adjustment that is oriented toward success (Hamiliton, 1980).

Sense of connectedness. Connectedness of self is the psychological or emotional association among people, things, or events (Booker, 2004).

Self-efficacy. Self-efficacy involves the personal belief that one is in charge of their successes in life (e.g., academic, social, work) (Bandura, 1997).

Sense of duty. A sense of duty revolves around the ability to meet obligations that are internally or externally defined (Wilson, 1993).

Sense of humor. A sense of humor involves a person's ability to see something as funny or find enjoyment in everyday experiences (Baines, 2004).

Social competence. Social competence is the ability to self-regulate life events and interactions with others in a positive manner (Harvey, 2007).

Spirituality. The concept of spirituality refers to the adopted belief system that the family and/or community embrace (Jones, 2007).

Sports involvement. Sports involvement refers to student participation in interscholastic sports programs within the school or community setting (Braddock, Royster, Winfield, & Hawkins 1991).

Tolerance for different ideologies and beliefs. Tolerance is defined as the acceptance that there is more than one belief system and all systems have the right to exist (Hewitt, 2005).

Summary

African American children/youth often experience societal barriers that exclude them from mainstream scholastic and social opportunities (Booker, 2004; Beland, 2007; Smith, Schneider, & Ruck, 2005). This lack of inclusion can have a negative impact on a student's academic and social achievement while in school as well as affect post-school outcomes (Connell, Spencer, & Aber, 1994). It appears that resiliency is a key factor in determining school and post-school success for African American children/youth (Booker, 2004; Bosworth & Earthman, 2002; Patterson, 2002; Smith, 2005). Because research indicates that African American students require support in developing resiliency (Ogbu, 2004), a Delphi inquiry process to identify a set of resiliency characteristics specific to the African American experience. The ultimate goal is to provide a blueprint that parent's and educators may use to build resiliency in this population of students while in school and beyond the boundaries of school.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The impact of school failure is a major educational focus in the United States (Walker & Sprague, 1999; Thompson, 2008). While the failure of students to achieve educationally is discussed frequently in the literature, it is of particular concern in the lives of African American children/youth as academic and social failure often results in a high drop out rate (Smith, 2005). Without strategies to build resiliency, educators and parents lack the specific tools to facilitate the success of African American children/ youth as they journey through school and beyond. The use of research-based strategies to build resiliency with this population can result in academic and social success (Benard, 1993; Etitle, 2002; Ungar, 2005).

Resiliency research focuses on an individual's capacity to overcome adversity and stress by incorporating protective factors (Masten, 1994). Research indicates that when the critical components of resilience are embedded in school and home settings, student achievement increases (Benard, 1993). Thus, armed with empirically-based resilience strategies, educators and parents have the appropriate tools with which to provide children/youth access to learning as well as protection from socially stressful situations in which the students may find themselves (Young, Wright, & Laster, 2005). It is important for researchers to continue to explore the characteristics of the resilient African American learner in order to provide culturally relevant strategies for use with this population.

Resiliency and Education

Schools exist to empower students to successfully function academically and socially. Thus, the formal educational system must focus on the importance of implementing resiliency strategies to increase the knowledge and confidence of students (Bryan, 2003). Incorporation of well-defined strategies to build resilience is needed in schools to promote more favorable outcomes for students (Thompson, 2008).

Academic Resiliency

Resilience is the ability to sustain emotional stability in the presence of harmful or threatening situations (Waugh, Fredrickson, & Taylor, 2008). Academically this is the ability to adapt to rapidly changing conditions and thrive. The need for the academic improvement of students is paramount for inner city students who often face negative challenges in attending and completing high school.

Ungar, Brown, Liebenberg, Othman, Kwong, Armstrong, and Gilgun (2007) qualitatively analyzed the interviews of 89 adolescents from eleven countries to compare resilience between Western and non-Western youth/children. Using seven traits: (a) access to material resources, (b) relationships, (c) identity, (d) cohesion, (e) power and control, (f) social justice, and (g) cultural adherence, Ungar et al. compared the students on mainstream Western cultural values such as warm family interactions, protective factors, positive role models, and supportive communities. The goal of the study was to explore culturally sensitive traits that reflect resiliency and are typically not reflected in the resiliency literature.

In the study, 32 girls and 57 boys from 14 countries participated in an interview that consisted of nine questions. The interview was conducted in the language of the student. Students were asked probing questions to determine the specific factors that contributed to their emotional success in a variety of environments (e.g., What do you and others do to keep healthy—mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually?). Transcripts of the interviews were converted to English and coded according to the grounded theory processes. Coded data were triangulated and examined within sites as well as among sites to build consensus of coded items. The responses were coded to identify themes. Coded themes were examined for one or more of the identified traits.

Unger et al. (2007) identified seven stressors from the student interviews. The seven stressors (e.g., access to material resources, relationships, identity, cohesion, power and control, social justice, and cultural adherence) were explained in the context of each culture. Examples of the cultural differences ranged from group definitions of resiliency to individual definitions of resiliency as well as education being a privilege to education being a right. These differences led the researchers to broaden the definition of resilience to include cultural underpinnings.

Ungar et al. (2007) found that resilient youth adapted to deal with the seven stressors in ways that were meaningful in terms of their cultural identification. The data indicated that the stressors interacted with each other and that resilient students were able to attain a balance when negotiating them. For non-Western students, from outside of Canada and the United States, the authors determined that resilience was not a final outcome, but a succession of small actions that contributed to the feeling of autonomy. Another non-Western feature of resilience was that group approval of accomplishments was defined by

cultural group membership. The interview data indicated that students who were considered *at risk* in the study possessed resilient characteristics that were believed to be inferior characteristics by mainstream society (e.g., premature maturity, premature independence) while their mainstream peers exhibited more dependence upon adults.

Ungar el al. (2007) concluded that when analyzing the impact of culture on resilience a broader conceptualization must be used. This conceptualization must examine how marginalized populations view their own resilience and how that view is evaluated by the dominant society. They also suggest that research should explore how the definition of resilience by various cultures defies pre-conceived beliefs of Western society. The authors present a model for understanding resilience through a non-Western lens and suggest that further research explore resilience as it is defined by different cultures or ethnic groups. They believe that a variety of definitions will emerge that will build a knowledge base concerning resiliency for educators to use in the classroom setting.

Martin and Marsh (2006) conducted a study to explore the effects of resilience on academic achievement. The goal of the study was to identify the essential predictor skills necessary for enhancing academic achievement in order for students to remain engaged and graduate from high school. The authors maintained that resiliency is not static, but progressive in nature and that a student may be resilient in one area while being vulnerable in another. Thus, teaching adaptive resiliency characteristics to students in the school setting can improve a student's academic resilience.

Martin and Marsh (2006) attempted to match the predictors (six adaptive and four maladaptive) to the outcomes of school enjoyment, class participation, and general self-esteem. They predicted that these would enhance a student's ability to acquire and

maintain academic resiliency. Four hundred and two Australian high-school students, grades 11 and 12, from two schools completed three sets of rating scales. The first rating scale consisted of six statements (e.g., I think I'm good at dealing with school-work pressures, I don't let study stress get on top of me, I'm good at bouncing back from a poor mark in my schoolwork). The second rating scale was a 40-item instrument designed to assess academic motivation and engagement. The final rating scale was comprised of three categories: (a) enjoyment of school, (b) class participation, and (c) general self-esteem. The high-school students rated themselves using the three instruments. The goal of this study was to identify predictor skills that students needed to foster academic resiliency.

The data were analyzed using a component factor analysis (CFA) that factored the means and variances of the academic resilience rating scales to ensure that the items demonstrated consistency and accurately represented the characteristic of academic resilience. Using zero order and partial correlations, Martin and Marsh (2006) determined that the categories of motivation and engagement on the *Student Motivation and Engagement Scale* showed a high significant correlation for the prediction of academic resilience.

To examine the relationship between the predictors (e.g., self-efficacy, mastery orientation, valuing of school, planning, study management, anxiety, uncertain control, failure avoidance, and self-handicapping) and the outcomes (e.g., enjoyment of school, class participation, and general self-esteem) multiple linear regression and path analyses were used. Students rated the impact of each predictor on their success or failure in the school setting. Student responses were gathered and scores were averaged for the mean

score. Students who had similar mean scores on predictors were clustered into groups. Group one (n=146) scored somewhat higher in self-efficacy (5.93), persistence (5.46), but also high in anxiety (5.08) and control (3.78) indicating that this group was only somewhat resilient. Group two (n=109) scored much lower in the adaptive categories, self-efficacy (4.93), planning (3.54), persistence (4.23), and high in anxiety (5.08) indicting that this group had the least amount of resilience of all the groups. Group three (n=147) scored high in self-efficacy (6.08), persistence (5.62), and planning (5.03). Because Group three had adaptive scores much higher than the other two groups and Group three also scored low in anxiety (3.35), and control (2.26), they were considered the most resilient of the three groups.

Martin and Marsh (2006) concluded that adaptive resiliency predictors can be taught and maladaptive predictors that impede resiliency can be controlled for using interventions such as consistent reinforcement and teaching students to reframe academic success as a progressive trait that can be obtained over time. The authors maintain that providing students with consistent, relevant feedback may also reduce uncertainty and anxiety, thus increasing the opportunity for academic resiliency to develop. Martin and Marsh recommend that educators recognize the importance of examining the foundational concepts of academic resilience. They suggest that future research incorporate the use of the adaptive predictors in educational practices to increase academic achievement of students. They also recommend that the predictors be incorporated in school curricula.

Cappela and Weinstein (2001) re-examined data from a national longititudinal study to ascertain the variables that impacted students who moved from having failing reading

scores to achieving high reading scores and subsequently graduating from high school. The purpose of the study was to explore the factors that contributed to improved reading achievement and academic resilience characterized in this study by high school graduation. Cappela and Weinstein explored the academic resiliency of students who began school (primary grades) with low reading scores and increased their 8th grade reading scores significantly. They were interested in the single variable of low achievement during the primary years as opposed to economic status, minority status, or living in a single-parent household.

Data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study were analyzed (NELS, 1988; U.S. Department of Education, 1994). By using this database, the researcher was able to consider the specific variable of early academic failure over multiple domains (e.g., school environment, length of time). Cappela and Weinstein (2001) wanted to be able to achieve national generalization of results and to build on previous academic resilience research.

The researchers first reviewed the records of students with low reading scores in the primary grades and compared the scores to their reading scores in the 8th and 10th grades. From these data, a four-part hypothesis was developed: (a) the typical traits of high economic status, White non-Hispanic ethnicity, two-parent household, and gender (female) would yield positive academic resilience; (b) locus of control, self-belief, and future goals would impact academic resilience; (c) 10th grade students who exhibited class preparedness and engagement in extra-curricular activities would have higher reading scores and do better academically; and, (d) the school environment (e.g., educational support, curricular support, and peer support) would impact reading scores

and graduation. The researchers hypothesized that these four characteristics would positively impact student academic resiliency in high school.

The data from a subset of 1,362 students were analyzed in the study. Cappella and Weinstein (2001) examined 8th and 10th grade student survey data, 8th and 12th grade reading achievement scores, 10th grade administrator surveys, and the high school transcripts of the students. For this study, *at-risk* was defined as students in the lowest 8th grade reading proficiency level (Level 0) as determined by a standardized reading test. *Academic resilience* was defined as students who exhibited an increased reading score from their low 8th grade proficiency level (Level 0) to reading at or above average (Levels 2 and 3) on a standardized reading test. *Non- resilience* was defined as students with low 8th eighth grade standardized reading scores (Level 0) who either dropped out of school or remained in school and had low 12th grade reading scores (Levels 0 or 1). The goal of the study was to identify the contributing factors leading to the increase of the reading scores beyond the typical variables identified in the resiliency literature (e.g., economics, minority status, and single-parent household).

Data were analyzed through a series of four consecutive multiple regressions. The regression analyses explored the relationship between the hypothesized predictors for the students (e.g., demographics, psychological factors, behavioral factors, and school environment) and academic resilience (improved reading scores) from 8th to 12th grade. Results of the analyses indicated that academically resilient students who improved their reading scores were influenced primarily by ethnicity (m=1.41), with White non-Hispanic females exhibiting the largest increase in scores; students exhibiting a strong internal locus of control showed an increase in reading scores (m = -0.07); students reporting a

positive self-concept increased their reading scores (m = -0.04); and, students who came to class prepared to learn increased their reading scores (m = -0.38 mean).

An interesting finding in the study was that schools in which a rigorous academic curriculum was instituted had more students who increased their reading scores than schools without a rigorous curriculum. Cappela and Weinstein (2001) noted that this variable may be the major factor that contributed to the increase of reading scores. It maybe that exposure to an academically rich environment in high school, even though late in a student's academic career, may contribute to the academic resiliency of students considered *at-risk* for reading failure. Cappela and Weinstein concluded that in the future it will be vital to analyze other longitudinal data in order to understand low-achieving students and the impact educational and personal factors have on their academic resilience.

In a study designed to describe and compare the self-concept and motivational patterns of: (a) academically resilient students, (b) non-resilient students, (c) advantaged achievers, and (d) advantaged low achievers, Rouse (2001) attempted to determine the internal motivational patterns of academically resilient students and the environmental supports that contributed to their scholastic achievement. From a group of 170 southwestern high school sophomores, Rouse selected 64 White non-Hispanic students from four categories: (a) 17 resilient, low-economic students (4 males, 13 females) with a GPA of 2.75 or better, (b) 19 non-resilient, low-economic students; (9 males, 10 females) with a GPA of 2.75 or lower, (c) 19 advantaged achievers, high-economic students (12 males, 7 females) with a GPA of 2.75 or better, and (d) 9 low-advantaged achievers, low-economic students (8 males, 1 female) with a GPA of 2.75 or lower.

Rouse (2001) examined variables contributing to resiliency using the *Hollingshead Index* (1965) and four stress questions. The *Hollingshead Index* records parental education level and occupation then categorizes the results into five income levels. Rouse examined the data from four groups of participants: (a) resilient, (b) non-resilient, (c) advantaged, and (d) low-advantaged. The resilient and non-resilient participants fell in the lowest two income categories of the *Hollingsworth Index* indicating that the resilient and non-resilient students' parents came from low-skilled and unskilled labor positions. Advantaged students fell in the upper three levels of the index indicating that their parents had a higher level of income than that of the resilient and non-resilient students.

Stress levels were calculated by comparing answers on a four-point, Likert scale questionnaire designed to measure whether or not a student experienced high or low stress. The four questions were based on: (a) identifying and developing a goal, (b) adopting a belief to attain a goal, (c) establishing belief in an environment's ability to support the accomplishment of a goal, and (d) placing emphasis on a desired goal.

Resilient and non-resilient students scored in the high-stress category on the questionnaire. Both advantaged groups (high and low) scored in the low stress category. Rouse (2001) found that resilient students possessed a strong belief in their academic ability, but only a moderate belief in the educational environment's ability to support them in their academic pursuits. Non-resilient students exhibited vulnerability in their academic ability in the cognitive realm and only a moderate belief in environmental support. Advantaged achievers displayed a vigorous belief in their academic strength and the educational environment's ability to support them in acquiring academic resilience.

Advantaged low achievers also displayed a pattern of little belief in the educational environment's ability to support them in their academic pursuits.

Rouse (2001) concluded that the students who fared the best in academic settings were advantaged students from the high economic groups with a low stress background. He maintained that resilient students, from low economic groups with unskilled or low skilled parents, would benefit from additional environmental support even though the students believed in their own ability to succeed and have control over their school life. Rouse indicates that a resilient student's internal locus of control also contributes to their resilient status and that non-resilient students would benefit from strategies to increase their belief in their own potential. Rouse also urges that more research be conducted to ascertain the reasons that advantaged low achievers fail to achieve in school.

Rouse (2001) also found that favorable motivational patterns are associated with resilient students rather than non-resilient students. He maintains that these positive motivational beliefs directly influence academic resilience. Rouse also found that resilient students believe that the school environment is unsupportive of their social and cognitive goals and that further research is needed to ascertain the impact of this lack of support on fostering and enriching students' self-concept, motivation, and academic resilience.

In a study designed to measure the relationship between resiliency and academic success for high-achieving and low-achieving students from the same ability level, Reis, Colbert, and Hebert (2005) focused on the risk and protective aspects that contributed to or decreased the acquisition of academic ability. They also examined the manner in which academically successful students develop resilience.

Thirty-five students (17 underachieving and 18 achieving) participated in the study. For the purpose of the study, high achieving students were defined as students possessing the following: (a) acceptance in an academically gifted elementary or middle school program, (b) exceptional academic success in terms of grades or test scores, (c) nominated for the study by an instructor or counselor, or (d) recipient of academic achievement awards and honors. Underachieving students were identified on the basis of five factors: (a) participated in a gifted program during elementary or middle school and had performed exceptionally high academically, (b) typically had grades of a B or better, (c) currently had an academic GPA of 2.0 or below, (d) enrolled in non-college bound classes, or (e) no longer enrolled in school or truant.

Reis, Colbert, and Hebert (2005) collected data through the use of a participant observer approach and also conducted in-depth interviews with participants. School was the primary place of student observation with interviews conducted with administrators, coaches, teachers, counselors, as well as community members. Students were asked, "Tell me about the adults in school who have worked closely with you," and, "How has your guidance counselor assisted or impeded your academic achievement?" Answers to these questions served to guide the informal student interviews. Administrators, coaches, teachers, counselors were asked questions about the students' academic ability and personality in the school setting.

Results of the observations and interviews indicated that high achieving students had at least one supportive adult in their lives with whom they had a close bond and, thus, a link to academic goals. Ten high-achieving students stated that a teacher or counselor served as an adult role model. Five successful students said parents were their role

models. Support from peers also was crucial in developing academic resilience along with attendance in after-school programs and summer enrichment activities. Sixteen high-achieving students said they depended on positive peers for academic support. When faced with difficulties, high achieving students indicated that they drew strength from outside sources, using extracurricular scholastic opportunities to shape their personality and hone talents. Conversely, underachieving students stated that they lacked adult support, positive peer support, and did not participate in extra-curricular activities. Only one underachieving student mentioned a parent as a positive role model and listed peer involvement as important in their academic success. Reis, Colbert, and Hebert (2005) also noted the occurrence of the sibling dropout rate among the underachieving students. Six underachieving students had siblings who had dropped out of school.

Reis, Colbert, and Hebert (2005) concluded that there are many risk factors that impinge on the academic resilience of students (e.g., sibling involvement in drugs, alcohol abuse, lack of teacher role models, lack of participation in after-school and summer programs), mediating mechanisms (e.g., parental involvement, teacher/counselor as role models), and protective factors (e.g., religious home environment, girls choosing not to date, participation in extra-curricular activities, and positive peer support). Reis, Colbert, and Hebert encourage educators to conduct more research into these factors in order to create strategies and interventions to increase resiliency.

Social/Emotional Resiliency

Social and emotional learning has been defined as a set of core skills, attitudes, abilities, and feelings that are defined within the contexts of culture, neighborhood, and situation (Elias, Kress, & Neft, 2003). The constructs of social and emotional learning

have been strongly correlated with positive academic outcomes for students, with social and emotional learning being identified as the key in keeping students engaged in the educational process. Social and emotional resiliency must be incorporated early in the learning process in order to reap social, emotional, and academic gains (Reynolds, 1989). The importance of early academic achievement coupled with social-emotional adjustment to school is paramount for successful outcomes later in life.

Morrison, Brown, D'Incau, O'Farrel, and Furlong (2006) conducted a review of the resiliency literature specifically in terms of the concepts of social and emotional development. They were particularly interested in student strengths and protective factors used to increase social and emotional resilience in children and youth. Specifically, Morrison et al., had three goals as they reviewed the resiliency literature: (a) to uncover the risks and protective aspects of resilience, (b) create support for the *developmental trajectory* view of resiliency, and (c) identify the functions of education, peers, and families for developing a holistic approach to resilience. From their review, they developed a template to be used by schools to incorporate the salient characteristics of resilience in education. The authors maintain that although academic resilience in essential, social/emotional skills often precede the development of academic resilience.

Morrison, et al., (2006) analyzed several decades of resiliency research articles to identify specific social-emotional strengths. The goal was to extract the possible protective factors associated with the strengths in terms of the three identified goals of the study. Special attention was given to the characteristics of identity, social behavior, and peer-relationships. A table listing nine risk and protective factor domains (e.g.,

temperament, autonomy, sense of purpose and future, social competence, assets, problem-solving, achievement motivation, school behavior and family) was developed.

Morrison, et al., (2006) concluded that the literature review table could be used: (a) as a checklist for student needs and problem solving, (b) for development of the basis for eligibility for special education services, (c) as a pre-selection tool for psychological services, (d) as a lens for viewing students from a strength-based approach, (e) for communication with teachers, and (f) to present an educational history of a student to parents. The researchers maintain that more research should be conducted into each of the risk and protective factors identified from the literature review and that educators learn more about the factors as they work toward developing resiliency in the children with whom they work.

Wong (2003) re-examined the longitudinal study on student resilience by Werner and Smith (1982) to assess the social and emotional outcomes of a subgroup of 22 participants (14 males and 8 females) of the original 72 participants. The twenty-two participants observed by Wong were students with learning disabilities. Wong wanted to identify the role childhood poverty and stress had on adult social and psychological outcomes. Participants' psychological and intellectual development at birth, and ages 1, 2, 10, 31/32, and age 40 were recorded. The 22 participants were labeled as having a learning disability at age 10 by a three-person team (pediatrician, public health nurse, and a psychologist) using a battery of tests designed to assess learning disabilities. Of the 22 participants observed in this study, 36% of the females and 64% of the males came from an impoverished background. Nearly all (four-fifths) of the 22 participants had been involved in criminal activity ranging from truancy to larceny. At age 18, the 22

participants performed low on the social aspects profile of the *California Psychological Inventory* and the *Novicki Locus of Control Scale.*

At each age juncture (birth, and ages 1, 2, 10, 31/32, and age 40), stressors and protective factors were recorded and analyzed. Wong (2003) noted that at age 32 the subgroup of 22 participants experienced a sharp decline in negative behaviors and exhibited more assimilation into the mainstream of society. Wong found that at age 40, 60% of the 22 participants enjoyed working, experienced marital happiness, and had a sense of overall well being. Wong hypothesized that the favorable adult outcomes were a response to the insightful role of nurturing caregivers and supportive surroundings including noteworthy educators, mentors, and clergy.

From these findings, Wong (2003) identified five groups of effective protective factors that can impact social and emotional resiliency outcomes: (a) positive reactions and responses from parents, teachers, peers, and spouses, (b) use of natural abilities and talents, (c) the ability to persevere, governed with a set of realistic goals, (d) structured parental boundaries, (e) the mother's high level of education, (f) involved adults (e.g., community, school, church, or home), and (g) timely transitions (e.g., from high school to work). Wong maintains that research must move from a deficit-based view of students to a strength-based approach incorporating these protective factors.

Wong (2003) concluded that further research is needed that focuses on the specific social and emotional protective factors needed during important transitional milestones. Wong also maintains that consideration of social and psychological experiences during development should be included in the risk and resilience framework.

Richman, Rosenfeld, and Bowen (1998) explored the social supports needed to increase the social and emotional resiliency of adolescents at risk for academic failure. The eight social supports listed in the *School Success Profile (SSP)* were identified as the supports to be studied. The *SSP* is a survey-questionnaire taken from Bronfenbrenner's ecological evaluation (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This self-reporting profile assesses five major areas of a student's social milieu: (a) neighborhood, (b) school, (c) friends, (d) family, and (e) health/well-being. The *SSP* allows a student to express their perceptions of social support in the five areas.

Originally, 808 respondents were given the *SSP* surveys to complete. Of the 808 respondents, 525 students from 17 middle and high schools in North Carolina and Florida completed the *SSP*. Ninety-two variables were measured on the *SSP* survey with 265 close-ended questions that assessed student adjustment in areas of their social experience (e.g., community, school, peers, family and self-perception of their personal well-being).

Thirty-two discriminate analyses (DA) were conducted to determine the basis for each of the eight types of social support, (e.g., listening, emotional supports, emotional challenges, reality confirmation, task support, task appreciation, task challenges, tangible assistance, and personal assistance). Two student groups were formed prior to the analyses. They were comprised of students stating that they had received the eight types of support and students stating that they had not received the eight types of support. The four levels of support (e.g., parents, adults interventionists, instructors, friends, and community members) were included in the analyses as discriminating variables.

The profiles from the *SSP* surveys completed by the students indicated that middle school students depended heavily on adults in their environment to provide personal

assistance support and emotional challenge support. However, they depended more on peers for listening support. Richman, Rosenfeld, and Bowen (1998) maintain that this impacted the middle school students' social and emotional resiliency level and increased pro-social behaviors.

The survey results also indicated that students in high school valued adult support in three areas (e.g., emotional challenge, support, personal assistance) to increase resilience. An increase was found in the time spent studying by high school students when they perceived the social supports of personal assistance and emotional support were in place.

Richman, Rosenfeld, and Bowen (1998) maintain that the findings of their study indicate that parents and adults in a student's environment are the primary people responsible for providing student support for social and emotional resilience in education. They believe that this support increases resiliency, school fit, and lessens the impact of undesirable influences in a student's environment. They urge researchers to continue to investigate the benefits of social/emotional support for building resilience in adolescents as well as the most efficient delivery of the supports in academic settings.

In a study designed to examine the results of social-emotional progress on the well being and educational achievement of talented middle-school students, Elmore and Zenus (1994) worked with 30, sixth-grade students for 12 weeks. The students were enrolled in an accelerated mathematics class and were divided into two groups (14 in one group and 16 in the other group). One teacher of the gifted-talented taught both groups of students. Besides mathematics, the students participated in an intervention of teaching successful communication techniques, collaborative learning, internal locus of control, self-control, and effective decision-making.

The students were divided into two teams during the last term of their sixth grade school year. Teams were matched with a high performing, two medium scoring, and one low-achieving student on each team. Students were taught a variety of social skills (e.g. admiring the contributions of others, listening intently, self-advocating, making good decisions) over a twelve-week period. The new skill was rehearsed through role-playing activities. Once students became familiar with a skill, they were asked to incorporate the use of the skill during the mathematics lesson. The students then assessed how the group incorporated the new skill.

The study consisted of a pretest and a post-test, with baseline data taken from the *University of Chicago School Mathematics Project* (*UCSMP*) which is comprised of pre-algebra, pre-geometry, and applied arithmetic. To determine student well being and self-perception, the *Perceived Competence Scale for Children* was used. Scores for both groups of students were totaled and a *t*-test conducted to ascertain if a significant change occurred between the pre-and posttest. The posttest indicated a gain of 3.77 on the *UCSMP* with mean self-esteem scores improving by .17 on the posttest. The cognitive score (.13) was not significantly impacted by the intervention.

To determine the combined effect of the intervention on ability, the student scores were combined and rank-ordered by math averages using upper, middle, and lower achieving categories. Upper and middle academic gains were 2.27 and the average gain for the lower group was 6.8. The most significant gain was found in the lowest achieving group, when placed with achieving students, the lower group initially was intimidated by the higher group, but over time adjusted and become more engaged. Elmore and Zensus (1994) found that positive social and emotional benefit occurred when students were

placed in accelerated classes. They maintain that while academic gains are a priority in school achievement, enhancement of social skills provides education to the whole child.

Elmore and Zenus (1994) concluded that the sixth-grade talented students seemed to profit educationally, socially, and emotionally during the study. A reduction of communication problems occurred during the study as well. A sense of connectedness and positive self-esteem was measured as well as an increase in mathematic scores. Elmore and Zenus claim that social-emotional resilience may increase when appropriate interventions are embedded in curricular subject materials.

Lane, Carter, Pierson, and Glaeser (2006) conducted a study to compare the academic, social, and behavioral practices of high school students with learning disabilities (LD) and emotional disturbance (ED). The goal of the study was to provide comparative research concerning the social and emotional resilience of students with LD and ED beyond elementary school. The authors maintained that often students with ED do not possess the characteristics of resiliency needed to complete high school and often face negative outcomes beyond high school. By comparing the social and emotional characteristics of students with ED to students with LD, Lane, Carter, Pierson and Glaeser attempted to identify which specific academic, social and emotional elements each group possessed and what impact these elements had on academic success.

Forty-five high school students with ED and 49 high school students with LD participated in the study. The ages of the students ranged from 14 to 19 years. Forty-one participants were White non-Hispanic, 34 participants were Hispanic, 11 were African American, and 8 were Asian. Thirty-four of the students were in the 9th grade, 30 were in

the 10th grade, 17 were in the 11th grade, and 13 were in the 12th grade. The students attended two public high schools and two alternative high schools.

A 30-item, *Social Skills Rating System-Secondary Teachers Version* (SSRS) was completed by teachers to assess how many times a student displayed a particular behavior. Teachers also completed the *Walker-McConnell Scale of Social Competence and School Adjustment* (SCSA) to evaluate student school adjustment. Academic scores were calculated using the *Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement* (WJ III). Student files were analyzed on three variables: (a) attendance, (b) negative write-ups, and (c) disciplinary comments.

Data were analyzed using a multivariate analysis to measure scores for each group. One-way MANOVAs were conducted to evaluate the differences between students with ED and students with LD on three domains: (a) academic (*SSRS* Academic Competence), (b) school adjustment (*Walker-McConnell SCSA*), and (c) school records (attendance, negative write-ups, and disciplinary comments). Mean scores were examined to determine the direction of differences between the two groups (LD and ED). After the initial analysis was conducted, a descriptive and predictive discriminant function was used to determine if the labels of ED and LD fit the characteristics the students.

The one-way MANOVA was conducted to examine the academic level comparison of the students indicated that both the students with ED and those with LD did not significantly differ from each other, mean scores being two standard deviations below the mean. A second one-way MANOVA conducted for the social domain indicated a significant effect for both groups of students indicating that teachers viewed students with ED to have much lower levels of social skills than students with LD, with the mean

scores for participants with ED being more than a standard deviation below the mean. The one-way MANOVA for the behavioral domain indicated that students with ED experienced significantly more problem behaviors than students with LD and had more absences and discipline referrals. Mean scores for attendance indicated that students with ED missed twice as much school and had twice as many discipline referrals than their LD counterparts.

Lane, Carter, Pierson, and Glaeser (2006) maintain that in spite of federal initiatives, teachers and schools still struggle to ensure student success. They maintain that students with ED and LD experience less fit academically based on deficits in the social emotional domain. They also note that most empirical social and emotional research is conducted with students from the elementary grades and that social emotional resilience in high school is highly predictive of post high school outcomes. They maintain that more research is needed to identify the predictors of social emotional resiliency for high school students in order to place quality evidence-based interventions in the hands of educators.

Summary

Students face a myriad of dilemmas in their effort to complete school and successfully navigate through life. Several decades of research has been conducted on the characteristics that make a child resilient and this research indicates that the ability to triumph over stressful events and thrive after setbacks qualifies a child as resilient (Brooks & Goldstein, 2002; Waxman, Gray, & Padron, 2003). In the field of education, resilience occurs when students, succeed in school despite personal vulnerabilities that are compounded and by ongoing environmental conditions and experiences (Wang,

Haertel, & Walberg, 1994). Social emotional definitions of resilience speak to the sense of adjustment needed in the educational arena to succeed. These attributes affect youth beyond high school, often resulting in: (a) a high dropout rate, (b) a high rate of incarceration, (c) low employment, and (d) a low rate of post-secondary education (Murray, 2003).

Because of the complexity of the issue, research on academic resiliency as well as social and emotional resilience is vital in order to determine the risks and protective factors needed for students to become successful in school and society (Markstrom, Marshall, & Tryon, 2000). The literature indicates that when teachers and parents are armed with empirically sound, strength-based approaches to resiliency building, students achieve more favorable outcomes (Weis, 1985). The combined approach of examining social emotional and academic resiliency and the risks facing youth will increase the ability of education to address this complex issue.

Resiliency, Education, and African American Children and Youth

The research concerning the building of resiliency, academically or social/emotional, among African American students is limited. The research that does exist indicates that resiliency is an important skill and that without it African American children and youth face uncertain and perilous outcomes (Hall, 2007). African American children and youth share the same academic, social, and emotional goals as other children and youth, but require specific approaches that incorporate cultural emphasis (Rak & Patterson, 1996).

Academic Resiliency

Words like competent, motivated, industrious, and intelligent are words rarely mentioned when describing African American youth. Floyd (1996) states that African American children and youth who do succeed academically possess three important characteristics of resilience: (a) family involvement, (b) competent adult mentoring, and (c) perseverance and optimism. These three components occur repeatedly in the research that has been conducted concerning African American students and resiliency.

Stewart (2007) examined the research concerning the constructs that impact the academic resilience African American students. The goal was to isolate and investigate structural influences that contributed or detracted from the academic resilience of 10th grade students. Stewart hypothesized that high academic resilience is closely related to a high rate of school involvement and participation. He also hypothesized that lower academic resilience is associated with negative interpersonal problems while in school.

Stewart used data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS) (1988; 1999) which is a national study of schools, administrators, teachers, students, and families. The sample selected included 1,238 African American 10th grade students from 546 high schools across the United States. Forty-eight percent of the sample was male and 52% was female. The dependent variable was student self-reported grade point in math, history, and science. Nine student self-reports were collected from the following categories: (a) school attachment, (b) school involvement, (c) school commitment, (d) association with positive peers, (e) parental school involvement, and (f) parent-child discussion. Demographic information was also collected (e.g., family structure, gender, and economic status).

Nesting analysis was the statistical model used to account for data embedded within the longitudinal database. A regression analysis was used as the initial step for compiling the predictors of student grade point (GPA). Next, a model was developed that included student GPA and school structural variables (e.g., school attachment, school involvement, and parent-child discussion). Stewart (2007) found four of the nine variables positively related to high student GPA scores: (a) school attachment, (b) commitment to school, (c) association with positive peers, and (d) parent-child discussion. A final model was developed to examine the combined effect of school structural influences on GPA. Six school variables: (a) economics, (b) ratio of White non-Hispanic to African Americans, (c) school location, (d) school size, (e) school social problems, and (f) school cohesion. Stewart noted that only one variable (school cohesion) impacted student GPA scores. Schools with higher cohesion also displayed higher student GPA scores. Stewart found that low economic status; ratio of White non-Hispanic to African Americans, school location, school size, and school social problems did not directly impact student GPA scores.

Stewart (2007) stated that Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory guided the assessment process in the study and helped identify strategies for providing interconnected, organized structures for African American students to learn in. Stewart maintained that the hypothesis that increased student involvement leads to increased GPA was warranted and that a lower GPA is often marked by disunity and interpersonal problems on a school campus. Stewart recommends that teacher training and professional development include the incorporation of enjoyment of school techniques such as instructing students on how to band together in academic and athletic activities on

campus. He also recommends site-based trainings for school staff to apply multicultural sensitivity in educating African American students as well as using techniques from sociologists, psychologists, engineers, and economists to increase academic resilience.

In a study of 20 African American 12th grade students from low economic groups, Floyd (1996) interviewed students considered to be accelerated achievers based on enrollment in college preparatory classes. The goal of the study was to determine, from the students' perspectives, whether support was provided in the their academic settings for them to achieve academically.

The students were interviewed five times from January to May on their high school campuses. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes and was conducted one-on-one. The last interview was a group interview with all the participants. The interview questions ranged from, "who influenced you the most in pursuing academic goals?" to "describe specific behaviors that adults performed that contributed to your success." Questions also were asked about the expectations of family in relation to school achievement. Students were asked to identify the personality traits that led them to be resilient in spite of adversity. Answers were extracted from each interview and classified in categories: (a) influence of supportive family members, (b) external supports, and (c) personality factors.

Floyd (1996) found that five students directly indicated that family support was crucial to their academic success, while five students credited school staff (e.g., teachers, coaches, and counselors) for their success. Each of the twenty students listed determination and a positive outlook as a contributory factor in their academic success. One student said that determination really played a key role in her success when a teacher

refused to assist her and that she used the refusal as fuel to push forward and pursue academic success to a greater degree.

Floyd (1996) concluded that seven protective factors must be used in education to increase academic resilience in African American children: (a) continued exploration of the low-economic nurturing family prototype (b) genuine, authentic teachers and school staff who see beyond a student's economic situation, (c) reflection of diversity in the school environment, (d) application of empirical research on the enhancement of African American student academic resiliency, (e) use of school counselors to provide career path opportunities, (f) a focus on the academic success of students who live in poverty similar to praise received for athletic prowess, and (g) the setting of clear, realistic goals, and high expectations for all African American students. Floyd suggests that student insights are beneficial for parents, teachers and community members for raising awareness into what makes a child resilient from the child's perspective.

In a study designed to explore the scholastic achievement of students in jeopardy of failing sixth and seventh grade, Legum and Hoare (2004) implemented an intervention to increase academic readiness. Fifty-seven students in grades seven and eight participated in a study investigating the use of a career intervention program and its impact on the resiliency of African American youth. Twenty-seven students participated in the career intervention program and 30 students were in the control group. The students attended a Title I school in which 56% of the students received free or reduced lunch. Students were selected for the study based on: (a) having low standardized test scores, (b) not being in a gifted program, (c) having low attendance rates, (d) having a high number of suspensions, (e) receiving free or reduced lunch, and (f) having below average grades.

The intervention used in the study was *Career Targets* (Durgin, 1998). *Career Targets* immerses middle school students in the investigation of various professions. Students in the experimental group used *Career Targets* as part of their educational planning and occupation path. The intervention was comprised of three parts: (a) students record likes and dislikes on an inventory survey, (b) students pair careers with personal interest, and (c) students gain knowledge of the skills needed to perform the job they like. Additionally, students determine which courses are needed to prepare for the identified job. Students then learn interview strategies and conduct role-play interview scenarios with each other. They also complete a fact or fiction worksheet to assess their knowledge about professions. Survey questions such as, "What do you learn in school that impacts your career beyond school?" The *Career Targets* intervention was conducted once per week over a 9-week period with the 27 participants in the experimental group.

Career maturity was measured using the *Crites Career Maturity Inventory* (Crites & Savickas, 1995) to assess the employability level of the student participants. Students agreed or disagreed with 25 statements about job choices. Self-esteem was evaluated using the *Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory* (Coopersmith, 1989). Students recorded responses "like me" or "unlike me" on the 58-item protocols about family, school, peers, and individual preferences. Report cards and grade point averages also were reviewed before and after the *Career Targets* intervention to assess academic resilience. The control students also completed the *Crites Career Maturity Inventory* and the *Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory*. Scores from the two assessments were calculated by hand according to the test manuals and were analyzed using SPSS 10.0. An independent *t*-test was conducted which determined that there was no statistically significant

difference between the control and experimental group before the career intervention on the domains of career maturity level, self-esteem, and academic achievement.

Post-test scores indicated that no statistical significance occurred in any domain (e.g., career maturity, self-esteem, or academic achievement) after the *Career Target* intervention between the experimental and control groups for career maturity-attitude, and career maturity-competency. Self-esteem scores yielded no significant difference between the groups after the *Career Target* intervention, and academic achievement. Post-test scores showed that both the experimental and control group were equivalent in scores. Interestingly, twice as many at-risk students in the experimental group as the control group improved in their *awareness* of various careers because of the intervention and the exposure to employment information.

Legum and Hoare (2004) concluded that the intervention would need to be conducted over a longer period of time to observe progress and that extra time was needed to correct poor study habits. The researchers also maintained that just the exposure to employment opportunities while attending middle school was beneficial even though the results were not significant. Overall, Legum and Hoare believe the study provides the structure for continued investigation into interventions that will fortify a student's ability and resiliency to become academically resilient and graduate from high school.

In a study designed to investigate the academic adjustment of African American students transitioning to middle school, Burchinal, Roberts, Zeisel, and Rowley (2008) attempted to identify the preventive and protective factors associated with successful academic and social skills during middle school transition. Seventy-four African American children were observed from 1 year of age to 8 years of age to examine the

emerging resilient characteristics that could serve as preventive and protective factors later in their schooling (e.g., when these students transitioned into middle school). The six hypothesized risk factors were: (1) family poverty, (2) single motherhood, (3) large household size, (4) low maternal education, (5) high maternal depression, and (6) low school quality.

Early childhood teachers and parents completed surveys and questionnaires concerning family income and size, marital status, mother's educational status, mother's mental state, and the child's perception of equality in the school environment. Student communication skills were assessed using the *Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals—3rd edition* (Semel, Wiig, & Secord, 1995). The depression levels of the mothers were rated using the *Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale.* Student intelligence scores were derived from the *Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children (3rd edition).* A structured interview titled *Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME)* was conducted with the mothers to assess the strength of the relationship between child and mother. Student perception of equality in the school setting (e.g., their expectation of discrimination in the school setting) was measured using the *Racial Stories Task Inventory.* Student academic scores were measured each summer after completing a grade level.

The results of the data collection indicated that the level of risk showed substantial loadings for the six risk variables of: (a) family poverty, (b) single motherhood, (c) large household, (d) low maternal education, (e) high maternal depression, and (f) low school quality. A hierarchical linear model was used to examine repeated assessment and generate one categorical outcome representative of the variables. Results indicated that

family and child characteristics provided protective or vulnerable elements for academic gains as the students transitioned to middle school. These were: (a) the higher the risk factors, the lower the reading, math and social skills, (b) the higher a student's language skills, the higher a student's reading, math and social skills, (c) stronger parenting skills provided a protective measure for academic success in the transition to middle school, and (d) perceived racial discrimination was a barrier to a successful transition.

Results indicated that there were three predictive measures to create a smoother transition and increase academic ability for middle school African American students: (a) strong communication skills, (b) strong maternal well-being, and (c) positive perception of nondiscrimination encountered. Students with solid communication skills experienced less behavior problems in middle school, also students whose mothers experienced low rates of depression had fewer occurrences of behavioral problems when transitioning to middle school. Finally, racial perception scores of the children indicated that the expectation of discrimination produced considerable vulnerability for behavior problems. Strong maternal well being, coupled with high language ability and an optimistic perception of non- discrimination in the school setting increased African American student academic achievement in middle school.

Burchinal, Roberts, Zeisel, and Rowley (2008) concluded that African American students transitioning to middle school often experience more social risks that impede academic excellence than do other students. The specific risk of poor maternal well being is associated with lower math, reading, social skills and poor behavior in school between 4th and 6th grade. Also noted were the protective measures of good communication skills,

and positive insight about discriminatory practices in the school environment. Results also indicated a strong connection with early language and future academic success.

Boykin, Albury, Tyler, Hurley, Bailey, and Miller (2005) examined the influence of culture in a study designed to determine if cultural learning style impacted the academic achievement of 66 African American and 72 White non-Hispanic 5th grade students. The students were given scenarios based on four cultural themes, two representing mainstream White non-Hispanic learning styles and two representing African-American learning styles. Boykin et al. developed the scenarios based on four cultural themes. The two mainstream White non-Hispanic academic themes were *individual* and *interpersonal competition*. The two African American cultural academic themes were *intergroup competition* and *communal learning*. Mainstream White non-Hispanic cultural academic learning themes revolved around the virtues of independent thinking and individual competition with the exclusive use of materials. African American cultural academic themes placed value on the ability to compete within a group and for sharing materials and collaborating with others rather than working alone.

Boykin, et al. (2005) developed the 90 word scenarios with half of the scenarios incorporating the European American virtues such as individualism and competition and the other half representing the African American virtues of intra-group competition and communal learning. Definitions were constructed for each of the cultural characteristics. The scenario for the trait of individualism displayed a scholarly student choosing to work autonomously and complete assignments without interaction with peers. This student preferred to work with their own supplies and be rewarded by the teacher for individual

accomplishments. The scenario for the trait of competition consisted of a strong desire to be the first to complete assignments and recognition as the best student in the class. Students in this scenario expressed aspirations for being recognized as the best in academics and exhibiting a disdain for coming in second in any scholastic event.

Conversely, the African American traits infused in the scenarios were communalism and verve. Communalism was demonstrated by the cooperative sharing of resources and thoughts by the high achieving student. The inclusion of verve in the scenarios was shown by lively animated discourses in the classroom, often with background music. This collaborative dialogue presented various styles of instruction and interaction with the students. The students were asked four questions following their viewing of the scenarios that addressed their attitude toward the high-scoring students. Students were polled to determine if they wanted to pursue social relationships with the various students displaying the four characteristics.

A 2 X 4 repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to investigate the result of the resiliency trait of cultural acculturation on social relationships that impact academics in both African American students and White non-Hispanic students. The ANOVA was conducted to ascertain whether the students' attitudes varied based on their cultural background. Response tables displaying the results indicated that White non-Hispanic students scored higher in the traits of Individualism and Competition and African American students scored higher in the traits of Communal and Verities. Pearson correlation computations indicated that a high interaction occurred with White non-Hispanic students and the communal trait, but the interaction was still less than the individualistic and competitive areas.

Boykin, et al. (2005) concluded that positive academic accomplishments were derived from the inclusion of the resiliency trait of cultural-based perceptions. The authors maintain that the study signifies the importance of African American students learning in a culturally relevant environment in order to increase their academic resiliency and that education will increase the academic outcomes for African American students when it is connected to cultural traits that exist beyond school. Boykin, et al. (2005) maintain the importance of connecting learning to the cultural styles existing in African American culture and that more research is warranted to determine whether findings can be generalized to other age groups and class settings.

Social/Emotional Resiliency

Social engagement is the key to human development (Adler, 1980). A person's ability to coexist and thrive socially is necessary to live a full and productive life. While children and youth are born with innate social and emotional traits, these must be nurtured and developed to shape a healthy personality. Often the victims of negative social perceptions and low teacher expectations, African American children and youth require intense, high-quality interventions that focus on social and emotional support (Thompson, 2008). These interventions can impact the social interactions of these children as well as low achievement often seen in African American children and youth.

Somers, Owens, and Piliawsky (2008) examined the perceptions of African American students' concerning the social and emotional factors that impact their school success. The goal was to ascertain the social support received from five resources: (a) parents, (b) peers, (c) teachers, (d) classmates, and (e) close friends. The following

educational attitudes and behaviors also were assessed: (a) academic plans, (b) academic commitment behaviors, (c) individual control, (d) persistence, (e) understanding of the monetary benefit of education, and (f) personal value of education. One hundred and eighteen African American students (43 males, 75 females) participated in the study.

Social support scores were assessed using the *Children and Adolescent Social Support Scale (CASSS)* (Malecki, Demaray, & Elliot, 2000). The students also completed a five-point scale to identify educational attitudes and behaviors. A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted with the five social supports (e.g., parents, peers, teachers, classmates, and close friends) with the 9th grade GPAs factored in. Follow up Pearson correlation coefficients indicated a mild statistically significant relationship between all of the social support variables and the fall GPAs of the students.

Additionally, correlations were conducted between the five social supports and the six educational attitudes and behaviors, indicating moderate to strong correlations. The parent, teacher, and peer support correlations indicated a relationship with the educational attitudes and behaviors to complete their high school education and attend college. Parent support was related directly to identification of the financial significance of education and also correlated with greater determination and belief in personal control.

Study findings indicate that the five types of social supports individually did not predict grades, but were correlated with the grades. Parents and peer support were strongly correlated with grades, followed by teacher support. Somers, Owens, and Piliawsky (2008) maintain that positive social support enhances academic outcomes thereby increasing African American students' understanding of why academic attainment is necessary beyond school. They also advocate drawing resources not only

from family, but the community as well in order to integrate academic goals into real life opportunities. Somers, Owens, and Piliawsky conclude that educators must form greater relationships with parents. They report that when African American parents become involved in school before their children are adolescents everyone benefits and the children make a smoother transition to high school.

In an effort to establish a culturally responsive, collaborative atmosphere, Bondy, Ross, Gallingane and Hambacher (2007) examined the social factors within classrooms that contribute to the creation of successful learning environments for African American students. The authors chose three new elementary school teachers who exemplified culturally responsive teaching and who had created inviting learning settings. The teachers were Asian American (fifth grade), White non-Hispanic (third grade), and African American (second grade). The student population of the school was 99% African American.

The teachers were observed via videotape and were interviewed to determine the strategies they used to create their classrooms. The teachers were videotaped the first two hours of the first day of school. Videotapes were transcribed to extract data and alternately viewed for consensus of topics by the authors. The tapes were viewed with the question in mind: "What is the teacher doing?' Central themes then were developed according to Spradley's domain analysis (Spradley, 1980). The authors traded tapes with each other for theme development and then compared notes. Patterns of similar behavior were noted in the instructional style of the three teachers during the first two hours of class on the first day. The following categories were observed: (a) developing

relationships, (b) establishing expectations, (c) insistence or holding students accountable for meeting expectations, and (d) culturally responsive communication.

From the first hour of the first day, the teachers established a rapport with each student as they entered the classroom. To do this, teachers shared information about themselves (e.g., sharing photos of special times and people in their lives). This sparked the interest of the students who then shared their own insights about family and special times. One teacher read the book *I'm Going to Like Me* by Jamie Leigh Curtis and discussed similarities in the story and her own life. This exercise took place within the first 17 minutes of class.

Within the first hour of school, all teachers communicated clear, direct expectations (e.g., where to keep belongings, procedures for lining up). Teachers stated that these procedures would be revisited frequently during the first few weeks of school. The concept of *insistence* was introduced during the first hour of the first day. *Insistence* was defined as respectfully insisting, with a calm demeanor, that all classroom expectations be achieved and consistently honored by students. All three teachers incorporated five key teaching practices in their lessons: (a) providing non-examples, (b) requiring demonstration, (c) asking for choral response, and (d) using *what ifs*. When unacceptable behavior occurred, the teachers repeated their original request in a proactive manner. Students, who violated classroom rules, immediately experienced predetermined consequences without a change in tone, punitive consequences, or sarcastic discussions from the teacher.

Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, and Hambacher (2007) observed that the teachers adhered to the cultural styles that were unique to the majority population of the school (African

American). The teachers used familiar terms and expressions from the African American culture as well as mentioned popular African America figures (e.g., Usher, Chris Rock, Martin Lawrence). For lesson memorization, the teachers used the call and response style of repetition found in most African American churches. Bondy, et al., maintained that these strategies created culturally sound and academic rich environments for the African American students and that special emphasis was placed on the cultural norm on *insistence*. This concept is prevalent in the African American culture and was implemented by all three teachers. Each instructor expected students to behave and complete assignments. Clear, direct expectations were communicated during the first few minutes of the first day that set the tone for future interactions.

The use of these direct strategies provided a calm, systematic classroom environment that supported academic achievement while increasing student resiliency. By selecting three teachers of various ethnicities, the authors discovered that all three teachers possessed the ability to incorporate culturally relevant practices in a consistent manner within the first few minutes of class. The use of these practices from the beginning of class made a considerable impact as the students were exposed to familiar applications from the onset of class. Bondy, et al. (2007) believe that the emphasis the teachers placed on building relationships with the children led to a caring, supportive environment.

Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, and Hambacher (2007) state that typical literature on classroom structure conducive to learning rarely applies to teaching African American students. The incorporation of culturally responsive classroom management is a relevant method to build social resilience in this population because it affirms their worth and taps into cultural learning styles while increasing their academic outcomes. Bondy et al.

conclude that further studies should utilize culturally responsive management and academic practices to build the knowledge base for practitioners in the classroom.

In a study conducted by Yakin, and McMahon (2003), the risk and resilience of African American students living in poverty and high stress areas was examined using a theoretical model (Howard, 2001). The goals of the study were to examine the social vulnerability and protective characteristics of African American youth and children using two violence protection curricula. One hundred, forty-two African American students (49 males and 93 females) participated in the study. The students ranged in age from 10-15 years.

The assessments used consisted of seven measures: (a) *Rosenberg Self-Esteem Sale* (1965,) (b) *Community Supports Scale*, (c) *The Children's Exposure to Violence Scale* (Dahlberg, Toal, & Behrens, 1998), (d) *Aggressive Behavior Scale* (Orpinas, Parcel, McAlister, & Frankowski, 1995, (e) *Appraisal of Violence Scale* (f) *Youth Self-Report of Anxiety and Depression*, and (g) *Children's Coping Strategies Checklist.* The students completed the assessments in their classrooms.

A chi-square analysis was conducted to determine age and gender differences. No significant gender differences were found on the seven measures, but significant differences were noted within the age categories. A path analysis was performed to determine the goodness of fit. An exceptional fit with the data was demonstrated. The path model revealed five important relationships: (a) greater self-esteem was accompanied by a lesser degree of uneasiness and disorder, (b) increased community support contributed to greater control and focus, (c) increased exposure to violence led to more hostility, (d) increased hostility was connected with less consideration of violent

events, and (e) increased vulnerability to violence was related to increased anxiety and depression.

Yakon and McMahon (2003) concluded that the results indicated that positive self-esteem is associated with positive psychosocial effects for African American students and can create a resilience sphere to safeguard a student. They also maintained that community support contributed to increased levels of coping skills that allowed students to perceive themselves as resilient. However, they did find a cyclical effect of aggression in the responses of students exposed to the most violence. These students viewed their neighborhoods as threatening to their safety, which caused the students to have a more hardened exterior when engaged with others.

Yakin and McMahon (2003) call for continued research to fill in the gaps in the literature concerning African American students who live in large metropolitan areas. They maintain that more research is necessary into the identification of family strengths, historical factors, political factors, and specific cultural characteristics that impact social emotional resiliency. They maintain that further research will lead to the ability to assist African American youth build self-esteem and develop valuable strategies to survive violence and harmful conditions.

Miller and MacIntosh (1999) conducted a study in which 131 urban African American students identified the environmental pressures that they must overcome to be resilient socially and emotionally. The goal of the study was to probe into cultural specific aspects of resilience for African American children and youth. Eighty-three girls and 48 boys in grades 8 through 12 participated in the study. A percentage of students

(38.5%) were in the general education classroom, with 43.8% enrolled in college preparatory classes, and 14% enrolled in vocational or technical classes.

Stress was the independent variable as determined by the *Perceived Stress Scale* (Cohen, Kamarch, & Mermelstein, 1983). Stress also was measured by Gordon's (1995) four-item assessment to determine how students compared their stress levels against their friends' stress levels. The *Urban Hassles Scale* (Miller & Webster, 1998) was used to evaluate stresses related to inner city life. This 12-item Likert scale was scored from 1 to 4, with 1 meaning a very safe neighborhood and 4 meaning a very unsafe neighborhood. Students also rated the extent that factors buffered them from the harmful effects of stress on their academic work using the *Racial Socialization of Adolescent Scale* (RSAS) (Stevenson, 1994). Finally, the *Collective Self-Esteem Scale* (CSES) (Luthanen & Crocker, 1992) was administered to evaluate students' perception of identity based on group inclusion. Educational attainment served as the dependent variable in the study as measured by grade point average. School participation was measured using a 7-item scale that asked questions such as, "Have you participated in school-related activities?" Weekly homework engagement time was assessed along with school attendance.

Positive correlations were found among the study's stressors, protective elements, and levels of academic achievement. Urban stresses were negatively correlated with comprehensive self-esteem and ethnic identity. Neighborhood safety perception was negatively related with school activities. The perception of a lack of safety was positively related with days absent from school. Collective self-esteem was positively correlated with the elements of school activities and GPA, while collective self-esteem was negatively correlated with days missed from school.

Miller and MacIntosh (1999) concluded that African American students face two major types of stress: (a) neighborhood / environment, and (b) cultural intolerance within school settings. A sense of racial identity coupled with high-collective self-esteem can offset the predominant risk factors typically experienced by African American students. The authors maintain that educators and service providers need knowledge about environmental effects on student development. Because research is limited on how social perceptions impact African American students, continued research is warranted.

Hampson, Rahman, Brown, Taylor, and Donaldson (1998) conducted a study to identify cultural identity for African American students. Sixty, 4th grade African American students from a public school participated in the experimental group and 28 students served as the control group. The students completed a pretest and a posttest to identify their intrinsic self-value. The intervention in the study was *Project SELF,* which is a program designed to enhance cultural awareness and ancestral pride with an emphasis on achieving social and emotional stability. *Project SELF* focuses on acquainting African American students with historical information about their cultural lineage, societal contributions, disruptions of life that led to the demise of a cohesive way of life for African Americans (e.g., slavery), and the impact of slavery through the ages. Following the lesson on slavery, students are trained to understand social structures and political influence within a civilization. Finally, students are instructed in an eight-step, decision-making process designed to instill critical and higher order problem solving skills.

The *Knowledge of Inheritance Task* (KIT) was introduced to assess students' understanding of the ancestral curriculum starting with the first human fossils found in

Africa. Another assessment entitled, *Who I Am and Where I'm Going* (WHO) was used to measure changes in student self-perception and vision for the future. Hampson, et al. (1998) were interested in assessing how the African American students felt about themselves and their sense of connectedness with members from their past ancestral background. To gauge student ability to problem-solve, students completed the *Problem-Solving Task for Self, Family, and Community* (PST) which provided real life situations for the students to evaluate and make decisions. Students were given each round of tests in the same order (*KIT*, the *WHO*, and then the *PST*). Data were analyzed using Wilcoxon nonparametric statistics.

Means for the experimental group (4.78) and the control group (4.38) did not differ significantly on the initial pretest given at the beginning of the study. Posttest scores (experimental, 23.35, control group, 4.17) indicated that the experimental group made improvements in all three curricular domains (e.g., *Knowledge of Inheritance Task, Who I Am and Where I'm Going, and Problem Solving Task for Self, Family, and Community).* Competency in ancestral history clearly impacted the students' self reported self-esteem. At the pretest, 95% of the students did not understand any identifiable features of Egyptian civilization while posttest scores indicated that 79% of students could refer to one of more relevant major details of historical value. A posttest score of 75% on the *WHO* indicated that affirmative responses were given to describe students as opposed to 22% at pretest. Problem solving task awareness improved from 15% to 45% following *Project SELF*. Value of schoolwork increased from 56% to 98% revealing a movement toward completing and presenting work that made students proud.

Hampson, et al. (1998) concluded that further research is needed to fully ascertain the importance of building social and emotional resilience through cultural discoveries. They maintain that social and emotional resiliency is closely tied to cultural self-awareness and cultural pride.

Summary

Unfortunately, African American students still are likely to experience less academic and social resilience than their White non-Hispanic counterparts (Borman, & Rachuba, 2001). Educators and African American parents are searching for protective barriers to shield children and youth from deleterious outcomes in life (Brown, 2008). Because of the continued decline in academic and social/emotional resilience of African American students, as exemplified by growing drop out rates and incarceration, educators and parents need the appropriate tools to enhance resiliency among this population of students. Because the literature is sparse dealing with resiliency and African American children and youth, it is important to create a well-rounded cultural diagram of resiliency as defined by African Americans. From this cultural picture, education will be better prepared to develop interventions and strategies that are culturally relevant and specific.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Overview

Resiliency is an important element contributing to the success of African American children and youth (Patterson, 2002). Without this essential characteristic, African American children/youth are often targets of low expectations and increased probability of school failure (Ogbu, 2004). While there is a vast amount of research examining the significance of resiliency for White, non-Hispanic children/youth, the research focusing on resiliency and African American children/youth is sparse (Wasonga, Christman, & Kilmer, 2003). Without this pertinent research, educators and African American parents are at a significant disadvantage when attempting to build this crucial attribute into the lives and education of African American students (Parker, Cowen, Work, & Wyman, 1990).

Identified in this study are identified specific characteristics of resiliency based on information collected from African American parents who graduated from high school and who had one or more children who graduated from high school. The Delphi process was used to build consensus among this participant group concerning the characteristics of resiliency for African American children/youth. The Delphi method is based on the

premise that human judgment is legitimate and provides useful input for the topic in question (Stitt-Gohdes, & Crews, 2004).

This study examined the views of African American parents toward the concept of resiliency. A consensus was developed regarding what these parents viewed as the characteristics of resiliency for their children.

Research Questions

This study involved the administration of three iterations of the Delphi survey process to develop a consensus among African American parents concerning the characteristics of resiliency they believe contributed to their own success and the success of their child who graduated from high school. The study focused on the following questions:

Research Question 1. What roles do *individual* characteristics play in achieving resiliency in African American children/youth?

Research Question 2. What roles do *relationship* characteristics play in achieving resiliency in African American children/youth?

Research Question 3. What roles do *community* characteristics play in achieving resiliency in African American children/youth?

Research Question 4. What roles do *cultural* characteristics play in achieving resiliency in African American children/youth?

Research Question 5. What roles do *physical ecology* characteristics play in achieving resiliency in African American children/youth?

Participants

Parents

The participants in this study were comprised of a sample of African American parents from five African American churches located in a large metropolitan southwestern city (see Table 1). The pastors of the five churches (A, B, C, D, and E) provided access to the congregations of their churches to serve as participants (see Appendix A). The churches were predominately African American and only parents who sign informed consent forms participated in the study (see Appendix B).

Delphi Process

A Delphi process requires that only persons with expertise in the area under investigation participate in the study (Linstone & Turoff, 2002). For this study, expertise was defined as a parent (a) who had graduated from high school through a traditional route, and (b) who had at least one child who had already graduated from high school through a traditional route. Table 1 represents the demographic data that were collected from the participants in the study. Appendix C contains the demographic collection sheet.

Data Collectors

There were five data collectors, one at each church, on site to assist participants in completing the survey instruments associated with the Delphi data collection process, including the demographic sheet. The data collectors were African American women who were active in their respective churches but who were not participating in the study themselves. They were trained in the data collection process used in this study.

Setting

This study took place in five predominately African American churches located in a large metropolitan city in the southwestern United States. The congregations of the churches were primarily African American families, comprising a wide range of educational and economic levels. African American churches were selected as the data collection sites because of the importance these institutions play within the African American community. The churches serve as the social, historical, and cultural hub of the community (Lincoln, 1990; Payne, 1995). Data were collected following church services on Wednesday evenings and Sunday afternoons at a table located in a classroom at each church.

Instrumentation

The Delphi method is a technique to facilitate communication among groups of people who do not physically meet (Barnette, Danielson, & Algozzine, 1978). The Delphi allows participants to generate ideas and share special knowledge without having contact with each other (Nehiley, 2001). Participants in a Delphi study are selected on the basis of their expertise and/or knowledge of a specific problem or situation. Members of a Delphi study are selected purposely and put together for the purpose of analysis (Stitt-Gohdes & Crews, 2004). The key elements of the Delphi process are: (a) structuring the flow of information (b) anonymity of the participants and (c) feedback to the participants (Gunaydin, 2008). This study employed a three-round Delphi process, each round of the Delphi allowing the participants an opportunity to contribute information they felt was important.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Information by Church

Characteristics	A (n=65)	B (n=48)	C (n=45)	D (n=38)	E (n=44)
Gender					
Male	10	13	4	6	7
Female	55	35	41	32	37
Total	65	48	45	38	44
Ethnic-Background					
Hispanic American	0	1	0	0	1
American Indian	0	1	0	0	0
Asian American	0	0	0	0	0
African American	64	45	44	38	43
European American	1	0	1	0	0
Other	0	1	0	0	0
Total	65	48	45	38	44
Marital Status					
Married	40	28	14	21	16
Widowed	3	7	0	1	9
Divorced	12	9	17	10	7
Separated	6	1	4	0	3

(table continues)

Characteristics	A (n=65)	B (n=48)	C (n=45)	D (n=38)	E (n=44)
Never Married	4	2	6	0	6
Living w/Partner	0	1	0	0	2
Educational Background					
No high school diploma or GED	4	1	2	2	4
High school graduate or GED	17	13	5	7	6
Post-secondary but no degree	29	11	19	14	24
Associate or Bachelors degree	12	20	14	15	7
Graduate degree	3	2	5	0	2
Number of children who graduated from high school					
Male	72	56	46	43	34
Female	66	43	59	39	40
Total	138	99	105	82	74
Children in Special Education	9	9	3	2	7

Round One

The first round of the Delphi was open-ended regarding responses from the participants, with the focus on generating a large data pool of *characteristics* the African American parents believed (a) contributed to their own personal success (i.e., graduation from high school) as well as (b) the characteristics that contributed to their child's success (i.e., graduation from high school). This first round generated unique responses

from the participants that were then used in the second and third rounds of the Delphi process. The independent responses collected in Round One served as the basis for further investigation and as the main source of data for qualitative analysis (see Appendix D). Eight prompts focused the initial participant responses.

About Yourself

1. Please list three *internal characteristics* of yourself that have contributed to your success.
2. Please list three *internal characteristics* of yourself that have hindered your success.
3. Please list three *external forces* that have contributed to your success.
4. Please list three *external forces* that have hindered your success.

About Your Child(ren)

1. Please list three *internal characteristics* of your child(ren) who graduated from high school that have contributed to his or her success.
2. Please list three *internal characteristics* of your child(ren) who graduated from high school that have hindered his or her success.
3. Please list three *external forces* of your child(ren) who graduated from high school that have contributed to his or her success.
4. Please list three *external forces* of your child(ren) who graduated from high school that have hindered his or her success.

The responses to these eight prompts were organized into a comprehensive list of all responses. These unique items were extracted from the participant narratives as individual thought units much like determining t-units (Smith, Lee, & McDade, 2001)

used in essay scoring. From this list of unique items those responses that were similar in meaning were combined into single aggregated responses. Figure 1 below gives an example of how similar response items could be combined into one aggregated response.

Unique Response Items from Narrative with Similar Meanings
1. My grandmother always read me a bedtime story. 2. We used to always read fairy tale stories from the *Book of Knowledge.* 3. I had heard all the children's stories before I started to school because my mother read them to us.
A Single Aggregated Response Item
Reading aloud was a common occurrence during childhood. (Value = 3)

Figure 1. *An example of the process for creating aggregated response items.*

The aggregated responses were assigned a numeric value equal to the number of unique response items from which the aggregated response was created (e.g., The aggregated response in Figure 1 would have a value of 3). A rank-ordered list was developed based on the value of each aggregated response. From the rank-ordered list, the top 10 items associated with each of the eight prompts (e.g., internal characteristics that contributed to your success; external characteristics that hindered your child's success) were determined.

Round Two

In round two of the Delphi, participants were given a survey instrument comprised of the Top 10 aggregated responses for each of the eight prompts (i.e., 80-items in total) that were developed from data collected in Round One of the Delphi (see Appendix E). The

number of unique responses from which each aggregated item on the survey had been constructed was also included on the survey and explained to the participants. The participants then were asked to rate each item on the 5-item Likert instrument as: 1-did not impact my or my child's success, 2-had very little impact on my or my child's success, 3-had some impact on my or my child's success, 4-had considerable impact on my or my child's success, and 5-strongly impacted my or my child's success. Additionally, participants were directed to select the *top three most important* items listed for each of the eight prompts. Analysis included the construction of a *top-three* list of items for each of the eight prompts along with descriptive statistics for each.

Round Three

The third and final data collection round in the Delphi process also utilized a survey instrument with the same Likert scale. The survey items on this instrument were drawn from the top-three most important items list developed as part of the data analysis process in Round Two. This instrument, then, consisted of 24 survey items, three from each of the eight prompt categories (see Appendix F).

Materials

Three rounds of the Delphi process were used in this study. Round One materials of the Delphi are contained in Appendix D. Materials for Round Two are found in Appendix E and materials for Round Three are in Appendix F. Demographic data were collected from the participants (see Table 1).

Training of Data Collectors

The five data collectors in this study were trained to assist parents as they completed the main data collection instruments and demographic information sheets during each round of the Delphi. Each data collector received a script to read to the parents so that all data were collected in a systematic manner. Data collectors attended a two-hour training session at which they learned the process of the Delphi, the definition of terms contained on the Delphi, and the data collection process within the church settings. The data collectors practiced the data collection procedure, which included reading the script to parents, during the training session.

Design and Procedures

This study was conducted over a period of 22 weeks and consisted of three phases. The phases were: (a) meeting with the pastors, (b) training data collectors, and (c) data collection and analysis.

Phase One

During phase one of the study, meetings were arranged with the pastors of five demographically appropriate churches. Churches selected for the study were chosen in a *sample of convenience* method. This homogeneous group was selected because of the high concentration of African American parents available in one place at one time (Lipsey, 1990). Permission was requested to collect data during church services every Sunday and Wednesday for the three rounds of the Delphi. The pastors also completed the facilities form to allow the study to take place in their churches (see Appendix A).

Phase Two

Phase Two

In phase two the data collectors were trained in a 2-hour session held at the researcher's home university. At the training, the Delphi process was explained, terms were defined, and the data collection process discussed. The data collectors practiced the data collection procedure as well as reading the script to parents, during the training session. Each prompt on Round One of the Delphi was discussed so that each data collector understood the items.

Phase Three

Informed consent was obtained from participants at the churches (see Appendix B). Only those who signed consent forms were allowed to participate in the Delphi process.

In Round One of the Delphi process, parents received the demographic information form (see Appendix C) to complete as well as round one of the Delphi (see Appendix D). In Round Two of the Delphi, parents received a cover sheet asking if they had participated in Round One of the Delphi. If the answer was *yes*, they were instructed to go directly to Round Two of the Delphi. If the answer was *no*, they were asked to complete the demographic form prior to completing the Delphi. In Round Three, the participants received a cover sheet asking if they had completed Rounds One and Two of the Delphi. If the answer was *yes*, they were instructed to complete Round Three of the Delphi. If the answer was *no*, they were instructed to complete the demographic information form prior to completing the Delphi.

Round One of the Delphi occurred during the weeks of August 24th, August 31^{tst}, and September 7th; Round Two of the Delphi occurred during the weeks of November 30th, December 1, and December 7; and, Round Three of the Delphi occurred during the weeks

of February 1, February 8, and February 15. The weeks in between data collection were devoted to data analysis and creation of materials for subsequent rounds of the Delphi.

Data Collection

Interscorer reliability was conducted for each round of the Delphi process. Twenty-five percent of all responses in each Delphi round were checked to ensure reliability. Interscorer reliability was determined by [agreement/(agreement + disagreement)] x100 = percent of agreement. This provided a reliability check for category placement of items on the surveys.

Treatment of the Data

Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and reported as part of the Delphi process. The list of aggregated response items from Round One of the process provided the basic data set for all analyses. A qualitative analysis of these data provided an understanding of the breadth of content in the responses, while a descriptive quantitative analysis provided a metric for determining and assigning importance to the content. This dual-coding process provided results that address the research questions on both scope and consequence.

Qualitative Analysis

From round one of the Delphi, items from the aggregated response list were coded in order to identify thematic and categorical similarities among the responses. Using the five areas of characteristics outlined in the research questions (i.e., individual, relationship,

community, cultural, and physical ecology) as top-level thematic units, domain analysis (Spradley, 1980) was then used to identify, code, and place the aggregated responses into a new set of categories. These categories expanded and collapsed to accommodate the data until all data were classified. Once the categorizing was complete, the categories were cross referenced with the top-level themes to show relationships across (a) the themes, which reflected the focus of the research questions, (b) the categories, which were developed directly from participant data, and (c) the individual aggregated responses. Aggregated response items were placed into finalized categories, which were combined into finalized themes. These themes and categories were also cross-referenced against the eight prompts from Round One (e.g., internal characteristics that contributed to your success; external characteristics that hindered your child's success).

Descriptive Quantitative Analysis

Aggregated response items. From the comprehensive list of all unique responses from all participants for each prompt, a shorter list of aggregated response items was created. Similar items from the list of unique responses were combined into aggregated responses items and those aggregated items were assigned a frequency value equal to the number of unique response items from which it was developed.

Surveys. Placement of each item within the survey did reflect its frequency value (i.e., number of unique responses comprising an aggregated response) as a ranking and its frequency value was provided on the survey. Means were calculated for each aggregated item on the initial survey. Response items with the highest mean scores (i.e., top ten) were the focus of further quantitative analysis. A mean score of 4.0 was selected as indicating consensus on this Delphi (McCallister, 1992).

Themes, categories, and response items. Based on the results of the qualitative analysis, the number of unique response items assigned to each category and corresponding theme was calculated. Aggregated responses were reported based on (a) the percentage of participants who provided a unique response from which the aggregated items were developed, as well as (b) the actual number of unique responses from which the aggregated items were developed.

Top three. Participants as part of Survey Two identified the three most important items. The participants provided a list of their top-three response items from the survey in order of importance regarding resiliency. Frequency of the top-three items was calculated. The frequency reflected how many different times the item was selected by the participants as a top-three choice.

Response Tables

Response tables were constructed as the primary data and results reporting medium. A comprehensive response table was constructed for individual aggregated response items and included:

1. The prompt category from which the item was generated (e.g., internal characteristics that contributed to your success; external characteristics that hindered your child's success).
2. The aggregated response item (developed from survey one) itself.
3. The number of unique response items from which each aggregated item was developed along with a minimum of four verbatim samples of those unique responses.

4. The number of participants who provided a unique response from which the aggregated response item was constructed.
5. Its mean score and rank order from survey two.
6. Its rank in the top three items of importance list from survey two.
7. Its mean score from survey three.
8. Its final rank in its particular prompt category.
9. The over all qualitative category into which the item was placed.
10. The research question to which it most closely relates.

Response tables were constructed for each of the top-three response items resulting from the corresponding top-three survey results from Survey Two, across the eight prompts (3 items X 8 prompts = 24 response tables).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study was conducted to solicit from African American parents the characteristics of resiliency they believe contributed to their success and the success of their child who graduated from high school. Data were collected through a Delphi inquiry structured around the parent (internal/external characteristics that contributed to their success and internal/external characteristics that hindered their success) and their child(ren) (internal/external characteristics that contributed to their success and internal/external characteristics that hindered their success). Parents were considered experts in resiliency if they graduated from high school via a traditional route and had at least one child who graduated from high school through a traditional route. The three Delphi surveys led the parent/participants through a series of consensus building exercises. Each survey built upon responses from the previous Delphi survey. The responses of the parent/participants were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Research Questions

The research questions asked in this study were:

Research Question 1. What roles do individual characteristics play in achieving resiliency in African American children/youth?

Research Questions 2. What roles do relationship characteristics play in achieving resiliency in African American children/youth?

Research Question 3. What roles do community characteristics play in achieving resiliency in African American children/youth?

Research Question 4. What roles do cultural characteristics play in achieving resiliency in African American children/youth?

Research Question 5. What roles do physical ecology characteristics play in achieving resiliency in African American children/youth?

Interscorer Reliability

Interscorer reliability was conducted for each round of the Delphi process. To develop aggregated responses from unique responses and to develop categories from aggregated responses, 25% of all responses were checked to ensure reliability and placement agreement. This was accomplished by Observer B reviewing the unique responses and their placement into aggregated responses as well as reviewing the aggregated responses placed into categories in Round One and Three of the Delphi. Interscorer agreement was determined by [agreements / (agreement + disagreements)] x 100 = percent of agreement. Interscorer agreement was 96% on the unique to aggregated responses and 100% on aggregated responses into categories for both Round One and Round Three. Overall reliability scores are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Interscorer Reliability

Source	Observer A	Observer B	Percent of Agreement
Unique to Aggregated Responses	3216/3216	3117/3216	3117/3216=96%
Aggregated to Categories (Round One)	80/80	80/80	80/80=100%
Aggregated to Categories (Round Three)	24/24	24/24	24/24=100%

Participants

Because participation facilitates communication among the participants in the Delphi process, researchers regularly reviewed the completed Delphi surveys to ascertain the completeness of the surveys and the usability of the surveys. There were 136 Delphi surveys completed in Round One of the Delphi process, of these 134 were complete and usable (e.g., a complete Delphi, a signed Human Subject From, completed demographic information). For Round Two of the Delphi, 106 surveys were completed with 63 being usable (e.g., a complete Delphi, a signed Human Subject From, completed demographic information). The drop in completed surveys may due to the fact that Round Two of the Delphi was longer and many parents stopped midway in the Delphi without completing

the entire survey. In Round Three of the Delphi 148 surveys were completed with 43 being usable (e.g., a complete Delphi, a signed Human Subject From, completed demographic information). While Round Three of the Delphi generated the most participants, many of them were first time participants. Unfortunately, most of the new participants did not complete the demographic information portion of the survey and, thus, were not usable in this study. Overall, there were 390 Delphi surveys completed in all three rounds and of these 240 were complete and used for analysis of the Delphi for this study.

Round One of the Delphi

Round One of the Delphi included five African American churches located in a large southwestern city. The churches are located centrally and draw participants from all over the city. One hundred and thirty four parents completed the first round of the Delphi (see Appendix D) providing a total of 3,216 unique responses, 402 for each of the eight prompts given (i.e., internal/external characteristics that contributed/hindered parent success and internal/external characteristics that contributed/hindered child success).

These 3,216 unique responses were organized into a comprehensive list of all responses. Responses that were similar in nature were combined into a single aggregated response. This process was repeated three times resulting in a total of 281 aggregated responses. This was done to make sure that the aggregated responses accurately represented the unique responses.

For the About Yourself portion of Round One, there were 28 aggregated responses for the internal characteristics that contributed to success, 45 aggregated responses for

internal characteristics that hindered success, 18 aggregated responses for external forces that contributed to success, and 55 aggregated responses for external forces that hindered success. For the About Your Child portion of Round One, there were 38 aggregated responses for the internal characteristics of the child that contributed to success, 37 aggregated responses for internal characteristics of the child that hindered success, 29 aggregated responses for external forces that contributed to the success of the child, and 31 aggregated responses for external forces that hindered the child's success.

From these 281 aggregated responses, a *top-ten* list of aggregated responses was determined based on the frequency of unique responses that contributed to each of the aggregated responses for each of the eight prompts. Thus, for each prompt (e.g., About Your Child—Internal Contributed, Internal Hindered, External Contributed, External Hindered; About Yourself Internal Contributed, Internal Hindered, External Contributed, External Hindered), 10 aggregated responses were selected based on the highest frequency of unique responses that contributed to the aggregated response (see Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3

Top-Ten Aggregated Responses Based on Frequency for About Yourself

Prompt	Aggregated Responses	Frequency
Internal-	I was highly motivated.	101
Contributed	I possessed positive personality traits.	50
	My faith helped me succeed.	49
	I wanted others to be proud of me.	29
	Family support contributed to my success.	22
	I was intelligent and diligent in my quest for success.	15
	I was focused on my education.	12
	I was disciplined for success.	11
	I possessed positive self-esteem.	10
	I was focused on listening.	9
Internal-	I experienced low self-esteem.	28
Hindered	I was fearful in my quest for education.	20
	Becoming a parent at an early age hindered my success.	17
	Procrastination hindered me from success.	16
	Stubbornness hindered my success.	14
	I lacked resources to support my success.	13
	I was easily distracted.	12
	Shyness hindered my success.	11
	Lack of family support hindered my success.	10
	Impatience hindered my ability to succeed.	7

(table continues)

Prompt	Aggregated Responses	Frequency
External-Contributed	I received the support of my family.	111
	My belief in God.	64
	Teacher/Mentors.	16
	I had good friends.	15
	I have a positive belief system.	12
	I was focused on education.	11
	I was determined to succeed.	8
	My community influenced my success.	7
	My ability to work hard influences my success.	6
	My desire to achieve influenced my success.	4
External-Hindered	Lack of finances hindered my ability to succeed.	39
	My choice of friends hindered my ability to succeed.	20
	Racism impacted my success.	20
	I had poor school skills.	19
	I was influenced by drugs/alcohol.	15
	Lack of support hindered my success.	14
	Working prevented my success.	12
	Lack of help from schools/teachers prevented my success.	11
	Early pregnancy/marriage prevented my success.	11
	Family struggles prevented my success.	9

Table 4

Top-Ten Aggregated Responses Based on Frequency for About Your Child

Prompt	Aggregated Responses	Frequency
Internal-	My child strives to be successful.	30
Contributed	My child is determined to be successful.	30
	My child is successful due to spiritual beliefs.	27
	My child is successful due to family involvement.	24
	My child was persistent.	22
	My child is motivated to be successful.	16
	My child was highly intelligent.	13
	My child has a positive attitude.	12
	My child is successful due to good study skills.	10
	My child is successful die to his/her loyalty.	8
Internal-	My child is influenced by peer pressure.	30
Hindered	My child has poor study skills.	14
	My child has a lack of focus.	13
	My child has low self-esteem.	11
	My child is unmotivated.	10
	My child procrastinates.	9
	My child is shy.	8
	My child is fearful.	7
	My child lacks resources.	6
	My child is angry.	5

(table continues)

Prompt	Aggregated Responses	Frequency
External-Contributed	My child received encouragement from family.	113
	My child received spiritual insight from family, church, and community.	100
	My child received positive educational support.	36
	My child's friends were a positive influence.	23
	My child strove to fit in socially.	22
	My child was involved in extra curricular activities.	21
	My child desired to live up to others expectations.	18
	My child had a good environment.	5
	My child received financial support.	4
	My child followed household rules.	1
External-Hindered	My child was influenced by peers.	50
	My child experienced family problems.	33
	Having to work and a lack of resources.	23
	Unsupportive and negative teachers and school.	21
	A negative environment hindered my child.	20
	My child spent too much time pursuing recreation.	19
	My child display traits of laziness.	15
	My child suffered from low self-esteem.	14
	Racism hindered my child.	12
	My child was involved in too many outside activities.	10

The frequency range of unique items contributing to the aggregated responses for each of the eight prompts are as follows: About Yourself Internal Contributed (range 9-101); About Yourself Internal Hindered (range 7-28); About Yourself External Contributed (range 4-111); About Yourself External Hindered (range 9-39); About Your Child, Internal Contributed (range 8-30); About Your Child, Internal Hindered (range 5-30); About Child, External Contributed (range 1-113); and, About Your Child, External Hindered (range 10-50). The low-end of the range for unique items helped determine the decision to provide a *top-ten* list of aggregated responses (e.g., as opposed to a top-five or top-twenty).

Qualitative Categories

At this point in the study, the *top-ten* list for each of the eight prompts were reviewed and a process initiated through which the 80 resulting aggregated responses were placed into categories that were descriptive of the responses. This process resulted in the identification of 10 categories. The categories that were determined and the number of aggregated responses that fit into each of the categories are:

1. Educational traits, with 6 response items.
2. Good environment, with 3 response items.
3. Family involvement/problems, with 9 response items.
4. Positive educational supports, with 7 response items.
5. Racism, with 3 response items.
6. Lack of resources, with 6 responses items.
7. Positive and negative personal traits, with 35 response items.
8. Spiritual/faith, with 4 response items.

9. Extra-curricular, with 3 response items.

10. Inappropriate behaviors, with 4 response items.

These categories were then cross-referenced with each of the eight prompts as well as with the themes (i.e., research question foci) (see Tables 5 and 6).

Table 5

About Yourself Categories and Themes

Prompt	Category	Associated Research Theme (Question)
Internal Contributed	Family Involvement/Problems	Individual Characteristics
	Positive/Negative Personal Traits	Relationship Characteristics
	Spiritual/Faith	Community Characteristics
		Cultural Characteristics
Internal Hindered	Family Involvement/Problems	Individual Characteristics
	Lack of Resources	Relationship Characteristics
	Positive/Negative Personal Traits	Community Characteristics
	Inappropriate Behaviors	
External Contributed	Family Involvement/Problems	Individual Characteristics
	Spiritual/Faith	Relationship Characteristics
	Positive Educational Supports	Community Characteristics
	Good Environment	Cultural Characteristics
		Physical Ecology Characteristics

(table continues)

Prompt	Category	Associated Research Theme (Question)
External Hindered	Family Involvement/Problems	Individual Characteristics
	Lack of Resources	Relationship Characteristics
	Racism	Community Characteristics
	Inappropriate Behaviors	Physical Ecology Characteristics

Table 6

About Your Child Categories and Themes

Prompt	Category	Associated Research Theme (Question)
Internal Contributed	Family Involvement/Problems	Individual Characteristics
	Educational Traits	Relationship Characteristics
	Spiritual/Faith	Community Characteristics
	Positive and Negative Personal Traits	Cultural Characteristics
Internal Hindered	Educational Traits	Individual Characteristics
	Positive and Negative Personal Traits	Relationship Characteristics
	Lack of Resources	Community Characteristics
	Inappropriate Behaviors	Cultural Characteristics
		Physical Ecology Characteristics

(table continues)

Prompt	Category	Associated Research Theme (Question)
External Contributed	Family Involvement/Problems	Individual Characteristics
	Spiritual/Faith	Relationship Characteristics
	Good Environment	Community Characteristics
	Positive Educational Supports	Cultural Characteristics
	Extra-Curricular	Physical Ecology Characteristics
External Hindered	Family Involvement/Problems	Individual Characteristics
	Lack of Resources	Relationship Characteristics
	Racism	Community Characteristics
	Extra-Curricular	Physical Ecology Characteristics
	Inappropriate Behaviors	

Round Two of the Delphi

In Round Two of the Delphi, the top-ten aggregated responses identified in Round One were organized around each of the original eight prompts (see Appendix E). The participants were given a survey that provided them with information concerning the rank order of each response (i.e., 1-10) and the number of unique items from which the aggregated response was created from data obtained in Round One. Participants were asked to indicate their agreement with each aggregated response using a Likert-scale (1-disagree to 5-agree). Upon completion of the Likert-portion of the survey, the participants then selected the top-three most important items from the 10 aggregated items and listed them in a separate section of the survey. Thus, in Round Two of the

Delphi, participants provided two sets of information, their ranking of the 80 aggregated items from Round One (i.e., 10 for each of the eight prompts) and their selection of the top-three items for each of the eight prompts.

Likert Results

The results of Round Two of the Likert portion of the survey are provided in Table 7 and Table 8. These tables include: (a) the prompt heading, (b) the top-ten aggregated response items for each prompt, (c) the frequency or number of unique responses from which the aggregate response item was developed, and (d) the mean score from the Likert portion of the survey.

Table 7

Parent Table "About Yourself"

Prompt	Response Item	Frequency: Round 1	Mean: Round 2
Internal Contributed	I was highly motivated.	101	4.23
	I possessed positive personality traits.	50	4.13
	My faith helped me succeed.	49	4.42
	I wanted others to be proud of me.	29	4.03
	Family support contributed to my success.	22	3.85
	I displayed intelligence in my quest for success.	13	4.20
	I was focused on my education.	12	3.86
	I was very self-disciplined.	11	3.93
	I possessed positive self-esteem.	10	3.90
	I was focused on listening.	9	3.48

(table continues)

Prompt	Response Item	Frequency: Round 1	Mean: Round 2
Internal Hindered	I experienced low self-esteem.	28	2.33
	I was fearful in my quest for education.	20	2.21
	Becoming a parent at an early age.	17	2.23
	Procrastination hindered me from success.	16	2.72
	Stubbornness hindered my success.	14	2.3
	I lacked resources to support my success.	13	2.5
	I was easily distracted.	12	2.11
	Shyness hindered my success.	11	2.22
	Lack of family support hindered my success.	10	2.26
	Impatience hindered my ability to succeed.	7	2.03
External Contributed	I received lots of support from my family.	111	3.82
	My belief in God.	64	4.53
	Teachers or other mentors helped me achieve.	16	3.93
	I had good friends.	15	3.87
	I had a positive outlook and belief system.	12	4.24
	I was focused on education.	10	3.89
	I was determined to succeed.	8	4.35
	My community influenced my success.	7	3.13
	My ability to work hard influenced my success.	6	4.41
	My desire to achieve influenced my success.	4	4.39

(table continues)

Prompt	Response Item	Frequency: Round 1	Mean: Round 2
External Hindered	A lack of finances hindered my ability to succeed.	39	3.19
	My choice of friends was not good.	21	2.38
	Racism had a negative impact on me.	20	2.37
	I had poor study skills in school.	19	2.82
	I was influenced by drugs or alcohol.	15	2.07
	I didn't get enough support from family or friends.	14	2.60
	Working prevented me from being more successful.	12	2.85
	I didn't receive enough support from teachers at school.	11	2.73
	Early pregnancy/marriage got in the way of my education.	10	2.92
	Family struggles were a big factor in my life.	9	2.84

Table 8

Child Table "About Your Child"

Prompt	Item	Frequency: Round 1	Mean: Round 2
Internal Contributed	My child would strive hard for what he/she wanted to achieve.	39	4.16
	My child was full of determination.	30	4.27
	Family involvement played a big part in my child's success.	27	4.50
	Spiritual beliefs played a big part in my child's success.	24	4.30
	Persistence was an important characteristic in my child.	22	4.16
	My child was highly motivated.	16	4.15
	My child was very intelligent.	13	4.34
	My child had a positive attitude.	12	4.01
	My child was successful due to good study skills.	10	3.93
	Loyalty was a top characteristic related to my child's success.	8	4.07

(table continues)

Prompt	Item	Frequency: Round 1	Mean: Round 2
Internal Hindered	My child was overly influenced by peer pressure.	30	2.29
	My child had poor study skills in school.	14	2.11
	My child could not seem to focus on important things.	13	2.18
	My child had a low level of self-esteem.	11	1.91
	My child was unmotivated to achieve.	10	1.78
	My child procrastinated and put things off.	9	2.62
	My child was very shy.	7	1.93
	My child was fearful.	7	1.83
	My child lacked the necessary resources.	6	1.73
	My child was angry.	5	1.73
External Contributed	My child received lots of encouragement from family.	113	4.59
	My child received spiritual insight from family and/or the church community.	100	4.33
	My child had positive educational support.	36	4.36
	My child's friends were a positive influence.	23	3.22
	My child stove to fit in socially.	22	3.29
	My child was involved in activities outside the classroom.	21	4.09

(table continues)

Prompt	Item	Frequency: Round 1	Mean: Round 2
	My child wanted to live up to the expectations of others.	18	3.27
	My child had a good environment.	5	4.35
	My child received adequate financial support.	4	4.19
	My child followed household rules.	1	4.17
External Hindered	My child was overly influenced by peer pressure.	50	2.08
	My child experienced adverse family problems.	33	2.23
	My child spent too much time involved in social/recreational activities.	29	1.92
	A lack of resources required my child to work.	23	1.77
	My child was not supported by his/her teachers.	21	1.96
	A negative environment influenced my child.	20	1.72
	My child was involved in a negative lifestyle.	17	1.59
	My child displayed traits of laziness.	15	2.17
	My child suffered from low self-esteem.	14	1.80
	Racism hindered my child.	12	1.44

It is important to note that the level of agreement with each response item statement (i.e., as determined by the Likert scale mean scores) did not necessarily correspond to the rank order of the response items based on the frequency count (i.e., the number of unique response items from Round One). The same phenomenon occurs again with the top-three

items in Round Three of the Delphi process, the rank-order list for each category is often re-ordered when mean scores from the Likert scale for agreement are given precedence.

Top Three Items

The second part of the Round Two Delphi asked participants to select the "top three" most important response items from the 10 items in each prompt heading (see Appendix E). The top-three were computed by determining the number of times a particular aggregated response item was selected as being in the top-three. The top-three selections did not necessarily correspond to the rank order based on frequency count, or the level of agreement from the Likert scale mean scores.

The rank-ordered, top-three most important choices from Round Two of the Delphi are indicated in Table 9 along with a frequency count of the number of times each item was selected for the top-ten list, its Likert-scale mean from Round Two, and its previous rank as one of the top-ten based on the frequency count of unique items from Round One.

Table 9

Top-three Items From Round Two of the Delphi

Top3 Rank		Top 3 Count	Top 10 Rank	Likert Mean
About yourself: Internal characteristics: Contributed to success				
1	My faith helped me succeed.	38	#3	4.42
2	I was highly motivated.	29	#1	4.23
3	My ability to work hard influenced my success.	9	#9	4.50

(table continues)

Top 3 Rank		Top 3 Count	Top 10 Rank	Likert Mean
About yourself: External characteristics: Contributed to success				
1	I received lots of support from my family.	26	#1	3.82
2	I had good friends.	16	#4	3.87
3	Teachers or other mentors helped me achieve.	13	#3	3.93
About yourself: Internal characteristics: Hindered success				
1	I was fearful in my quest for education.	26	#2	2.21
2	I had poor study skills in school.	22	#4	2.41
3	Impatience hindered my ability to succeed.	7	#10	2.03
About yourself: External characteristics: Hindered success				
1	A lack of finances hindered my ability to succeed.	29	#1	3.19
2	Family struggles were a big factor in my life.	21	#10	2.84
3	I lacked resources to support my success.	14	#6	2.43
About Your Child: Internal characteristics: Contributed to success				
1	Spiritual beliefs played a big part in my child's success.	39	#4	4.30
2	My child had a positive attitude.	29	#8	4.01
3	My child was full of determination.	15	#2	4.27

(table continues)

Top 3 Rank		Top 3 Count	Top 10 Rank	Likert Mean
About Your Child: External characteristics: Contributed to success				
1	My child received lots of encouragement from family.	48	#1	4.59
2	My child received spiritual insight from family and/or the church community.	35	#2	4.33
3	My child had positive educational support.	29	#3	4.36
About Your Child: Internal characteristics: Hindered success				
1	My child could not seem to focus on important things.	26	#3	2.18
2	My child had a low level of self-esteem.	25	#4	1.91
3	My child had poor study skills in school.	22	#2	2.11
About Your Child: External characteristics: Hindered success				
1	My child experienced adverse family problems.	34	#2	2.23
2	My child was overly influenced by peer pressure.	32	#1	2.08
3	A negative environment influenced my child.	12	#6	1.72

It is interesting to note, that although all of the aggregated response items that ultimately bubbled up to the top-three list through Rounds One and Two of the Delphi process were equally the product of the participants as a group, when providing an indicator of agreement with those statements, those response items that focused on

"contributing to success" were given much higher ratings of agreement than the response items that focused on "hindering success." The average mean score for the top-three items from the Likert survey section in Round Two for response items "contributing" was 4.19. The average mean score from the Likert survey section in Round Two for response items "hindering" was 2.25, a difference of almost 50%. Even though the participants selected the "hindering" items as very important, they did not rate those same items very high on the Likert scale indicating agreement with the statements.

Round Three of the Delphi

The third and final data collection round in the Delphi process also utilized a survey instrument with the same Likert scale (1-disagree to 5-agree). The survey items on this instrument were drawn from the list of top-three most important items selected by participants as part of the data collection and analysis process in Round Two (see Appendix F). This instrument, then, consisted of 24 survey items, three from each of the eight prompt headings. The response items were listed in rank order as the top three items in each of the eight categories. The mean scores from this final survey were used to reconfigure the final top-three lists, with the rank order by mean scores on the survey supplanting the rank order determined in Round Two.

A series of 24 comprehensive response-table figures follows, providing a final look at the outcome of the Delphi consensus-building process. Each figure represents one of the top-three response items, and is shown in a rank order series organized by prompt heading (i.e., three response items for each of the eight prompts). In addition to the quantitative data from Round One and Round Two, the response-table figures connect

each of the top-three aggregated response items to the qualitative analysis by indicating which of the 10 categories (e.g., faith, family, personal traits) the item was associated with; as well as the research question(s) that are best informed by the consensus outcome regarding the item.

Once again, it is interesting to note that of the 24 aggregated response items identified by the participants as being most important and brought into Round Three of the Delphi, the "contributing to success" items were given much higher ratings of agreement than the response items that focused on "hindering success." The average mean score for the "contributing" items from the Likert survey in Round Three was 4.00 while the average mean score for the "hindering" items was 2.00, a difference of 50%. Even though the participants identified the "hindering" items as their top three items, they did not rate them very high on the Likert scale indicating agreement with the statements.

Spiritual beliefs played a big part in my child's success.					
1.	Number of Unique Responses: 24	**2.**	Persons Who Said It:	# 24	17.65%
3.	Mean from Survey 2: 4.30	**4.**	Rank Order from Survey 2: 4		
5.	Rank from Top 3 Importance: 1	**6.**	Mean from Survey 3: 4.65		
7.	Final Rank for Your Child, Internal, Contributed: 1				
8.	Qualitative Category: Spiritual/Faith	9.	Research Question Informed: 1,2,3,4		
Examples from Unique Response Items: 1. Godly teaching 2. Prayer 3. Attending church 4. Applying faith					

Figure 2. *Your Child – Internal – Contributed: Number 1 Most Important*

My child was full of determination.					
1.	Number of Unique Responses: 30	**2.**	Persons Who Said It:	# 30	22.06 %
3.	Mean from Survey 2: 4.27	**4.**	Rank Order from Survey 2: 2		
5.	Rank from Top 3 Importance: 3	**6.**	Mean from Survey 3: 4.35		
7.	Final Rank for Your Child, Internal, Contributed: 2				
8.	Qualitative Category: Positive or Negative Personal Traits	9.	Research Question Informed: 1,2,4		

Examples from Unique Response Items:

1. Full of drive and energy

2. Passionate about succeeding

3. Had a desire to achieve

4. Had a desire to learn

Figure 3. *Your Child – Internal – Contributed: Number 2 Most Important*

My child had a positive attitude.					
1.	Number of Unique Responses: 12	**2.**	Persons Who Said It:	# 12	8.82%
3.	Mean from Survey 2: 4.01	**4.**	Rank Order from Survey 2: 8		
5.	Rank from Top 3 Importance: 2	**6.**	Mean from Survey 3: 4.32		
7.	Final Rank for Your Child, Internal, Contributed: 3				
8.	Qualitative Category: Positive or Negative Personal Traits	9.	Research Question Informed: 1,2,4		

Examples from Unique Response Items:

1. Had a desire to live better

2. Positive personality

3. Desire to please me

4. Displayed a positive attitude

Figure 4. *Your Child – Internal – Contributed: Number 3 Most Important*

My child received lots of encouragement from family.					
1.	Number of Unique Responses: 113	**2.**	Persons Who Said It:	# 113	83.09%
3.	Mean from Survey 2: 4.59	**4.**	Rank Order from Survey 2: 1		
5.	Rank from Top 3 Importance: 1	**6.**	Mean from Survey 3: 4.61		
7.	Final Rank for Your Child, External, Contributed: 1				
8.	Qualitative Category: Family Involvement/Problems	9.	Research Question Informed: 1,2		
Examples from Unique Response Items: 1. Nurturing from family 2. Maintained high expectations for my child 3. Child knew that I cared 4. Extended family and grandparents supported my child					

Figure 5. *Your Child – External – Contributed: Number 1 Most Important*

My child received spiritual insight from family and/or the church community.					
1.	Number of Unique Responses: 100	**2.**	Persons Who Said It:	# 100	73.53%
3.	Mean from Survey 2: 4.34	**4.**	Rank Order from Survey 2: 2		
5.	Rank from Top 3 Importance: 2	**6.**	Mean from Survey 3: 4.60		
7.	Final Rank for Your Child, External, Contributed: 2				
8.	Qualitative Category: Spiritual/Faith	9.	Research Question Informed: 1,2,3,4		
Examples from Unique Response Items: 1. Being a Christian made a difference 2. Praying and receiving prayer 3. Support from church increased my child's ability 4. Pastor mentored my child					

Figure 6. *Your Child – External – Contributed: Number 2 Most Important*

My child had positive educational support.					
1.	Number of Unique Responses: 36	**2.**	Persons Who Said It:	# 36	26.47%
3.	Mean from Survey 2: 4.36	**4.**	Rank Order from Survey 2: 3		
5.	Rank from Top 3 Importance: 2	**6.**	Mean from Survey 3: 4.56		
7.	Final Rank for Your Child, External, Contributed: 3				
8.	Qualitative Category: Positive Educational Supports	9.	Research Question Informed: 1,2,3,5		

Examples from Unique Response Items:

1. Teachers encouraged my child to study hard in school

2. My child had high quality teachers

3. My child was motivated by the school staff

4. My child had an early childhood foundation

Figure 7. *Your Child – External – Contributed: Number 3 Most Important*

My child could not seem to focus on important things.					
1.	Number of Unique Responses: 13	**2.**	Persons Who Said It:	# 13	9.56%
3.	Mean from Survey 2: 2.18	**4.**	Rank Order from Survey 2: 3		
5.	Rank from Top 3 Importance: 2	**6.**	Mean from Survey 3: 2.65		
7.	Final Rank for Your Child, Internal, Hindered: 1				
8.	Qualitative Category: Positive or Negative Personal Traits	9.	Research Question Informed: 1,2		

Examples from Unique Response Items:

1. My child struggled to focus in school

2. My child experienced a lack of motivation in school

3. My child was easily frustrated in school

4. My child had difficulty maintaining focus

Figure 8. *Your Child – Internal – Hindered: Number 1 Most Important*

My child had a low level of self-esteem.					
1.	Number of Unique Responses: 11	**2.**	Persons Who Said It:	# 11	8.09%
3.	Mean from Survey 2: 1.92	**4.**	Rank Order from Survey 2: 4		
5.	Rank from Top 3 Importance: 1	**6.**	Mean from Survey 3: 2.52		
7.	Final Rank for Your Child, Internal, Hindered: 2				
8.	Qualitative Category: Positive or Negative Personal Traits	9.	Research Question Informed: 1,2		
Examples from Unique Response Items: 1. My child experienced low self-esteem 2. My child was hurt by things that others said 3. My child did lacked confidence 4. My child was not sure of himself					

Figure 9. *Your Child – Internal – Hindered: Number 2 Most Important*

My child had poor study skills in school.					
1.	Number of Unique Responses: 14	**2.**	Persons Who Said It:	# 14	10.29%
3.	Mean from Survey 2: 2.11	**4.**	Rank Order from Survey 2: 2		
5.	Rank from Top 3 Importance: 3	**6.**	Mean from Survey 3: 2.46		
7.	Final Rank for Your Child, Internal, Hindered: 3				
8.	Qualitative Category: Educational Traits	9.	Research Question Informed: 1		
Examples from Unique Response Items: 1. Did not manage time 2. Lack of studying 3. Did not read often 4. Fell off task					

Figure 10. *Your Child – Internal – Hindered: Number 3 Most Important*

My child experienced adverse family problems.					
1.	Number of Unique Responses: 33	**2.**	Persons Who Said It:	# 33	24.26%
3.	Mean from Survey 2: 2.23	**4.**	Rank Order from Survey 2: 2		
5.	Rank from Top 3 Importance: 1	**6.**	Mean from Survey 3: 2.44		
7.	Final Rank for Your Child, External, Hindered: 1				
8.	Qualitative Category: Family Involvement/Problems	9.	Research Question Informed: 1,2		
Examples from Unique Response Items: 1. No father figure 2. Divorce 3. Rape/Pregnancy 4. Mother's substance abuse					

Figure 11. *Your Child – External – Hindered: Number 1 Most Important*

My child was overly influenced by peer pressure.					
1.	Number of Unique Responses: 50	**2.**	Persons Who Said It:	# 50	36.76%
3.	Mean from Survey 2: 2.08	**4.**	Rank Order from Survey 2: 1		
5.	Rank from Top 3 Importance: 3	**6.**	Mean from Survey 3: 2.20		
7.	Final Rank for Your Child, External, Hindered: 2				
8.	Qualitative Category: Negative External Influences	9.	Research Question Informed: 2,3		
Examples from Unique Response Items: 1. Peer pressure 2. Gang influence 3. Wrong crowd 4. Choosing the wrong friends					

Figure 12. *Your Child – External – Hindered: Number 2 Most Important*

A negative environment influenced my child.					
1.	Number of Unique Responses: 20	**2.**	Persons Who Said It:	# 20	14.71%
3.	Mean from Survey 2: 1.72	**4.**	Rank Order from Survey 2: 6		
5.	Rank from Top 3 Importance: 2	**6.**	Mean from Survey 3: 2.07		
7.	Final Rank for Your Child, External, Hindered: 3				
8.	Qualitative Category: Negative External Influences	9.	Research Question Informed: 2,3		
Examples from Unique Response Items: 1. Challenges of other kids 2. Local economy 3. Prison 4. Police					

Figure 13. *Your Child – External – Hindered: Number 3 Most Important*

My faith helped me succeed.					
1.	Number of Unique Responses: 49	**2.**	Persons Who Said It:	# 49	36.03%
3.	Mean from Survey 2: 4.43	**4.**	Rank Order from Survey 2: 3		
5.	Rank from Top 3 Importance: 1	**6.**	Mean from Survey 3: 4.59		
7.	Final Rank for Yourself, Internal, Contributed: 1				
8.	Qualitative Category: Spiritual/Faith	9.	Research Question Informed: 1,2,3,4		
Examples from Unique Response Items: 1. Having a relationship with the Lord 2. Faith in God 3. Belief in God to guide me 4. Inspired by God to keep pushing					

Figure 14. *Yourself – Internal – Contributed: Number 1 Most Important*

My ability to work hard influenced my success.					
1.	Number of Unique Responses: 6	**2.**	Persons Who Said It:	# 6	4.41 %
3.	Mean from Survey 2: 4.41	**4.**	Rank Order from Survey 2: 10		
5.	Rank from Top 3 Importance: 3	**6.**	Mean from Survey 3: 4.51		
7.	Final Rank for Yourself, Internal, Contributed: 2				
8.	Qualitative Category: Positive or Negative Personal Traits	9.	Research Question Informed: 1,2		

Examples from Unique Response Items:

1. Hard worker

2. Good work ethics

3. Endurance

4. Good study habits

Figure 15. *Yourself – Internal – Contributed: Number 2 Most Important*

I was highly motivated.					
1.	Number of Unique Responses: 101	**2.**	Persons Who Said It:	# 101	74.26%
3.	Mean from Survey 2: 4.24	**4.**	Rank Order from Survey 2: 1		
5.	Rank from Top 3 Importance: 2	**6.**	Mean from Survey 3: 4.44		
7.	Final Rank for Yourself, Internal, Contributed: 3				
8.	Qualitative Category: Positive or Negative Personal Traits	9.	Research Question Informed: 1,2		

Examples from Unique Response Items:

1. Wanted to be successful

2. Motivation to leave the South

3. Would like to have the best life

4.Wanted to a part of something positive

Figure 16. *Yourself– Internal – Contributed: Number 3 Most Important*

I received lots of support from my family.					
1.	Number of Unique Responses: 101	**2.**	Persons Who Said It:	# 111	81.62%
3.	Mean from Survey 2: 3.82	**4.**	Rank Order from Survey 2: 1		
5.	Rank from Top 3 Importance: 1	**6.**	Mean from Survey 3: 4.23		
7.	Final Rank for Your Yourself, External, Contributed: 1				
8.	Qualitative Category: Family Involvement/Problems	9.	Research Question Informed: 1,2		

Examples from Unique Response Items:

1. Mother made sure I did well

2. Love and support from parents

3. Extended family

4. High expectations from family

Figure 17. *Yourself– External – Contributed: Number 1 Most Important*

I had good friends.					
1.	Number of Unique Responses: 15	**2.**	Persons Who Said It:	# 15	11.03%
3.	Mean from Survey 2: 3.87	**4.**	Rank Order from Survey 2: 3		
5.	Rank from Top 3 Importance: 3	**6.**	Mean from Survey 3: 4.16		
7.	Final Rank for Your Yourself, External, Contributed: 2				
8.	Qualitative Category: Positive Educational Supports	9.	Research Question Informed: 1,2		

Examples from Unique Response Items:

1. Seeing other's accomplishment

2. Friends who wanted to do better

3. Positive friends

4. Male role models

Figure 18. *Yourself – External – Contributed: Number 2 Most Important*

Teachers or other mentors helped me achieve.					
1.	Number of Unique Responses: 16	**2.**	Persons Who Said It:	# 16	11.76%
3.	Mean from Survey 2: 3.94	**4.**	Rank Order from Survey 2: 2		
5.	Rank from Top 3 Importance: 2	**6.**	Mean from Survey 3: 4.12		
7.	Final Rank for Yourself, External, Contributed: 3				
8.	Qualitative Category: Positive Educational Supports	9.	Research Question Informed: 1,2,5		

Examples from Unique Response Items:

1. Public school teacher who cared

2. Good teachers

3. Having a teacher who cared

4. Teachers/mentors

Figure 19. *Yourself – External – Contributed: Number 3 Most Important*

I was fearful in my quest for education.					
1.	Number of Unique Responses: 20	**2.**	Persons Who Said It:	# 20	14.71%
3.	Mean from Survey 2: 2.22	**4.**	Rank Order from Survey 2: 2		
5.	Rank from Top 3 Importance: 1	**6.**	Mean from Survey 3: 2.69		
7.	Final Rank for Yourself, Internal, Hindered: 1				
8.	Qualitative Category: Positive or Negative Personal Traits	9.	Research Question Informed: 1,2		

Examples from Unique Response Items:

1. Fear of failure

2. Failure to follow through

3. Fear of success

4. Scared of change

Figure 20. *Yourself – Internal – Hindered: Number 1 Most Important*

I had poor study skills in school.					
1.	Number of Unique Responses: 19	**2.**	Persons Who Said It:	# 19	13.97%
3.	Mean from Survey 2: 2.82	**4.**	Rank Order from Survey 2: 3		
5.	Rank from Top 3 Importance: 3	**6.**	Mean from Survey 3: 2.42		
7.	Final Rank for Yourself, Internal, Hindered: 2				
8.	Qualitative Category: Positive/Negative Personal Traits	9.	Research Question Informed: 1		
Examples from Unique Response Items: 1. Easily distracted 2. Lazy 3. Complacent 4. Time management					

Figure 21. *Yourself – Internal – Hindered: Number 2 Most Important*

Impatience hindered my ability to succeed.					
1.	Number of Unique Responses: 7	**2.**	Persons Who Said It:	# 7	5.15%
3.	Mean from Survey 2: 2.04	**4.**	Rank Order from Survey 2: 10		
5.	Rank from Top 3 Importance: 2	**6.**	Mean from Survey 3: 2.36		
7.	Final Rank for Yourself, Internal, Hindered: 3				
8.	Qualitative Category: Positive or Negative Personal Traits	9.	Research Question Informed: 1,2		
Examples from Unique Response Items: 1. Lack of patience 2. Anxiety 3. Impatience 4. Distracted easily					

Figure 22. *Yourself – Internal – Hindered: Number 3 Most Important*

A lack of finances hindered my ability to succeed.					
1.	Number of Unique Responses: 39	**2.**	Persons Who Said It:	# 39	28.68%
3.	Mean from Survey 2: 3.20	**4.**	Rank Order from Survey 2: 1		
5.	Rank from Top 3 Importance: 1	**6.**	Mean from Survey 3: 2.67		
7.	Final Rank for Yourself, External, Hindered: 1				
8.	Qualitative Category: Lack of Resources	9.	Research Question Informed: 2,3,5		
Examples from Unique Response Items: 1. Financial issues 2. Finances 3. Lack of money 4. Lack of funds					

Figure 23. *Yourself – External – Hindered: Number 1 Most Important*

Family struggles were a big factor in my life.					
1.	Number of Unique Responses: 9	**2.**	Persons Who Said It:	# 9	6.62%
3.	Mean from Survey 2: 2.84	**4.**	Rank Order from Survey 2: 10		
5.	Rank from Top 3 Importance: 2	**6.**	Mean from Survey 3: 2.57		
7.	Final Rank for Yourself, External, Hindered: 2				
8.	Qualitative Category: Family Involvement/Problems	9.	Research Question Informed: 1,2		
Examples from Unique Response Items: 1. Lack of family guidance 2. Lack of family support 3. Family situations 4. Early marriage					

Figure 24. *Yourself – External – Hindered: Number 2 Most Important*

I lacked resources to support my success.					
1.	Number of Unique Responses: 13	**2.**	Persons Who Said It:	# 13	9.56%
3.	Mean from Survey 2: 2.52	**4.**	Rank Order from Survey 2: 7		
5.	Rank from Top 3 Importance: 3	**6.**	Mean from Survey 3: 2.43		
7.	Final Rank for Yourself, External, Hindered: 3				
8.	Qualitative Category: Lack of Resources	9.	Research Question Informed: 2,3,5		
Examples from Unique Response Items: 1. Not having resources 2. Not knowing how to get resources 3. Finding resources 4. Lack of resources					

Figure 25. *Yourself – External – Hindered: Number 3 Most Important*

Qualitative Categories

At this point in the study, the final 24 items for each of the eight prompts were reviewed and the items were placed into the categories identified in Round One. As this process proceeded, it became clear that the ten categories identified in Round One of the Delphi process had been reduced to six categories in Round Three. This provides an indication that the participants had reduced their focus down to six specific categories of resiliency. These categories then were related to the associated research themes (research question foci) (see Tables 10 and 11). The final six categories relating to resiliency as identified by the participants were related to all five of the research questions posed in the study.

Table 10

About Yourself Final Categories and Themes

Prompt	Category	Associated Research Theme (Question)
Internal Contributed	Spiritual/Faith	Individual Characteristics
	Positive/Negative Personal Traits	Relationship Characteristics
		Community Characteristics
		Cultural Characteristics
Internal Hindered	Positive/Negative Personal Traits	Individual Characteristics
External Contributed	Family Involvement/Problems	Individual Characteristics
	Positive Educational Supports	Relationship Characteristics
		Physical Ecology Characteristics
External Hindered	Family Involvement/Problems	Individual Characteristics
	Lack of Resources	Relationship Characteristics
		Community Characteristics
		Physical Ecology Characteristics

Table 11

About Your Child Final Categories and Themes

Prompt	Category	Associated Research Theme (Question)
Internal Contributed	Spiritual/Faith	Individual Characteristics
	Positive/Negative Personal Traits	Relationship Characteristics
		Community Characteristics
		Cultural Characteristics
Internal Hindered	Positive/Negative Personal Traits	Individual Characteristics
External Contributed	Family Involvement/Problems	Individual Characteristics
	Spiritual/Faith	Relationship Characteristics
	Positive Educational Supports	Cultural Characteristics
		Community Characteristics
		Physical Ecology Characteristics
External Hindered	Family Involvement/Problems	Individual Characteristics
	Inappropriate Behaviors	Relationship Characteristics
		Community Characteristics
		Cultural Characteristics

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Resiliency appears to be an abstract concept and one for which researchers continue to search for the specific variables that contribute to the development of resiliency in humans (Patterson, 2002). Several major research fields (e.g., anthropology, psychology, sociology, and education) have investigated resiliency and all conclude that it contributes to a person's coping and thriving in modern society (Robinson, 2005; Goldstein, 2001; Ungar, 2004; Werner & Smith, 1992). While the concept of resiliency is considered to be important for successful survival, the specific characteristics of resiliency for African American children/youth have not been well defined in the literature (Ogbu, 2004; Patterson, 2002). Because this population of students often find themselves in negative situations, experience less social fit in school, have a higher propensity for at-risk behavior, and experience less favorable academic and social outcomes, the identification of specific characteristics of resiliency for this population is both timely and necessary.

In the current climate of school reform, there is a need for education to explore resiliency in terms of specific ethnic, racial, cultural, linguistic, and economic groups. With an increasingly diverse student population and school systems that are ethnocentrically based (e.g., created around traditional White, non-Hispanic culture and values), there is a need for resiliency characteristics to be identified that are unique to

specific groups of students. These characteristics can be used to develop strategies to support the students in academic and social emotional areas.

This study involved three Delphi inquiries with a large group of African American parents in order to create a consensus concerning resiliency. The ultimate goal was to identify the characteristics of resiliency that parents agreed both contributed to and hindered their success and the success of their child. Through the Delphi process, the parents defined and re-defined resiliency in terms of the African American experience. This, in turn, verified that resiliency is a vital component for the life success, academic success, and social parity of African American children/youth.

Individual Characteristics

Individual characteristics of resiliency may be defined as innate abilities that reside in an individual and help the person remain centered during difficult times (Condly, 2006). These characteristics revolve around intangible traits that often are defined as personal or personality traits.

Round One

The first question in this study focused on the roles that *individual characteristics* play in achieving resiliency in African American children/youth. In Round One of the Delphi, *individual characteristics* were identified in all of the eight prompts (i.e., About Yourself, internal/external contributed/hindered and About Your Child, internal/external contributed/hindered). Specifically, the theme of *individual characteristics* was comprised of the categories of positive/negative personal traits, spiritual/faith, and inappropriate behaviors.

In terms of frequency in each of the eight original prompts, the descriptive data indicate that *individual characteristics* appeared in the About Yourself portion of the Delphi: (a) eight times in the internal contributed prompt, with a frequency of 237 responses, (b) seven times in the internal hindered prompt, with a frequency of 88 responses, (c) five times in the external contributed prompt, with a frequency of 41, and (d) twice in the internal hindered prompt, with a frequency of 39. For the About Your Child portion of the Delphi, *internal characteristics* appeared: (a) seven times in the internal contributed prompt, with a frequency of 131 responses, (b) eight times in the internal hindered prompt, with a frequency of 93 responses, (c) twice in the external contributed prompt, with a frequency of 23, and (d) three times in the external hindered prompt, with a frequency of 79.

The appearance of *individual characteristics* in Round One of the Delphi in terms of overall category identification and frequency of responses indicates that for African American parents and their children *individual characteristics* (both positive and negative) play a major role in resiliency. Examples of responses for the parents ranged from *I was highly motivated* to *I experienced low self-esteem* and for their children from *My child has a positive attitude* to *My child procrastinates*. This high frequency may indicate one area on which educators and parents should focus as they work with African American children/youth to develop internal traits that ultimately will impact school success (e.g., motivation, internal locus of control).

Round Two

In Round Two of the Delphi, participants, using a Likert scale, indicated their agreement or disagreement with the top-ten aggregated responses identified in Round

One. In the second portion of Round Two, participants selected the top-three most important items from the Top 10 aggregated items and listed them in a separate section of the survey. The means from the Likert-portion of Round Two indicate that some of the aggregated responses had higher mean scores for level-of-agreement than expected from the frequency count conducted in Round One. For example, for the About Yourself Internal Contributed prompt, *My faith helped me succeed* had a frequency count of 49 responses from Round One and a mean score (indicating level of agreement with the item) from the Likert-scale in Round Two of 4.42 (out of 5). Conversely, *I was highly motivated*, had a frequency count of 101 from Round One and a mean score of 4.23 from Round Two. Thus, the two items exchanged positions as items one and two. A similar pattern of rearrangement occurred across the eight prompts for the About Yourself and About Your Child sections. Both example items, motivation and faith, were placed in the spiritual/faith and positive/negative personal traits which corresponded to the *individual characteristics* theme. This indicates that the parents were beginning to refine their responses and move closer toward consensus in this round of the Delphi.

As the Delphi became more refined, the spiritual/faith category appeared more and more often across prompts and themes. The movement of this category may be attributed to the collection of data in churches. While educators cannot deal with spiritual/faith issues in the school setting, it is important for them to understand how deeply rooted this is in the African American culture (Lincoln, 1990; Payne, 1995). It may behoove schools with a large population of African American children to explore after or before school relationships with neighborhood churches to take advantage of this type of resiliency.

Top three items. The second portion of Round Two of the Delphi asked parents to identify the top-three items from the list of 10 aggregated items in each of the eight prompts. For About Yourself, participants selected items related to *individual characteristics* for the prompt items: (a) internal contributed, and (b) internal hindered. For About Your Child, participants selected *individual characteristics* for the prompt items: (a) internal contributed, (b) internal hindered, and (c) external hindered. This indicates that, overall, *individual characteristics* continued to be a focus of the participants when they were asked to further define resiliency from the top-ten items down to the top-three items.

Again items identified as being in categories associated with *individual characteristics*, were ranked higher or lower within the prompts based on frequency rankings from parent selection of the top-three items, frequency rankings from the top-ten aggregated responses, and Likert means from Round Two of the Delphi. An example of this is shown in the About Yourself Internal Contributed prompt. For the top-ten rank, *I was highly motivated* had the highest frequency of responses from the parents (101) and was ranked number 1 in the top-ten list for Round Two for this prompt. In Round Two, the Likert mean for this item was 4.23. However, the Likert mean for *My ability to work hard influenced my success* was 4.50, meaning that this item had the highest level of agreement from the parents for the first part of Round Two.

Yet, in the second part of Round Two of the Delphi when the parents selected their top-three items, *My faith helped me succeed* was selected 38 times by the parents and became the top item in this category replacing the previously selected items. Thus, the parents went through several ponderings before coming to consensus in Round Two on

My Faith helped me succeed as the top resilient *individual characteristic* for Yourself Internal Contributed. Had data collection stopped with Round One, the data would have reflected motivation as being the top item for Yourself Internal Contributed, conversely had it stopped with the top-ten Likert ranking, *My ability to work had influenced my success* would have been the top item. With the selection of the top-three items, parents further refined their thinking to *My Faith helped me succeed.* Thus, in terms of *individual characteristics*, the data became further refined in Round Two of the Delphi. Through repeated exposure, the parents considered, rejected, and pondered a variety of thoughts and ideas in terms of *individual characteristics* and ultimately, for this prompt, settled on faith.

Round Three

For the Third Round of the Delphi, the parents completed a Likert survey that contained the top three items for each of the eight prompts from Round Two. In this round, for the Your Child Internal Contributed prompt, all three of the top three items were related to the positive/negative personal traits category and the spiritual/faith category, both considered *individual characteristics* and for the Your Child External Contributed, three items were related to the family involvement/problems and positive educational supports categories, both considered *individual characteristics*. Continuing with the About Your Child portion of the Delphi, for the prompt Internal Hindered, all three items were from to the positive/negative personal traits category and for the Your Child External hindered, the top three selections were from the family involvement/problems and inappropriate behaviors categories, all of which were considered *individual characteristics.*

In Round Three of the Delphi for the About Yourself top-three portion of the survey, the top three items for the internal-contributes prompt were related to the positive/negative personal traits category and the spiritual/faith category, both considered *individual characteristics*. For the External Contributed prompt, two of the items were considered *individual characteristics* (family involvement/problems, educational traits). For the Internal Hindered prompt, all three items were related to positive/negative personal traits or educational traits categories, both representative of *individual characteristics*. For the External Hindered prompt, one of the items (family involvement/problems) was related to *individual characteristics*.

Summary

From the agreement exhibited from the responses gathered from the African American parents in this study, it appears that the resiliency concept of *individual characteristics* is pertinent for African American children/youth. In the end, the parents reached consensus on the fact that this resiliency construct both contributed to and hindered themselves and their children both internally and externally. The parents ultimately provided 20 out of 24 responses that were related to *individual characteristics*. While the responses varied over the identified categories (e.g., spiritual/faith, positive/negative personal traits), they provide a discussion starting point for parents and teachers concerning important *individual characteristics* related to resiliency for this population of children/youth.

Relationship Characteristics

Relationship characteristics are defined in the literature as the ability to connect with others and form ties with peers, parents, and teachers (Bryan, 2005). Relationships are defined by the strength of the bond that is formed as well as the sense of connectedness experienced by the person.

The second question in this study focused on the roles that *relationship characteristics* play in achieving resiliency in African American children/youth. In Round One of the Delphi, *relationship characteristics* were identified in all of the eight prompts (About Yourself, internal/external contributed/hindered and About Your Child, internal/external contributed/hindered). Specifically, the theme of *relationship characteristics* was comprised of the categories spiritual/faith, family involvement/problems, positive educational supports, extra-curricular, and inappropriate behaviors.

In terms of frequency in each of the eight original prompts, the descriptive data indicate that *relationship characteristics* appeared in the About Yourself portion of the Delphi: (a) once in the internal contributed prompt, with a frequency of 22 responses, (b) twice in the internal hindered prompt, with a frequency of 27 responses, (c) four times in the external contributed prompt, with a frequency of 149, and (d) five times in the external hindered prompt, with a frequency of 65. For the About Your Child portion of the Delphi, *relationship characteristics* appeared: (a) once in the internal contributed prompt, with a frequency of 27 responses, (b) once in the internal hindered prompt, with a frequency of 30 responses, (c) six times in the external contributed prompt, with a

frequency of 297, and (d) four times in the external hindered prompt, with a frequency of 133.

Round One

The appearance of *relationship characteristics* in Round One of the Delphi in terms of overall category identification and frequency of responses indicates that for African American parents and their children *relationship characteristics* (both positive and negative) play a major role in resiliency. Examples of responses for the parents ranged from *Family support contributed to my success* to *My choice of friends was not good* and for their children from *My child received lots of encouragement from family* to *My child spent too much time involved in social/recreational activities*. This high frequency may indicate one area on which educators and parents should focus as they work with African American children/youth to develop the forming of positive relationships that can have an impact on school success (e.g., forming appropriate school-based relationships with peers and teachers), community success (e.g., understanding positive and negative relationships and their impact on self), and social emotional success (e.g. maintaining positive interactions, learning to express negative feelings in an appropriate manner).

Round Two

In Round Two of the Delphi, participants, using a Likert scale, indicated their agreement or disagreement with the top-ten aggregated responses identified in Round One. In the second portion of Round Two, participants selected the top-three most important items from the 10 aggregated items and listed them in a separate section of the survey. The means from the Likert portion of Round Two indicate that some of the aggregated responses had higher mean levels-of-agreement than expected from the

frequency count conducted in Round One. For example, for the About Yourself External Contributed prompt, *My belief in God* had a frequency count of 64 responses from Round One of the Delphi and a mean score from the Likert scale in Round Two of 4.53. Conversely, *I received lots of support from my family*, had a frequency count of 111 from Round One and a mean score of 3.82 from Round Two. Thus, the two items exchanged positions as items one and two. This same pattern occurred across the eight prompts for the parents and children. Both example items, belief in God and family support were placed in the spiritual/faith and family involvement/problems categories, which corresponded to the *relationship characteristics* theme. At this point in the Delphi, participants were beginning to refine their responses and move closer toward consensus in this round of the Delphi. This type of movement in agreement is indication that the participants of the Delphi were focusing on the change in the prompts given and moving toward consensus.

Top three items. The second portion of Round Two of the Delphi asked parents to identify the top-three items from the list of 10 aggregated items in each of the eight prompts. For About Yourself, parents selected items related to *relationship characteristics* for the prompt items: (a) external contributed, and (b) external hindered. For About Your Child, parents selected *relationship characteristics* for the prompt items: (a) external contributed, and (b) external hindered. This indicates that, overall, parents viewed the resilient theme of *relationship characteristics* to be externally based, outside of themselves and their children. That is to say, they defined *relationship characteristics* in terms of family, peers, teachers, or mentors. Thus, in Round Two of the Delphi, when parents were asked to further refine their agreement on resiliency, *relationship*

characteristics continued to be a focus of the parents and the parents became much more specific in terms of it being an external resiliency characteristic.

Again items identified as being in categories associated with *relationship characteristics*, were ranked higher or lower within the prompts based on frequency rankings from parent selection of the top-three items, frequency rankings from the top-ten aggregated responses, and Likert means from Round Two of the Delphi. An example of this is shown in the About Yourself External Contributed prompt. For the top-ten rank, *I received lots of support from my family* had the highest frequency of responses from the parents (111) and was ranked number 1 in the top-ten list for Round Two for this prompt. In Round Two, the Likert mean for this item was 3.82. However, the likert mean for *Teachers or other mentors helped me achieve* was 3.93, meaning that this item had the highest level of agreement from the parents for *relationship characteristics* for the first part of Round Two.

Yet, in the second part of Round Two of the Delphi when the participants selected their top-three items, *I received lots of support from my family* was selected 26 times by the participants and became the top item in this category, *I had good friends* was selected by 16 participants, and *Teachers or other mentors helped me achieve* was selected by 13 participants. Thus, the participants went through several ponderings before coming to consensus in Round Two on *I received lots of support from my family* as the top resilient *relationship characteristic* for Yourself Internal Contributed. Had data collection stopped with Round One, the data would reflect *I received lots of support from my family* as being the top item for Yourself External Contributed, conversely had it stopped with the top-ten Likert ranking, *Teachers or other mentors helped me achieve* would have

been the top item. With the selection of the top-three items, participants further reconsidered their thinking and went back to their original choice of *I received lots of support from my family.* Thus, in terms of *relationship characteristics*, the data were re-hashed in Round Two of the Delphi. Through repeated exposure, the participants considered, rejected, pondered, and reconsidered a variety of thoughts and ideas in terms of *relationship characteristics* and ultimately, for this prompt, settled on family support.

Round Three

For the Third Round of the Delphi, the parents completed a Likert survey that contained the top three items for each of the eight prompts from Round Two. For *relationship characteristics* in this round, once again, the focus was on the external prompts. Parents indicated that for themselves as well as for their child, the resiliency *relationship characteristics* were in the external contributed and external hindered prompts. The categories represented were family involvement/problems, positive educational supports, and inappropriate behaviors.

In Round Three for the About Yourself top-three portion of the survey, the top three items related to *relationship characteristics* again revolved around the external contributed and external hindered prompts for both the parents and children. For the About Yourself portion, the external contributed responses were related to the categories of family involvement/problems and positive educational supports and the external hindered responses focused on family involvement/problems. For the About Your Child portion, the external contributed responses revolved around the categories of family involvement/problems and positive educational supports and the external hindered

responses were related to the categories of family involvement/problems and inappropriate behaviors.

Summary

The theme of *relationship characteristics* appears to be related to the resiliency for the African American parents and their child(ren) who participated in this study. By Round Three of the Delphi, the parents had reached consensus that *relationship characteristics* of resiliency reside externally and can contribute or hinder one's success. The aggregated responses provided by these parents provide food for thought for educators and parents as they work to instill resiliency in African American children and youth. The parents provided 9 out of 24 responses related to *relationship characteristics.* The parents repeatedly cited family involvement, positive educational support, peer pressure, friendships, and teachers/mentors as contributing to resiliency. While these responses may not be new to educators, they do provide support for a renewed effort in these areas when working with African American children/youth. They serve as reminders of the importance of the external factors that impinge on this population of students daily and the importance of working with parents, working to structure positive peer supports, and becoming a mentor to students rather than simply a person who provides information or rules.

Community Characteristics

Community characteristics are external to the person and extend to the community as a supportive or non-supportive entity. This involves shared values, beliefs, norms, and rituals that can have a positive or negative impact on a person (Wang & Gordon, 1994).

Community resiliency is present when there is a sense of perceived social equity in terms of access to school, education, information, and learning resources (Booker, 2004).

The third question in this study focused on the roles that *community characteristics* play in achieving resiliency in African American children/youth. In Round One of the Delphi, *community characteristics* were identified in all of the eight prompts (about yourself, internal/external contributed/hindered and about child, internal/external contributed/hindered). Specifically, the theme of *community characteristics* was comprised of the categories of spiritual/faith, lack of resources, good environment, positive educational supports, and extra-curricular.

In terms of frequency in each of the eight original prompts, the descriptive data indicate that *community characteristics* appeared in the About Yourself portion of the Delphi: (a) once in the internal contributed prompt, with a frequency of 49 responses, (b) twice in the internal hindered prompt, with a frequency of 30 responses, (c) once in the external contributed prompt, with a frequency of 7 responses, and (d) three times in the external hindered prompt, with a frequency of 37. For the About Your Child portion of the Delphi, *community characteristics* appeared: (a) once in the internal contributed prompt, with a frequency of 27 responses, (b) once in the internal hindered prompt, with a frequency of 30 responses, (c) four times in the external contributed prompt, with a frequency of 162, and (d) six times in the external hindered prompt, with a frequency of 143.

Round One

The appearance of *community characteristics* in Round One of the Delphi in terms of overall category identification and frequency of responses indicates that for African

American parents and their children *community characteristics* (both positive and negative) play a role in resiliency. Examples of responses for the parents ranged from *My community influenced my success* to *I lacked resources to support my success* and for their children from *My child received spiritual insight from family, church, and community* to *A negative environment hindered my child.* The appearance of *community characteristics* as related to resiliency reinforces that a school is a part of the community in which it is located. As a member of the community, a school must be a source of support and educators must be seen as contributing to the community. The participants in this study indicated that *community characteristics* have an impact on resiliency and as such it is prudent that educators become aware of the various characteristics of a community that impact the development of resiliency by the children/youth who live in a community.

Round Two

In Round Two of the Delphi, participants, using a Likert scale, indicated their agreement or disagreement with the top-ten aggregated responses identified in Round One. In the second portion of Round Two, participants selected the top-three most important items from the 10 aggregated items and listed them in a separate section of the survey. The means from the Likert portion of Round Two indicate that some of the aggregated responses had higher mean levels of agreement than expected from the frequency count conducted in Round One. For example, for the About Yourself Internal Hindered prompt, *I lacked resources to support my success*, had a frequency count of 13 responses from Round One and a mean score from the Likert scale in Round Two of 2.50. Conversely, *Becoming a parent at an early age*, had a frequency count of 17 from

Round One and a mean score of 2.23 from Round Two. Thus, the two items exchanged positions. A similar pattern of rearrangement occurred across the prompts for the parents and children. Both example items, lacking resources and becoming a parent, were placed in the lack of resources and inappropriate behaviors that corresponded to the *community characteristics* theme. Again, participants were refining their answers as they moved through the Delphi inquiries.

It is interesting to note that as the Delphi became more refined, the theme of *community characteristics* appeared with less frequency. In fact, *community characteristics*, while appearing across the eight prompts at this point in the Delphi, appeared with less frequency than did *individual characteristics* and *relationship characteristics*. It appears that the participants in this study focused more on the individual person (self and child) than the community surrounding the person. This may be due to the fact that the Delphi was conducted in a church environment where people traveled from a variety of communities and, as such, the participants in this survey did not share one community.

Top three items. The second portion of Round Two of the Delphi asked participants to identify the top-three items from the list of 10 aggregated items in each of the eight prompts. For About Yourself, parents selected items related to *community characteristics* for the prompt items: (a) internal contributed, and (b) external hindered. For about your child, parents selected *community characteristics* for the prompt items: (a) internal contributed, (b) external contributed, and (c) external hindered. This indicates that, overall, *characteristics* were a focus of the parents in Round Two of the Delphi even though fewer items appeared.

As with the previous characteristics of resiliency, items identified as being in categories associated with *community characteristics*, were ranked higher or lower within the prompts based on frequency rankings from parent selection of the top-three items, frequency rankings from the top-ten aggregated responses, and Likert means from Round Two. An example of this is shown in the About Your Child External Hindered prompt. For the top-ten rank, *My child was overly influenced by peer pressure* had the highest frequency of responses from the parents (50) and was ranked number 1 in the top-ten list for Round Two for this prompt. In Round Two of the Delphi, the Likert mean for this item was 2.08. However, when this item moved into the top three items in the second part of Round Two, it moved to second place behind an item focusing on family relationships. Conversely, an item that received only 20 responses from the top-ten portion of Round Two, and focused on *community characteristics*, moved to item three for the top three list (*A negative environment influenced my child*). Once again, participants were refining their thoughts.

Round Three

For the Third Round of the Delphi, the parents completed a Likert survey that contained the top three items for each of the eight prompts from Round Two. In this round of the Delphi, resiliency as defined by the theme *community characteristics* was represented in the About Yourself prompts for internal contributed and external hindered and for About Your Child for internal contributed, external contributed and external hindered. The items revolved around the categories of spiritual/faith, lack of resources, positive educational supports, and inappropriate behaviors. The resiliency theme of

community characteristics was represented in only six out of the final 24 aggregated responses in the third round.

Summary

While the African American parents in this study do include *community characteristics* as a contributing factor to resiliency, the connection is a weaker one than can be made for *individual* and *relationship characteristics*. Most probably this is due to the fact that these parents did not share a community in which they lived, but shared a church community. Thus, the relationship between *community characteristics* and resiliency should be explored further. A Delphi should be conducted with parents who live in the same community and who share daily experiences as a result of the community. This would provide more depth into the contribution of *community characteristics* to resiliency. It maybe that resiliency is defined differently based on the characteristics of a community.

Cultural Characteristics

Cultural characteristics are internal and take into consideration the traditions, religion, and linguistic composition of a person. Typically, cultural characteristics are defined by affiliation to a religious organization, the life philosophy of the group, and being grounded in group-based traditions (Ogbu, 2004).

The fourth question in this study focused on the roles that *cultural characteristics* play in achieving resiliency in African American children/youth. In Round One of the Delphi, *cultural characteristics* were identified in five of the prompts (About Yourself, internal/external contributed and About Your Child, internal contributed/hindered,

external contributed). Specifically, the theme of *cultural characteristics* was comprised of the categories of positive/negative personal traits, spiritual/faith, and inappropriate behaviors (for the children).

In terms of frequency in each of the eight original prompts, the descriptive data indicate that *cultural characteristics* appeared in the About Yourself portion of the Delphi: (a) once in the internal contributed prompt, with a frequency of 49 responses, and (b) once in the external contributed prompt, with a frequency of 64 responses. For the About Your Child portion of the Delphi, *cultural characteristics* appeared: (a) once in the internal contributed prompt, with a frequency of 27 responses, (b) once in the internal hindered prompt, with a frequency of 30 responses, and (d) once in the external hindered prompt, with a frequency of 50.

Round One

The appearance of *cultural characteristics* in Round One of the Delphi in terms of overall category identification and frequency of responses indicates that for African American parents and their children *cultural characteristics* (both positive and negative) were identified in terms of religious experience and inappropriate behaviors among the children. Examples of responses for the participants ranged from *My faith helped me to succeed to My belief in God* and for their children from *My child is successful do to spiritual beliefs* to *My child is influenced by peer pressure*. The frequency of appearance of aggregated responses that could be placed into categories associated with the theme of *cultural characteristics* was lower than the previous three themes. Overall, for this group of African American parents, the only cultural categories that emerged were spiritual/faith and inappropriate behaviors for the children. Spiritual/faith is not a

responsibility of school personnel, however, the inappropriate behavior identified was peer pressure. This is an area in which school personnel, along with parents, could have a major impact. In order to address peer pressure, educators will need knowledge of the various affiliations (groups) that may exist within a community. This knowledge must be deeper than surface knowledge (e.g., what colors are associated with groups) to a psychological knowledge concerning the benefits to affiliation. The alternatives offered by adults to peer pressure must consider the psychological and social constructs that impact children/youth daily in certain communities. Educators must consider that peer pressure becomes a negative *cultural characteristic* for certain populations of youth and the negative impact on resiliency needs counter measures in the environments of school, community, and home.

Round Two

In Round Two of the Delphi, participants, using a Likert scale, indicated their agreement or disagreement with the top-ten aggregated responses identified in Round One. In the second portion of Round Two, participants selected the top-three most important items from the 10 aggregated items and listed them in a separate section of the survey. The means from the Likert portion of Round Two of the Delphi indicate that some of the aggregated responses had higher mean levels of agreement than expected from the frequency count conducted in Round One of the Delphi. For example, for the About Yourself Internal Contributed prompt, *My faith helped me succeed* had a frequency count of 49 responses from Round One of the Delphi and a mean score from the Likert scale in Round Two of 4.42. Conversely, *I was highly motivated*, had a frequency count of 101 from Round One and a mean score of 4.23 from Round Two.

Thus, the two items exchanged positions as items one and three, with *cultural characteristics* replacing *individual characteristics* as the highest ranked item for internal contributed. This also occurred for the internal contributed prompt, For the About Your Child prompt *Spiritual beliefs played a big part in my child's success* was ranked as the fourth highest item, moving up in the ranking to the second item. For the internal hindered prompt, *My child was overly influenced by peer pressure* moved from number one to number two in the ranking, and replaced by an item that was an individual characteristic. Thus, in this portion of Round Two, participants were reevaluating their responses and using the information provided from other participants to redefine their responses.

As the Delphi became more refined, the cultural characteristics category had fewer and fewer responses that could be placed into the theme. Other than the spiritual/faith category and inappropriate behaviors on the part of the children (peer pressure), there were no responses that could be coded as cultural in nature. This may be due to the nature of the prompts and the fact that the prompts did not ask participants to examine themselves or their child in terms of cultural traits or it may be that, for this group of parents, culture (except for religion) is not viewed as contributing to success. The construct of culture and its contribution to the resiliency of African American children/youth warrants further investigation.

Top three items. The second portion of Round Two of the Delphi asked parents to identify the top-three items from the list of 10 aggregated items in each of the eight prompts. For About Yourself, parents selected items related to *cultural characteristics* only for the prompt item internal contributed. For About Your Child, participants

selected *cultural characteristics* for the prompt items: (a) internal contributed, (b) external contributed, and (c) external hindered. This indicates that this population of parents indicated that *cultural characteristics* had a greater impact on their children than it did on them.

Again items identified as being in categories associated with *cultural characteristics*, were ranked higher or lower within the prompts based on frequency rankings from parent selection of the top-three items, frequency rankings from the top-ten aggregated responses, and Likert means from Round Two of the Delphi. An example of this is shown in the About Yourself internal contributed prompt. For the top-ten rank, *My faith helped me to succeed* was ranked number three based on frequency of responses from the parents (49) for Round One of the Delphi for this prompt. However, in Round Two of the Delphi, the Likert mean for this item was 4.42, making it the number one item.

In the second part of Round Two of the Delphi when the parents selected their top-three items, *My faith helped me succeed* was selected 38 times by the parents and became the top item in this category replacing the previously selected items. Thus, the parents went through several ponderings before coming to consensus in Round Two on *My Faith helped me succeed* as the top resilient individual characteristic for Yourself Internal Contributed. Had data collection stopped with Round One, the data would reflect motivation as being the top item for Yourself Internal Contributed (an individual characteristic). With the selection of the top-three items, parents further refined their thinking to *My Faith helped my succeed.* Thus, for the Yourself Internal Contributed prompt, a *cultural characteristics* replaced an *individual characteristic* as being the item that had the most impact on resiliency.

Round Three

For the Third Round of the Delphi, the parents completed a Likert survey that contained the top three items for each of the eight prompts from Round Two. In this round, for the About Yourself portion only one prompt for internal contributed was related to *cultural characteristics*. This was the aggregated response *My faith helped me succeed* associated with the category spiritual/faith. For the about your child portion, three prompts were associated with *cultural characteristics*, internal contributed (*Spiritual beliefs played a big part in my child's success*), external contributed (*My child received spiritual insight from family and/or the church community*), and external hindered (*My child was overly influenced by peer pressure*). These aggregated responses were associated with the categories of spiritual/faith and inappropriate behaviors that were associated with the *cultural characteristics* theme.

Summary

From the low number of responses that could be associated with *cultural characteristics*, it appears that, for the parents in this study, culture did not have a major impact on the definition of success/resiliency. While in the end, the parents reached consensus on the aggregated responses that were placed in categories associated with the *cultural characteristics* theme, the parents provided only four out of 24 responses associated with culture and primarily associated with culture in terms of the spiritual/faith category. Another Delphi designed around *cultural characteristics* may help define the contribution of culture to resiliency for this population or may better clarify culture in terms of resiliency.

Physical Ecology

A student's access to a healthy and safe environment defines physical ecology characteristics (International Resiliency Project, 2005). This involves the environmental factors that influence a person's vulnerability to stress and negative influences in the physical environment. Conversely, physical ecology factors can be positive in nature.

The fifth question in this study focused on the roles that *physical ecology characteristics* play in achieving resiliency in African American children/youth. In Round One of the Delphi, *physical ecology characteristics* were identified in five of the eight prompts (about yourself, external contributed/hindered and about your child, internal hindered and external contributed/hindered). Specifically, the theme of *physical ecology characteristics* was comprised of the categories of positive educational supports, good environment, lack of resources, racism, and extra-curricular.

In terms of frequency in each of the eight original prompts, the descriptive data indicate that *physical ecology characteristics* appeared in the About Yourself portion of the Delphi: (a) once in the external contributed prompt, with a frequency of 7 responses, and (b) twice in the external hindered prompt, with a frequency of 31. For the About Your Child portion of the Delphi, *physical ecology characteristics* appeared: (a) once in the internal hindered prompt, with a frequency of 6 responses, (c) three times in the external contributed prompt, with a frequency of 62, and (d) five times in the external hindered prompt, with a frequency of 93.

Round One

The appearance of *physical ecology characteristics* in Round One in terms of overall category identification and frequency of responses indicates that for this group of

participants, physical ecology had an impact, particularly for the external hindered prompt. However, for Round One of the Delphi, *physical ecology characteristics* were only represented in five of the eight prompts at a relatively low frequency rate. One interesting finding was that racism, as a category, was only identified for the external hindered prompt (yourself and child) and was placed in the physical ecology theme in this study. While racism became a category and represented a frequency of 32 responses, it did not represent a majority of the unique responses nor did it receive a high rate of frequency in Round One of the Delphi.

Round Two

In Round Two of the Delphi, participants, using a Likert scale, indicated their agreement or disagreement with the top-ten aggregated responses identified in Round One. In the second portion of Round Two, participants selected the top-three most important items from the 10 aggregated items and listed them in a separate section of the survey. The means from the Likert portion of Round Two of the Delphi indicate that some of the aggregated responses had higher mean levels of agreement than expected from the frequency count conducted in Round One of the Delphi. For example, for the About Yourself External Hindered prompt, *Racism had a negative impact one me* had a frequency count of 20 responses from Round One of the Delphi and a mean score from the Likert scale in Round Two of 2.37. Conversely, *I didn't receive enough support from teachers at school,* had a frequency count of 11 from Round One and a mean score of 2.73 from Round Two. Thus, the two items exchanged positions in Round Two of the Delphi. This occurred in only two of the five prompts that contained categories associated with *physical ecology characteristics.* From the lack of movement of aggregated

responses in terms of mean scores or frequency of responses, it appears that for *physical ecology characteristics* participants remained the most consistent in their responding. There was little movement in the items. This maybe due to the fact that participants had few aggregated responses placed into categories (e.g., good environment, positive educational supports, racism, lack of resources, extra-curricular) associated with this theme.

The second portion of Round Two of the Delphi asked parents to identify the top-three items from the list of 10 aggregated items in each of the eight prompts. For About Yourself, participants selected no items related to *physical ecology characteristics* to move into the top three items. For About Your Child, participants selected *physical ecology characteristics* for the prompt items: (a) external contributed (*My child had a positive educational environment*) and (c) external hindered (*A negative environment influenced my child*). This indicates that *physical ecology characteristics* of all the research themes appears to have the weakest link to resiliency as identified by this group of parents.

Top three items. For the top-three list, the item *My child had positive educational support* remained constant across the first two rounds of the Delphi in that it was always among the top three items in terms of frequency and mean ranking. The item *A negative environment influenced my child* was not a consistent item and moved from a ranking of number six in Round One to number three for the top-three items in Round Two of the Delphi. This again reflects a movement toward consensus and a refinement of thought on the part of the participants.

Round Three

For the Third Round of the Delphi, the parents completed a Likert survey that contained the top three items for each of the eight prompts from Round Two. In this round, for the Your Child External Contributed prompt provided one category (positive educational supports) related to *physical ecology characteristics.* While two prompts were related to About Yourself: (a) external contributed (positive educational supports) and (b) external hindered (lack of resources). Thus, in Round Three, there was further refinement of items from Round Two.

Summary

From the few unique items and aggregated responses ultimately related to the research theme of *physical ecology characteristics* provided by the African American parents in this study, it appears that the resiliency concept of *physical ecology characteristics* has little impact on resiliency for this group. The parents ultimately provided four out of 24 responses that were related to *physical ecology characteristics.* The four responses (e.g., *My child had positive educational support*, *Teachers or other mentors helped me achieve*, *A lack of finances hindered my ability to succeed*, *I lacked resources to support my success*) varied over the identified categories (e.g., positive educational supports and lack of resources) and provide a discussion starting point for parents and teachers concerning important *physical ecology characteristics* related to resiliency for this population of children/youth.

Conclusions

Seven conclusions can be drawn from this study:

1. Resiliency can be defined for African American students using similar terms used to define resiliency for the general population of students (e.g., individual characteristics, relationship characteristics, community characteristics, cultural characteristics, and physical ecology characteristics). However, the fine-tuning of these characteristics may differ (e.g., spiritual/faith, positive/negative personal traits, family involvement/problems, positive educational supports, and inappropriate behaviors).
2. There appears to be some reluctance on the part of African American parents to rate items that appear to be negative (e.g., hindered success) concerning their or their child's success. This might be due to the fact that data were collected in a church setting or that parents do not want to contribute to negative stereotyping.
3. There are six categories of resiliency that should be targeted when working with African American children/youth. These are spiritual/faith, positive/negative personal traits, family involvement/problems, positive educational supports, inappropriate behaviors, and lack of resources.
4. This study indicates that the link between community characteristics and resiliency needs further exploration and definition. It may be that community characteristics are situation specific and cannot be generalized across communities.

5. This study indicates that African American parents can be active participants in building consensus concerning their children. The large participation sample indicates the willingness of these parents to provide information, input, and ideas impacting their child's education.
6. This study indicates that the role of culture in resiliency is unclear for this population of African American parents and children. It may be that culture, outside of the spiritual/faith realm is not a primary factor for this group.
7. The relationship between physical ecology and resiliency is not established in this study. Parents provided few responses associated with physical ecology and it did not occur in a high enough frequency or with a high enough mean to draw conclusions about the relationship.

Recommendations for Further Study

Recommendations for further study are:

1. The study should be replicated including African American students who have graduated from high school, parents, and educators. In this manner, the data can be triangulated and responses compared and contrasted for a more in-depth Delphi inquiry.
2. The six resiliency categories (spiritual/faith, positive/negative personal traits, family involvement/problems, positive educational supports, inappropriate behaviors, lack of resources) should each serve as a focus of a Delphi inquiry in order to further define the characteristics of each category. In this manner,

specific items can be identified to create strategies for addressing resiliency with African American children/youth.

3. This study should be replicated with parents in a variety of educational settings (e.g., preschool, elementary, middle school, high school, alternative schools) across multiple community settings (e.g., schools in high economic, middle economic, and low economic areas). In this manner, educational resiliency for African American students can be defined. This will provide educators with specific areas that can be targeted in the school setting.
4. A replication of the study should occur targeting all ethnic, racial, linguistic, economic, and cultural groups. This will allow for a rich set of responses that transcends one group and provides multiple data points for school systems to target as they work with an increasingly diverse school population.
5. Further Delphi inquiries should be conducted across time (e.g., yearly), in multiple settings (e.g., schools, community centers, juvenile detention centers) with African American parents and children/youth to ascertain if responses change over time and settings.
6. A Delphi inquiry should be conducted focusing specifically on African American students placed in special education settings. With the overrepresentation of African American children/youth in special education, specifically in classrooms for students with intellectual and emotional disabilities, this inquiry would provide information concerning the resiliency of a group of students not often considered resilient.

7. A gender specific Delphi inquiry should be conducted with African American high school students to ascertain if male students perceive resiliency different than female students. This will contribute to information concerning students at an age when education often loses the students (e.g., dropping out, failing, suspensions, pregnancy).
8. A community specific Delphi inquiry should be conducted that explores the concept of resiliency in a variety of community settings. It may be that resiliency is community specific and varies from community to community, even when communities share other similar characteristics.
9. A culture specific Delphi inquiry should be conducted that explores the construct of African American culture and its relationship to resiliency. It may be that as the African American experience is redefined overtime that culture as a contributing factor to resiliency is changing.
10. A physical ecology Delphi inquiry should be conducted that asks parents to explore the relationship of the physical environment to the success of themselves and their children. It is possible that parents have a tendency to focus on the individual rather than the environment in which the individual resides.
11. The study should be replicated in rural communities. There may be a difference in the characteristics of resiliency that emerge in a rural community for African Americans than were agreed upon in an urban environment.
12. Once the specific characteristics of resiliency have been identified through a series of Delphi inquiries, these characteristics should be used to develop a resiliency checklist. This checklist should undergo a validation study to create a

valid instrument for teachers, parents, and community service providers to use as they work with African American children/youth in a variety of settings.

Summary

A series of Delphi inquiries were conducted in this study to ascertain the specific characteristics that contribute to or hinder the development of resiliency in African American children/youth as identified by parents. A Delphi was selected as the means to collect data because it allows consensus to build over time and over participants rather than a survey that provides one snap shot in time. The study focused on five characteristics of resiliency (individual, relationship, community, cultural, and physical ecology) that have been identified as characteristics for white non-Hispanic children and youth. These were used to investigate the overlap between the characteristics of resiliency for African American and white non-Hispanic children/youth and to better identify the characteristics of resiliency for African American children/youth.

The three rounds of the Delphi indicate that parents defined, refined, and revisited their responses. If the study had concluded after the first round of the Delphi, one set of conclusions would be drawn. If the study concluded after the second round of the Delphi, a different set of conclusions would be drawn. By the third and final round of the Delphi, the parents had refined their responses from the original 281 aggregated responses to 24 aggregated responses and from ten response categories to six response categories. The third and final round of the Delphi also indicates that the responses provided by the parents fall primarily into the research themes (questions) of *individual characteristics* and *relationship characteristics*. Indicating that for this group of parents,

these two themes appear to be most associated with their success and the success of their child. That is to say, that these two themes best define resiliency for this group of participants. However, there were responses also associated with the research themes of *community characteristics*, *cultural characteristics*, and *physical ecology characteristics*, just not to the extent to which the first two themes were represented. Thus, the three Delphi used in this study provide support that the resiliency components of *individual characteristics* and *relationship characteristics* found in the literature for white non-Hispanic children/youth appear to be associated with African American children/youth. There is less support from this study for the resiliency constructs of *community characteristics*, *cultural characteristics*, and *physical ecology characteristics*. However, the six categories of resiliency that emerged from the study (spiritual/faith, positive/negative personal traits, family involvement/problems, lack of resources, positive educational supports, and inappropriate behaviors) were represented across the five research themes and provide a beginning point for further identification and refinement of the resiliency characteristics for African American children/youth. This supports current research indicating that more research is needed to identify the resiliency characteristics of African American children/youth (Bryan, 2005; Kitano & Lewis, 2005; Marsh & Marsh, 2006).

This study has several important implications. Because students from diverse backgrounds comprise 33% of the public school enrollment (NCES, 2005), 13% of which are African American students, identification of the unique resiliency characteristics of this subgroup of students must occur to provide educators and parents evidence-based information (Brown, 2001). This study provides a first step in this direction.

Secondly, this study provided African American parents with a vehicle through which they could provide information specific to their experiences and the experiences of their children. The high rate of parental participation in this study (n=240) indicates that parents want to provide input that can be used to better the education of their children. This finding is reflected in current research (O'Bryan, Braddock, & Dawkins, 2006). Because the ultimate goal is the use of resiliency characteristics to create interventions that will contribute to the academic achievement and social success of African American students, it is important to know that parents are willing to contribute to the identification of the resiliency characteristics.

And, finally, the six categories identified by the parents in this study can serve as a starting point for supporting the development of resiliency in African American children/youth. Current research indicates that this population of students require supports if they are to develop resiliency (Booker, 2004; Ogbu, 2004; Smith, 2005). This study provides a beginning framework from which to develop those supports.

The failure of African American students to achieve academically and socially is discussed frequently in the literature (Benard, 1993; Etitle, 2005; Smith, 2005; Unger, 2005). However, research indicates that when the critical characteristics of resiliency are embedded in school and home settings, student achievement increases (Benard, 1993). If education is to provide the appropriate supports to develop resiliency for this population of students, it must identify the specific resiliency characteristics that are needed and work to create culturally relevant interventions to include them in the school and community environments. This study provides a piece of the cultural diagram concerning resiliency for African American children/youth. Further research is needed to

complete the diagram so that African American children/youth reach educational equity and parity with their White non-Hispanic peers.

APPENDIX A

PASTOR LETTERS

Simmie B. Richard, Pastor

Bread of Life
Ministries of His Glory

Bessie L. Richard, CoPastor

July 10th, 2008

Brenda Durosinmi, MPA, CIP, CIM-Director
Office for Protection of Research Subjects
University of Nevada of Las Vegas
4505 Maryland Parkway box 45037
Las Vegas, NV 89154-1037
Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at Bread of Life Church

Dear Ms. Durosinmi:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Dr. Kyle Higgins and Vita L. Jones to conduct a research project entitled, African American Parental Beliefs about Resiliency: A Delphi Study, at Bread of Life Church

When the research project has received approval from the UNLV Institutional Review Board, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as Pastor for the Bread of Life Church, I agree to provide access to the church for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the UNLV Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at 895-2794.

Sincerely,

Pastor Simmie B Richard July 13, 08

Pastor

Vita Jones Kyle Higgins

Doctoral Candidate Principal Investigator

2721 Coran Lane • Las Vegas, Nevada 89106 • Phone: (702) 648-8844 • Fax: (702) 647-2406
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New Antioch
Christian Fellowship
People Focused – Purpose Driven

www.newantioch.org

3950 Las Vegas Blvd., North, Ste 101

Las Vegas, NV 89115
(702) 644-7373

Fax: (702) 644-7378

Dr. Naida M. Parson
SENIOR PASTOR

Sonya Cheltenham
ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Regina K. Rhodes
ASSISTANT PASTOR

David Burr
ADMINISTRATIVE PASTOR

MarvaElane Burr
WORSHIP PASTOR

Joyce McDonnell
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER

Arianne Phillips
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER

July 10, 2008

Brenda Durosinmi, MPA, CIP, CIM-Director
Office for Protection of Research Subjects
University of Nevada of Las Vegas
4505 Maryland Parkway Box 45037
Las Vegas, NV 89154-1037

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at New Antioch Christian Fellowship

Dear Ms. Durosinmi:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Dr. Kyle Higgins and Vita L. Jones to conduct a research project entitled, African American Parental Beliefs about Resiliency: A Delphi Study, at New Antioch Christian Fellowship.

When the research project has received approval from the UNLV Institutional Review Board, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as Pastor for the New Antioch Christian Fellowship, I agree to provide access to the church for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the UNLV Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at 895-2794.

Sincerely,

Naida M. Parson, Ph.D. 7/13/08
Pastor

Vita Jones
Doctoral Candidate

Kyle Higgins
Principal Investigator

And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord. – ACTS 11:21

PORTALS TO GLORY CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST
2301 Comstock Dr., N. Las Vegas, NV 89032
Office: (702) 646-9700 **Fax:** (702) 646-5896
Elder, Cleo Jamerson, Jr. – Pastor **E-mail:** info@portalstoglory.org

June10th, 2008

Brenda Durosinmi, MPA, CIP, CIM-director
Office for protection of Research Subjects
University of Nevada of Las Vegas
4505 Maryland Parkway box 45037
Las Vegas NV 89154-1037

Subject: letter of acknowledgement of a Research project at Portals to Glory COGIC

Dear Ms. Durosinmi:

This letter will acknowledge that I have Reviewed a request by Dr. Kyle Higgins and Vita L. Jones to conduct a research project entitled, African American parental Beliefs about Resiliency: A Delphi study, at portals to Glory, COGIC

When the research project has received approval from the UNLV Institutional Review Board, and upon Presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as Pastor of the Portals To Glory, COGIC I agree to provide access to the Church, For the approved research project

If we have any concern or need additional information, the project researcher will Be contacted or we will contact the UNLV office for the protection of Research Subjects at 895-2794.

Sincerely,

Cleo Jamerson Jr. July 13, 08

Pastor

Vita Jones Kyle Higgins

Doctoral Candidate **Principal Investigator**

Come Unto Me, All Ye That Labor And Are Heavy Laden, And I Will Give You Rest.
Matthew 11:28

VICTORY MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

July 10th, 2008

Brenda Durosinmi, MPA, CIP, CIM-Director
Office for Protection of Research Subjects
University of Nevada of Las Vegas
4505 Maryland Parkway box 45037
Las Vegas, NV 89154-1037
Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at Victory Missionary Baptist Church

Dear Ms. Durosinmi:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Dr. Kyle Higgins and Vita L. Jones to conduct a research project entitled, African American Parental Beliefs about Resiliency: A Delphi Study, at Victory Missionary Baptist Church Center.

When the research project has received approval from the UNLV Institutional Review Board, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as Pastor for the Victory Missionary Baptist Church Center, I agree to provide access to the church for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the UNLV Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at 895-2794.

Sincerely,

July 11, 2008

Pastor

Doctoral Candidate

Kyle Higgins

Principal Investigator

Second Baptist Church
500 West Madison Avenue
P.O. Box 270267 – Las Vegas, Nevada 89106
(702) 648-6155 Fax (702) 648-8557
www.2ndbaptist.org. Email: sbclv@yahoo.com
Rev. Namon Johnson, Interim Pastor

July 10th, 2008

Brenda Durosinmi, MP, CP, CIM-Director
Office for Protection of Research Subjects
University of Nevada of Las Vegas
4505 Maryland Parkway, Box 45037
Las Vegas, NV 89154-1037

Subject: Letter of Acknowledgement of a Research Project at Second Baptist Church

Dear Ms. Durosinmi:

This letter will acknowledge that I have reviewed a request by Dr. Kyle Higgins and Vita L. Jones to conduct a research project entitled, African American Parental Beliefs about Resiliency: A Delphi Study, at Second Baptist Church.

When the research project has received approval from UNLV Institutional Review Board, and upon presentation of the approval letter to me by the approved researcher, as Pastor for the Second Baptist Church, I agree to provide access to the church for the approved research project.

If we have any concerns or need additional information, the project researcher will be contacted or we will contact the UNLV Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at 895-2794.

Sincerely,

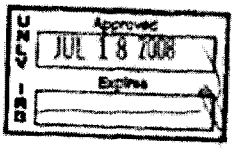
Rev Namon Johnson July 11, 2008
Pastor

Vita Jones Kyle Higgins
Doctoral Candidate Principal Investigator

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT

RECEIVED
JUL 14 2008



INFORMED CONSENT

Department of Special Education

TITLE OF STUDY: African American Parental Beliefs About Resiliency: A Delphi Study

INVESTIGATOR(S): Vita Jones and Kyle Higgins

CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: 895-3205

Purpose of the Study
Your have been invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to identify specific characteristics of resiliency that African American parents who graduated from high school and who have at least one child who graduated from high school believe contributed to their success.

Participants
You are being asked to participate in the study because you are an African American high school graduate who has a child who is a high school graduate.

Procedures
If you agree to volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete three rounds of surveys pertaining to characteristics of resiliency.

Benefits of Participation
There may not be direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. However, we hope to identify specific characteristics that contribute to resiliency building in African American youth.

Risks of Participation
There are risks involved in all research studies. This study involves the completion of three rounds of surveys. Because of this, there is minimal risk to you from participation (physical, psychological, social, or legal).

Cost /Compensation
There will be no financial cost to you to participate in this study, because all rounds of the survey will be completed at the church. You will not be compensated for your time.

Contact Information
If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact Dr. Kyle Higgins or Vita Jones at 895-3205. For questions regarding the rights of research subjects, any complaints or comments regarding the manner in which the study is being conducted you may contact **the UNLV Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at 702-895-2794.**

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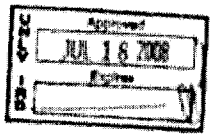

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice to your relations with the university. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research study.

Confidentiality

All information gathered in this study will be kept completely confidential. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. PARTICIPANTS' NAME WILL NOT BE LINKED TO THEIR RESPONSES ON THE SURVEYS. All records will be stored in a locked facility at UNLV for at least 3 years after completion of the study. After the storage time the information gathered will be destroyed.

Participant Consent:

I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I am at least 18 years of age. A copy of this form has been given to me.

Signature of Participant Date

Participant Name (Please Print)

Participant Note: Please do not sign this document if the Approval Stamp is missing or is expired.

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Demographic Information
Age:
Gender: Male _____ Female_____
Ethnic Background: Hispanic American _____ African American _____ American Indian _____ European American _____ Asian American _____ Other _____
Marital Status: Married _____ Divorced_____ Separated _____ Never married, living with a partner_____ Widowed_____ Never married_____
Educational Background: Formal schooling, no high school diploma or GED_____ High school graduate (diploma or GED)_____ Some college or post high school, but no degree_____ Associate/Bachelor degree (AA, AS, BA, BS, etc.)_____
How many children do you have who have graduated from high school? _____

APPENDIX D

ROUND ONE OF THE DELPHI

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this Delphi Survey. The next two boxes provide information that will help you complete the first round of the survey.
Resiliency is considered to be (a) the internal characteristics/traits that reside within a person, and (b) the external characteristics/forces that come from outside a person.
What are the internal characteristics and external forces that have led to your success and the success of your child who graduated from high school?

ABOUT YOURSELF

I.	Please list three *internal characteristics* of yourself that have **contributed** to your success.
	1. 2. 3.
II.	Please list three *internal characteristics* of yourself that have **hindered** your success.
	1. 2. 3.
III.	Please list three *external forces* that have **contributed** to your success.
	1. 2. 3.
IV.	Please list three *external forces* that have **hindered** your success.
	1. 2. 3.

ABOUT YOUR CHILD OR CHILDREN WHO GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL

I.	Please list three *internal characteristics* of your child(ren) who graduated from high school that have **contributed** to his or her success.
	1. 2. 3.
II.	Please list three *internal characteristics* of your child(ren) who graduated from high school that have **hindered** his or her success.
	1. 2. 3.
III.	Please list three *external forces* of your child(ren) who graduated from high school that have **contributed** to his or her success.
	1. 2. 3.
IV.	Please list three *external forces* of your child(ren) who graduated from high school that have **hindered** his or her success.
	1. 2. 3.

APPENDIX E

ROUND TWO OF THE DELPHI

Thank you for participating in this survey.

Your answers are very important and your time and effort are much appreciated.

1. Did you participate in the 1st survey?

If YES please go to Page 4 and BEGIN.

2. If you did NOT participate in the 1st survey...

... then please read and SIGN the Informed Consent Form immediately following this page -- and then BEGIN.

Thank you!

UNLV

Demographic Information

Age:

Gender:
Male
Female

Ethnic Background:
Hispanic American
American Indian
Asian American
African American
European American
Other

Marital Status:
Married
Divorced
Separated
Never married, living with a partner
Widowed
Never married

Educational Background:
Formal schooling, no high school diploma or GED
High school graduate (diploma or GED)
Some college or post high school, but no degree
Associate/Bachelor degree (AA, AS, BA, BS, etc.)

How many children do you have who have graduated from high school?
Male
Female

Dates your children graduated from high school.

Did any of your children who graduated from high school receive special education services?

Yes

No

About Your Child:
Internal characteristics that contributed to his or her success

Top Ten Items	Number of times someone said it	What the participants said in the first survey.	Disagree----Agree ←— —→ Circle Your Choice
1.	39	My child would **strive** hard for what he/she wants to achieve.	1 2 3 4 5
2.	30	My child was full of **determination.**	1 2 3 4 5
3.	27	**Family involvement** played a big part in my child's success.	1 2 3 4 5
4.	24	**Spiritual beliefs** played a big part in my child's success.	1 2 3 4 5
5.	22	**Persistence** was an important characteristic in my child.	1 2 3 4 5
6.	16	My child was highly **motivated.**	1 2 3 4 5
7.	13	My child was very **intelligent.**	1 2 3 4 5
8.	12	My child had a **positive attitude.**	1 2 3 4 5
9.	10	My child was successful due to **good study skills.**	1 2 3 4 5
10.	8	**Loyalty** was a top characteristic related to my child's success.	1 2 3 4 5

(1) Select the top three items YOU think are most important from the 10 statements above.
(2) List them in order of importance below.
(3) Write the reason why each item is so important.

	Item number		Your reason goes below
A			
B			
C			

About Your Child:
External characteristics that contributed to his or her success

Top Ten Items	Number of times someone said it	What the participants said in the first survey.		Disagree——Agree ←— —→ Circle Your Choice
1.	113	My child received lots of **encouragement** from family.		1 2 3 4 5
2.	100	My child received **spiritual insight** from family and/or the church community.		1 2 3 4 5
3.	36	My child had positive **educational** support.		1 2 3 4 5
4.	23	My child's **friends** were a positive influence.		1 2 3 4 5
5.	22	My child strove to **fit** in socially.		1 2 3 4 5
6.	21	My child was involved in **activities** outside the classroom.		1 2 3 4 5
7.	18	My child wanted to live up to the **expectations** of others.		1 2 3 4 5
8.	5	My child had a good **environment**.		1 2 3 4 5
9.	4	My child received adequate **financial support**.		1 2 3 4 5
10.	1	My child followed household **rules**.		1 2 3 4 5

(1) Select the top three items YOU think are most important from the 10 statements above.
(2) List them in order of importance below.
(3) Write the reason why each item is so important.

	Item number		Your reason goes below
A			
B			
C			

About Your Child:
Internal characteristics that hindered his or her success

Top Ten Items	Number of times someone said it	What the participants said in the first survey.	Disagree------Agree ←= =→ Circle Your Choice
1.	30	My child was overly influenced by **peer pressure.**	1 2 3 4 5
2.	14	My child had poor **study skills** in school.	1 2 3 4 5
3.	13	My child could not seem to **focus** on important things.	1 2 3 4 5
4.	11	My child had a low level of **self-esteem.**	1 2 3 4 5
5.	10	My child was **unmotivated** to achieve.	1 2 3 4 5
6.	9	My child **procrastinated** and put things off.	1 2 3 4 5
7.	8	My child was very **shy**.	1 2 3 4 5
8.	7	My child was **fearful**.	1 2 3 4 5
9.	6	My child lacked the necessary **resources**.	1 2 3 4 5
10.	5	My child was **angry**.	1 2 3 4 5

(1) Select the top three items YOU think are most important from the 10 statements above.
(2) List them in order of importance below.
(3) Write the reason why each item is so important.

	Item number		Your reason goes below
A			
B			
C			

About Your Child:
External characteristics that hindered to his or her success

Top Ten Items	Number of times someone said it	What the participants said in the first survey.		Disagree——Agree ←— —→ Circle Your Choice
1.	50	My child was negatively influenced by his/her **peers.**		1 2 3 4 5
2.	33	My child experienced adverse **family problems.**		1 2 3 4 5
3.	29	My child spent too much time involved in **social/recreational** activities.		1 2 3 4 5
4.	23	A lack of resources required my child to **work.**		1 2 3 4 5
5.	21	My child was not supported by his/her **teachers.**		1 2 3 4 5
6.	20	A **negative environment** influenced my child.		1 2 3 4 5
7.	17	My child was involved in a **negative lifestyle.**		1 2 3 4 5
8.	15	My child displayed traits of **laziness.**		1 2 3 4 5
9.	14	My child suffered from **low self-esteem.**		1 2 3 4 5
10.	12	**Racism** hindered my child.		1 2 3 4 5

(1) Select the top three items YOU think are most important from the 10 statements above.
(2) List them in order of importance below.
(3) Write the reason why each item is so important.

	Item number		Your reason goes below
A			
B			
C			

About Yourself:
Internal characteristics that contributed to your success

Top Ten Items	Number of times someone said it	What the participants said in the first survey.		Disagree------Agree ⬅== ==➡ Circle Your Choice
1.	101	I was highly **motivated.**		1 2 3 4 5
2.	50	I possessed positive **personality** traits.		1 2 3 4 5
3.	49	My **faith** helped me succeed.		1 2 3 4 5
4.	29	I wanted **others** to be proud of me.		1 2 3 4 5
5.	22	**Family** support contributed to my success.		1 2 3 4 5
6.	13	I displayed **intelligence** in my quest for success.		1 2 3 4 5
7.	12	I was **focused** on my education.		1 2 3 4 5
8.	11	I was very **self-disciplined**.		1 2 3 4 5
9.	10	I possessed positive **self-esteem**.		1 2 3 4 5
10.	9	I was focused on **listening**.		1 2 3 4 5

(1) Select the top three items YOU think are most important from the 10 statements above.
(2) List them in order of importance below.
(3) Write the reason why each item is so important.

	Item number		Your reason goes below
A			
B			
C			

About Yourself:
External characteristics that contributed to your success

Top Ten Items	Number of times someone said it	What the participants said in the first survey.		Disagree------Agree ←== ==→ Circle Your Choice
1.	111	I received lots of support from my **family.**		1 2 3 4 5
2.	64	My belief in **God**.		1 2 3 4 5
3.	16	**Teachers** or other mentors helped me achieve.		1 2 3 4 5
4.	15	I had good **friends.**		1 2 3 4 5
5.	12	I had a **positive outlook** and belief system.		1 2 3 4 5
6.	11	I was **focused** on education.		1 2 3 4 5
7.	8	I was **determined** to succeed.		1 2 3 4 5
8.	7	My **community** influenced my success.		1 2 3 4 5
9.	6	My ability to **work hard** influenced my success.		1 2 3 4 5
10.	4	My **desire** to achieve influenced my success.		1 2 3 4 5

(1) Select the top three items YOU think are most important from the 10 statements above.
(2) List them in order of importance below.
(3) Write the reason why each item is so important.

	Item number		Your reason goes below
A			
B			
C			

About Yourself:
Internal characteristics that hindered to your success

Top Ten Items	Number of times someone said it	What the participants said in the first survey.	Disagree------Agree ←= =→ Circle Your Choice
1.	28	I experienced **low-self esteem.**	1 2 3 4 5
2.	20	I was **fearful** in my quest for education.	1 2 3 4 5
3.	17	**Becoming a parent** at an early age hindered my success.	1 2 3 4 5
4.	16	**Procrastination** and putting things off was a problem for me.	1 2 3 4 5
5.	14	My own **stubbornness** often got in my way.	1 2 3 4 5
6.	13	I lacked **resources** to support my success.	1 2 3 4 5
7.	12	I was easily **distracted**.	1 2 3 4 5
8.	11	**Shyness** hindered my success.	1 2 3 4 5
9.	10	My **family** did not provide adequate support.	1 2 3 4 5
10.	7	**Impatience** hindered my ability to succeed.	1 2 3 4 5

(1) Select the top three items YOU think are most important from the 10 statements above.
(2) List them in order of importance below.
(3) Write the reason why each item is so important.

	Item number		Your reason goes below
A			
B			
C			

About Yourself:
External characteristics that hindered your success

Top Ten Items	Number of times someone said it	What the participants said in the first survey.	Disagree------Agree ←== ==→ Circle Your Choice
1.	39	A lack of **finances** hindered my ability to succeed.	1 2 3 4 5
2.	21	My choice of **friends** was not good.	1 2 3 4 5
3.	20	**Racism** had a negative impact on me.	1 2 3 4 5
4.	19	I had poor **study skills** in school.	1 2 3 4 5
5.	15	I was influenced by **drugs or alcohol**.	1 2 3 4 5
6.	14	I didn't get enough **support** from family or friends.	1 2 3 4 5
7.	12	**Working** prevented me from being more successful.	1 2 3 4 5
8.	11	I didn't receive enough **support** from teachers at school.	1 2 3 4 5
9.	10	Early **pregnancy/marriage** got in the way of my education.	1 2 3 4 5
10.	9	**Family struggles** were a big factor in my life.	1 2 3 4 5

(1) Select the top three items YOU think are most important from the 10 statements above.
(2) List them in order of importance below.
(3) Write the reason why each item is so important.

	Item number		Your reason goes below
A			
B			
C			

APPENDIX F

ROUND THREE OF THE DELPHI

Thank you for participating in this survey.
Your answers are very important and your time and effort are much appreciated.

Did you participate in the 1st or 2nd survey?
If YES please go to page 4 and BEGIN.

If you did NOT participate in the 1st or 2nd survey
please read and SIGN the Informed Consent on page 1 & 2 then BEGIN.

Thank you!

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Demographic Information
Age:
Gender: Male _____ Female_____
Ethnic Background: Hispanic American _____ African American _____ American Indian _____ European American _____ Asian American _____ Other _____
Marital Status: Married _____ Divorced_____ Separated _____ Never married, living with a partner_____ Widowed_____ Never married_____
Educational Background: Formal schooling, no high school diploma or GED_____ High school graduate (diploma or GED)_____ Some college or post high school, but no degree_____ Associate/Bachelor degree (AA, AS, BA, BS, etc.)_____
How many children do you have who have graduated from high school? _____ Male _____ Female _____
Dates your children graduated from high school. _____ _____ _____
Did any of your children who graduated from high school receive special education services? Yes_____ No_____

About Your Child:

Top Three Items		What the participants said in the second survey		Disagree——Agree ←== ==→ Circle Your Choice
Internal characteristics that contributed to his or her success				
1.		**Family involvement** played a big part in my child's success.		1 2 3 4 5
2.		**Spiritual beliefs** played a big part in my child's success.		1 2 3 4 5
3.		My child had a **positive attitude.**		1 2 3 4 5
External characteristics that contributed to his or her success				
1.		My child received lots of **encouragement** from family.		1 2 3 4 5
2.		My child received **spiritual insight** from family and/or the church community.		1 2 3 4 5
3.		My child had positive **educational** support.		1 2 3 4 5
Internal characteristics that hindered to his or her success				
1.		My child was overly influenced by **peer pressure.**		1 2 3 4 5
2.		My child had a low level of **self-esteem.**		1 2 3 4 5
3.		My child could not seem to **focus** on important things.		1 2 3 4 5
External characteristics that hindered to his or her success				
1.		My child experienced adverse **family problems.**		1 2 3 4 5
2.		My child suffered from **low self-esteem.**		1 2 3 4 5
3.		A **negative environment** influenced my child.		1 2 3 4 5

About Yourself:

Top Three Items		What the participants said in the second survey		Disagree——Agree ←== ==→ Circle Your Choice
Internal characteristics that contributed to your success				
1.		My **faith** helped me succeed.		1 2 3 4 5
2.		I was highly **motivated.**		1 2 3 4 5
3.		**Family** support contributed to my success.		1 2 3 4 5
External characteristics that contributed to your success				
1.		My belief in **God**.		1 2 3 4 5
2.		I received lots of support from my **family.**		1 2 3 4 5
3.		My ability to **work hard** influenced my success.		1 2 3 4 5
Internal characteristics that hindered to your success				
1.		I lacked **resources** to support my success.		1 2 3 4 5
2.		I was **fearful** in my quest for education.		1 2 3 4 5
3.		**Impatience** hindered my ability to succeed.		1 2 3 4 5
External characteristics that hindered to your success				
1.		A lack of **finances** hindered my ability to succeed.		1 2 3 4 5
2.		**Family struggles** were a big factor in my life.		1 2 3 4 5
3.		I had poor **study skills** in school.		1 2 3 4 5

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