The Relationship Between Resiliency In Rural African American Male Youth And Their Awareness Of Citizenship Practices

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESILIENCY

IN RURAL AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE YOUTH

AND THEIR AWARENESS OF CITIZENSHIP PRACTICES

by

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ABSTRACT

Effective citizenship practice in the United States has several important characteristics, which can provide the foundation for young people to access opportunity in employment and education. A continuum of policies, programs, and strategies meant to alleviate poverty have central themes of providing education and vocational opportunities, and yet large numbers of young minority people remain disenfranchised with no chance to succeed. There is even greater loss in the population of African American males who otherwise could achieve stable and strong economic life styles. Large unemployment and under-employment of African American males is documented through U.S. data sources where declining rates of labor force participation of black males is starkly evident (U.S. Census 2000).

Geographic influences for minority youth also increase limited access to educational and employment opportunities (Slack & Jenson, 2002). What is clear is that minority youth are faced with a disproportionately difficult access to educational and employment opportunities as a result of diminished community social support, which should be the encouraging force in directing their goal achievements.

Resiliency, as a strengths-based perspective, gained convincing prominence through the 1970s and 1980s. Initiative, self-control, self-esteem, and attachment are four protective factors of resiliency. Risk and protective factors are vital for intervention practices with individuals, families and communities. This study utilized protective factors that promote the skills and abilities necessary for encouraging resiliency and creating effective citizenship.

Resiliency and the awareness of citizenship practices may bolster African American male youth successes in educational and employment opportunities. Youth who consistently and routinely engage in employment can increase the well-being of themselves, their families, and their communities. This study utilized a self-administered survey design to obtain responses from rural African Americans male youth, between the ages of 12 and 19 inclusive, to determine their resiliency skills and their awareness of citizenship practices (p=.005, one-tailed). In a pre-post test for significance, participants were asked to take a citizenship practices survey after the viewing of the video. This paired t-test displayed statistically significant results (p= .0015, t= 2.998, df =98).

It is important to examine resiliency in rural African American male youth and how that resiliency interacts with the awareness of citizenship practices. There is little known about how rural African American, male youth perceive effective citizenship based on their level of resiliency. African American youth are better served toward successful employment and education through programs that are designed to increase citizenship practices awareness. There is reason to believe that citizenship practices, by way of training and community affirmation, with an infusion of resiliency skill techniques modeling, could open the doors wider for African American male youth who, for some, suffer from poverty, but for most suffer from the lack of free and open educational access which inhibits viable entry level employment opportunities.

This dissertation is dedicated to all the rural African American male youth
who endure their present and deserve an abundant future,
with a place to succeed… and I want that for them.

I especially dedicate this to my sons, Nathaniel and Mathias
and their children Makenzie, Mason, Mikiel, and Anthony,
who are creating successes every day,
to know how important they are to me,
and without them, this would be a hollow journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Effective citizenship practice in the United States has several important characteristics, which can provide the foundation for young people to access opportunity in employment and education. As productive citizens, individuals can attain economic goals through career, vocation, and entrepreneurial endeavors. Ricci (2004) describes three distinct parts of citizenship. Citizenship I is one's legal status of residence and birth. Citizenship II refers to the practice of political participation in active decision-making for a community or other government entity. It is the Citizenship III where he asserts that "good citizenship requires more than just obeying a country's laws and perhaps helping to make them…it requires virtuous behavior." (p. 8). He further contends that this level of citizenship "obliges citizens to use their political resources and skills to participate well, that is, to maintain not just effective laws but also a decent state (p. 8).

The National Council on Social Studies (NCSS) states that, "citizenship education is as important today as at any other time in our history" (2001, p. 296). The Council further states, "that our students should leave school with a clear sense of their rights and responsibilities as citizens. "They should also be prepared to challenge justice and promote the common good". (p. 309). Concepts such as problem solving and personal responsibility are basic human empowerment elements described by Morales and Sheafor (2001) where "the goal of increasing a sense of control in the problem-solving process and in the life situations, characterizes the approach with African Americans that

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empowers them" (p. 536). Through educational and employment opportunities there can be increased self-esteem, resiliency, economic well-being, and effective citizenship.

Since the early 1970s, research in childhood development has linked risk, vulnerability, and protective factors to a phenomenon characterized by positive coping and adjustment to stress and trauma often expressed as resilient qualities. Garmezy (1991) describes the construct for resiliency pointing out that " as we seek to understand the roots of resilience and the role of protective factors in reducing risk, defining such interconnections becomes an important research agenda" (p. 120). These early studies explored the developmental conditions of children living in disadvantaged or dangerous circumstances who were subject to critical incidents of socio-environmental hazards where, it was likely that behavioral and emotional problems existed due to the exposure of risk factors (Garmezy, 1991; Haggerty, et al., 1992; Oketch, & Harrington, 2000, Rutter, 1987; Werner, 1992; Wolin 1991).

The examination of resilience encourages a strengths-based foundation that creates quality assessment seeking to identify characteristics of competence in personal behavioral functioning. "Child-related risk and protective factors associated with maltreatment can be thought of as biological and psychosocial attributes or characteristics" (Fraser, 2004, p. 100). Resiliency appears to encourage and support an individual's ability to meet life's challenges effectively with reduced risk advantages. Self-esteem, self-efficacy, hardiness, and self-control are characteristics often used to describe a resilient person (Garmezy, 1991; Greene, 2002; Haggerty, et al., 1992; Norman, 2000; Rosenberg, 1964, Rutter, 1987; Werner, 1992; Wolin 1991).

Efforts can be directed at strengthening naturally occurring sources of protection and designing protective structures that enhance an adolescent's ability to be resilient. Authors Nettles and Pleck (1995) concentrate their study on the incidence of risk outcomes for non-metropolitan black youth in the following seven areas: health, school completion, employability, police involvement and risky sexual behavior, alcohol and drug use, and psychological symptoms and suicide (p. 148). Corresponding protective factors exist for resiliency-building. School completion is paramount to an individuals self esteem, self-respect and future opportunities. The quality of the school experience for African American youth enhances progress. In tandem with education, employability is greatly influenced by the level of achievement in academics.

Rural, African American, male youth who are encouraged to develop their resiliency attributes while initiating citizenship practices may well heighten their self-confidence, maintain positive self-esteem, and bolster their inner resolve to be fully engaged in society. Consequently the society is made better by their very presence. As Joseph (1995) points out, "all black families must have access to programs capable of providing direction, emotional support, and concern in solving the problems" (p. 170). This is a community initiative towards the kind of 'decent state' Ricci (2004) describes a characteristic of true citizenship practice.

Background

In a nation replete with opportunity, both educational and economic, entrenched poverty and discrimination remains prominent in the United States (Besharov, 1999; Ginsberg, 1998; Hare, 2002; Joseph, 1995; Miller, 1999; Slack & Jensen, 2002). A continuum of policies, programs and strategies meant to alleviate poverty have central

themes of providing education and vocational opportunities, and yet large numbers of young people remain disenfranchised with no chance to succeed. "Seen as essential to anti-poverty inventiveness, these key elements of education and employment do not seem to be enough to eradicate poverty for minority children" (Ginsberg, 1999, p. 23).

Research has frequently examined the experiential issues of African American male youth noting remarkable underemployment rates and disparagingly low levels of educational achievement (Hare, 2002; Ginsberg, 2000; McCubbin, et al, 1999; Miller, 1999; Joseph, 1995). Furthermore, there are factors such as poverty, lack of available employment experiences, and diminished social support networks, that can significantly contribute to the difficulties African American male youth face in their development toward adult life. These barriers to equal opportunities in education and employment create a cycle of diminished returns for any rural community.

African American males experience serious institutional barriers toward achieving a stable and strong economic status. Gordon (2002), strongly emphasizes that "despite enormous gains in educational attainment and marked improvements in employment opportunities, black males continue to be over represented among the poor in the United States" (p. 126). He further asserts that it is alarming that from their findings, black males account for a larger percentage of the poor than they do of the population as a whole with many black males reporting no income at all (p. 127). This emphasis marks a crucial factor relating to black males who report no income at all, which appears to contribute to the lack of a living wage for African American males. This lack of a living wage for black males has its roots in the lack of educational and work opportunities. Large unemployment and underemployment of African American males is documented through

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U.S. data sources where declining rates of labor force participation of black males is starkly evident (U.S.Census, 2000). African American male youth would benefit from meaningful support and mentoring to help them prevent or, at the least avoid, societal attitudes that contribute to underemployment due to societal barriers influenced by racism. Table 1. shows all U.S. households' income levels and percentages and U.S. African American households' income levels and percentages.

Table 1 DP-3. Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000

DP-3. **Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000** (abbreviated)
Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 4 (SF 4) - Sample Data
Geographic Area: United States
Groupings: All & African American alone

EMPLOYMENT STATUS: ALL		
Population 16 years and over	217,168,077	100.0
EMPLOYMENT STATUS: African American		
Population 16 years and over	24,744,502	100.0
INCOME IN 1999: ALL		
Households	105,539,122	100.0
Less than $10,000	10,067,027	9.5
$10,000 to $14,999	6,657,228	6.3
$15,000 to $24,999	13,536,965	12.8
$25,000 to $34,999	13,519,242	12.8
$35,000 to $49,999	17,446,272	16.5
Median household income (dollars) of ALL Households	41,994	

INCOME IN 1999: African American		
Households	12,023,966	100.0
Less than $10,000	2,293,890	19.1
$10,000 to $14,999	1,038,360	8.6
$15,000 to $24,999	1,894,463	15.8
$25,000 to $34,999	1,661,633	13.8
$35,000 to $49,999	1,843,003	15.3
Median household income (dollars) of all African American households	29,423	

POVERTY STATUS IN 1999 (below poverty level)		
Families: ALL	**6,620,945**	**(X)**
Percent below poverty level	(X)	**9.2**
With related children under 18 years	5,155,866	(X)
Percent below poverty level	(X)	13.6
With related children under 5 years	2,562,263	(X)
Percent below poverty level	(X)	17.0
POVERTY STATUS IN 1999 (below poverty level)		
Families: African American	**1,777,105**	**(X)**
Percent below poverty level	(X)	**21.6**
With related children under 18 years	1,493,783	(X)
Percent below poverty level	(X)	27.2
With related children under 5 years	723,664	(X)
Percent below poverty level	(X)	33.1

Individuals: ALL	**33,899,812**	**12.4%**
Related children under 18 years	11,386,031	(X)
Percent below poverty level	(X)	16.1
Related children 5 to 17 years	7,974,006	(X)
Percent below poverty level	(X)	15.4
Individuals: African American	**8,146,146**	**24.9%**
Related children under 18 years	3,406,531	(X)
Percent below poverty level	(X)	32.7
Related children 5 to 17 years	2,424,163	(X)
Percent below poverty level	(X)	31.3

(X) Not applicable.
Detailed Occupation Code List (PDF 42KB)
Detailed Industry Code List (PDF 44KB)
User note on employment status data (PDF 63KB)
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 4, Matrices PCT55, PCT57, PCT58, PCT79, PCT81, PCT85,

In comparing ALL households' income to African American households' income, there are some stark differences. In the less than $10,000 category ALL U.S. households comprise 9.5 percent, yet in the same category for African American households the total number of households earning less than $10,000 jumps to 19.1 percent. In the next several income brackets from $10,000 to $24,999, ALL households is 19.1 percent yet in African American households with incomes $10,000. to $24,999, the ratio is at a higher rate of 24.4 percent. The median household income (dollars) of ALL households is

$41,994. as compared to the median household income (dollars) of all African American households of $29,423. The African American households make over 12,000 dollars less income than that of ALL U.S. households, which portrays a glaring economic disparity between the tow groups.

The poverty income status comparison between ALL U.S. households and African American households demonstrates a disparaging picture. ALL U.S. households have a 9.2 percentage poverty level whereas African Americans have a 21.6 percent poverty level. In the category of children under 18 in poverty for ALL U.S. households the proportional rate is 13.6 percent, compared to the category of African American children under 18 in poverty where the rate is 27.2 percent. Children under 5 in poverty for ALL U.S. households is at 17.0 percent and African American children under 5 in poverty households is a staggering 33.1 percent. In sum, this equates to 12.4 percent of ALL individuals in the U.S who are below poverty, with twice as many African American individuals below poverty level at a rate of 24.9 percent. Poverty is an issue for African Americans that at its core have been linked to discrimination due to race (Gordon, 2002; Joseph, 1995; Miller, 1999; Morales & Shaefor, 2001; West, 1993).

Gordon (2002) explains that "the poverty rate of black male children (under age 18) is of particular concern since growing-up in poverty carries with it implications for a number of aspects of one's childhood – education, neighborhood safety and conditions, health care, and exposure to violence, to name a few" (p. 121). Here, Gordon notes that when children are raised in poverty they grow up in environments of less than quality schools, neighborhoods and even access to public protection services and health care systems are diminished. In addition, there is recurring and pervasive themes of low rates

of employment opportunities and low rates of educational advancement within the population of African American males stemming from the long history of prejudice and discrimination. It continues to limit the rate in which available African Americans could otherwise provide strong economic stability for themselves and their families (Brasharov, 1999; Gordon, 2002; Joseph, 1995; West, 1993).

The Rural Experience for African Americans

Geographic influences for minority youth also increase limited access to educational and employment opportunities. According to Ginsberg (2000), "given the high rates of poverty among minority groups, it is not surprising to find that rural regions with larger minority populations also have higher poverty rates" (p. 118). Rural, African American youth continue to be an underutilized human resource for local economic growth in the U.S. largely because of the low economic development that does not go beyond agriculture and mercantilism. High rates of unemployment and underemployment of African Americans evidenced by data from the U.S Census Bureau (2000) show that African Americans are only about half as likely as white Americans to be employed.

Comparing the total population of the U.S. and the total population of African Americans, the number of all Americans totals approximately 72.2 million workers out of the total U.S. population of 281.4 million. Of that, 72.2 million workers, 6.6 million are in poverty, which equals .09 percent of the total population. Of the 34.3 million African Americans in the U.S., there are 8.2 million workers of which 1.8 million are below the poverty level. This equals .22 percent of African Americans in poverty and represents more than twice the poverty rate than that of the general population. This stark reality has a pervasive impact on rural minority communities throughout the U.S.

Access to skilled jobs is key to gaining viable employment, which can be limited by lack of transportation to work. Lack of transportation to work is important because without it, youth are handicapped early with the inability to compete for job advancement. This lack of opportunity causes black youth to pay a high lifetime cost. A rapidly expanding black underclass is a serious social problem as this underclass is made up of the poorest of the poor, thereby trapped at the bottom of the social structure. An essential way to improve the situation is for comprehensive job training for black youth, creating jobs in rural communities for early access to skills and work ethic practice. "Only by moving to a career-based approach that emphasizes well-structured, work-based learning are we likely to exert a major influence on the life chances of disconnected young people" (Besahrov, 1999, p. 188).

Economic Development Issues

Slack and Jensen (2002) document, "trends in the prevalence of underemployment over a 30-year time frame, spanning from 1968 to 1998 with particular attention to major racial and ethnic groups in both rural and metro geographic areas" (p. 229). They describe a framework of five mutually exclusive labor force states, which comprehensively define the lack of employment adequacy. The authors emphasize, "that economic well-being in the United States is evidenced by employment adequacy, conceptualized as the degree to which workers are employed full-time at jobs that pay a living wage" (p. 212). These trends stress that minorities are consistently plagued by higher rates of underemployment than whites, and that color remains a substantial barrier to holding gainful work. An additional finding in the study is the lack of economic

development in rural settings, causing a 'double jeopardy' for black citizens, which increases their odds of underemployment (p. 246).

Slack and Jensen (2002) suggest that job quality is indeed needed for this minority population, as there is chronic under-employment of minority workers, which is detrimental to the local economies in rural communities (p. 231). Economic development efforts leading to meaningful expansion of opportunities can serve to strengthen rural communities and its minority citizens. If rural communities are to survive and protect scarce funding sources that support the existing and potential infrastructure needs, engaging all local citizens in the workforce increases rather than depletes the community's well-being.

What is clear is that minority youth are faced with a disproportionately difficult access to educational and employment opportunities as a result of diminished community social support, which should be the encouraging force in directing their goal achievements. Besharov (1999) points out that, "having parents, and other caring adults, such as a teacher, coach, employer, or mentor can foster interpersonal and decision-making skills that help young people be resilient in the face of adversity or difficult challenges" (p. 134). The author continues by saying that "completing high school is perhaps the most important action that adolescents can take to improve their economic prospects" (p. 134).

Awareness of Citizenship Practices

Rural African American male youth can contribute to the community by practicing citizenship through social participation, self-regulation, and guidance from adults (Brody, Flor, Gibson, 1999; Ginsberg 2000; McCubbin, et al., 1999). African American male

youth have felt the impact of racial discrimination and class inequity. Lack of educational opportunities diminishes motivation and self-esteem efforts in the formative years. Norman (2000) suggests that, "self-efficacy includes two essential aspects: a sense of self-worth or self-esteem, and, a sense of mastery over one's self and the external environment (sometimes called an 'internal locus of control)" (p. 5). African American male youth can contribute to the economic growth, neighborhood stability, and community efficacy when they are fully franchised by successful educational pursuits and early continuous employment experiences.

Roche (1992) offers a perspective on the role of the individual and citizenship that begins with the larger civics concept noting, "the politics of citizenship has for generations formulated its goals, fought its battles and found its voice in the discourse of rights" (p. 246). The author furthers the position, however, by saying, "citizenship also needs to be able to speak, to act and to understand itself in the language of citizen's personal responsibility and social obligation, in the discourse of duties as well as rights" (p. 246). This is a reasonable and clear dynamic of citizenship, whereby the greater community is responsible to promote effective citizenship for every person and the person has a duty to practice citizenship to access their rights.

The National Council of Social Studies (NCSS) produced its position statement on 'Creating Effective Citizens' with the focus on youth and the educational development of citizenship. Table 2., below lists the NCSS' ten-point perspective on effective citizenship. The Council defines citizenship as "a citizen's competent knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to assume the 'office of citizen' in a democratic republic" (p. 319).

Table 2 Ten Point Perspective on Effective Citizenship

> ➢ Embraces core democratic values and strives to live by them.
>
> ➢ Accepts responsibility for the well-being of oneself, one's family, and the community.
>
> ➢ Has knowledge of the people, history and traditions that have shaped our local communities, our nation, and the world.
>
> ➢ Has knowledge of our nation's founding documents, civic institutions, and political processes.
>
> ➢ Is aware of issues and events that have an impact on people at local, state, national and global levels.
>
> ➢ Seeks information from varied sources and perspectives to develop informed opinions and creative solutions.
>
> ➢ Asks meaningful questions and is able to analyze and evaluate information and ideas.
>
> ➢ Uses effective decision-making and problem-solving skills in public and private life.
>
> ➢ Has the ability to collaborate effectively as a member of a group.
>
> ➢ Actively participates in civic and community life.

Journal of the National Council of Social Studies, 2001

These principles of citizenship practices have important meaning for African American male youth, who could exhibit these principles, but for the constrained opportunities to do so. Schudson (1998) states that, "Voting, social trust, and social membership are the three most familiar measures of civic health" (p. 304).

For centuries, African Americans have endured injustice and adapted skillfully to retain their self-respect while advocating for the rights to equal education, employment and property ownership. "African American male contributions to the sciences and medicine made their contributions during the period of segregation and the modern era that continue to have an impact on the economy of the United States, and the convenience, health, safety, security and welfare of it s citizens" (Gordon, 2002, p. 61). Equal citizenship and respect have been elusive and exceedingly frustrating for African Americans throughout American history. Resilience has been a basis of strength and

protection for achievement and perseverance in a harsh, prejudiced environment in the United States.

From Risk to Resiliency

Currently, the resiliency framework has been conceptualized by a three-sided elemental set of factors: risk, vulnerability, and protective. Risk factors, adopted from the medical field's physical health assessment approach, are utilized by researchers to structure behavioral observations of children in terms of deficits and needs. Vulnerability attempts to explain how some people who are at risk are more likely than others to develop a negative outcome. "The far reaching range of risk research, which embraces a broad band of risk factors to which children and adults can be exposed-- some may eventuate in disease or disorder, which identifies vulnerability, -- but others, in many instances, may be overcome and lead to positive adaptive behavior, which identifies resilience" (Garmezy, 1991, in Haggerty, p. 341). Protective factors are characteristics one adopts to buffer the negative impact of risk factors. "Protective factors, both internal and external, help people resist or ameliorate risk" (Greene, 2002, p. 34).

Risk is any impact that raises the probability of harm that contributes to more significant problem conditions (Fraser, 2004; Greene, 2003; Garmezy, 1985). Protective factors are those internal and external processes that can promote positive outcomes to help overcome adversity. (Fraser, 2004; Norman, 2000; Rutter, 1999; Werner, 1992). Risk factors have limiting effects on human development. These risks include poor healthcare, poor parenting and reduced opportunities of education and employment. Protective factors include quality childcare, parent education, and multiple opportunities for education and career options.

Since the early 1970s, research in childhood development has linked protective factors to the phenomenon of life long resilience. Garmezy (1991) points out that " as we seek to understand the roots of resilience and the role of protective factors in reducing risk, defining such interconnections becomes an important research agenda" (p. 120). Self-esteem, hardiness, and self-control are characteristics of a resilient person (Garmezy, 1991; Greene, 2002; Haggerty, et al., 1992; McCubbin, et al., 1998; Norman, 2000; Rutter, 1987; Werner, 1992; Wolin 1991). It is resiliency that can encourage and support an individual's ability to meet life's challenges. Greene (2002) defines resiliency as "the unpredicted or markedly successful adaptation of the individual to negative events, trauma, stress and other forms of risk" (p. 339).

In other research during these early decades, researchers Garmezy (1987) and Rutter (1999) were exploring psychological treatment modalities for children within resiliency-based theory and protective factors. These experts noticed significant successes in using techniques and interventions that recognized the child's inner ability to utilize behaviors that protected them from re-experiencing the initial difficult traumas. It also pointed to an individual's ability to gain continued effective coping mechanisms that are useful over time for healthier functioning with family and significant others. "There is a need to pay attention to the suggestions that the psychopathological effects of risk experiences are strongly moderated by how individuals cognitively and affectively process their experiences and how the resulting working model of relationships is integrated into their self concept" (Rutter, 1999, p. 144).

Resiliency, as a strengths-based perspective, gained momentum through the 1970s and 1980s. Developed from risk and protective models, researchers examined children

who were able to successfully cope with risk factors encompassing their biological, psychological and socio-economical traumas. "Resilience and protective factors are the positive counterparts to both vulnerability, which denotes an individual's susceptibility to disorder and risk factors, which are biological or psychosocial hazards that increase the likelihood of a negative developmental outcome in a group of people" (Werner, 1992, p. 3). Studies have sought to identify what protective factors impact the recovery of difficult childhood development experiences that can lead to successful adulthood transitions. These transitions can produce positive well-being and a balanced set of coping skills.

Resiliency can be instrumental when facing stressful or traumatic challenges. Some resilient factors that help to protect an individual from severe psychological impairment due to traumatic experiences are perceptions of safety, positive regard, trust-building, self-efficacy, hardiness, and reliance on caring relationships (Garmezy, 1991; Greene, 2002; Norman, 2000; Rutter, 1987; Werner, 1992; Wolin 1991). Resiliency is a valuable human asset and may be key for better, more enduring life goals attainment, in which African American male youth can rely.

Resiliency Theory

Resiliency theory has been central in the research of a number of target populations including studies on the elderly, women experiencing trauma, and family systems research. Vital intervention practice strategies for individuals, families and communities have emerged from studies on resiliency and its impacts (Fraser, 2004; Greene, 2002; McCubbin, et al, 1998; Norman, 2000; Wagnild, 2003). It may be that protective factors can promote the skills and abilities necessary for encouraging

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resiliency, with a rural African American male youth perspective that can enhance the practice of effective citizenship.

There is a complexity to being resilient which requires coaching and guidance to fully be able to construct appropriate developmental stages. Howard and Dryden (1999), view resiliency integration functioning by saying " if resilience research is to make a difference and build on the best work that has preceded it, future studies should explore multiple conceptions of resilience and take account of the complexity of social systems within which children are embedded" (p. 324). They suggest community outcomes that make resiliency a community expectation with practical application. Emphasis placed on youth to consistently and routinely engage in employment can produce greater focus on their education, building a lifetime work ethic, and increased opportunities in adulthood to support themselves and others they care about. "Family and community supporters are key in helping to shape the life course trajectory of many at-risk adolescents" (Besharov, 1999, p. 134).

This study is an examination of the relationship between resiliency factors rural in African American male youth and their awareness of citizenship practices. The study focuses on the characteristics specific to rural geographic environments in which African America male youth live. Clearly, facilitating productive citizenship practices awareness processes could bolster their current levels of initiative, self-control, and self-efficacy. This warrants closer investigation. Exploring effective citizenship practices through the resiliency lens has the potential of diminishing the effects of poverty and racism for African American male youth.

Resiliency and Awareness of Citizenship Practices

Associating effective practices of citizenship with the dimensions of resiliency may lead to useful interventions for rural African American male youth. Citizenship is indeed an important aspect in American life. It is an opportunity that is reciprocal between the individual citizen and the community. "Although there is a rich body of research on resiliency, much of the literature fails to include minority youth or does not take into consideration their distinctive racial and environmental circumstances" (Miller, 1999, p. 493). Miller suggests that, "since educational achievement has long been considered as signifying resiliency among adolescents, that attention to these protective factors for African American adolescents requires a closer look at racial socialization for their greater academic achievement" (p. 494). Essentially, this indicates that proactive strategies for maintaining a sense of self must be especially sensitive to the protective aspects of being black in a racially prejudiced society in the U.S.

Preserving a sense of worthiness and self-esteem is particularly difficult and realistically overwhelming for young African males. Hare (2002) points out that "not only do black Americans remain twice as likely to be unemployed as whites, but when they are employed they can expect to hold lower-status positions and to be paid less even if holding the same occupational positions as their white counterparts" (p.100). It is important to recognize the effects of socio-economic factors, where limited access to resources, both economic and social, hinders the processes of positive racial socialization and affirmative racial identity development. Thus, citizenship practices are impeded.

Education, employment future, and community environments are often identified as basic prerequisites for important child development outcomes. There is a critical

impact on a child's development to maturation stemming from these prerequisites. Fraser (2004) opens with his perspective stating, "Poverty directly reduces the quality of food, shelter, health care, education and transportation" (p. 1). When adding racial discrimination to poverty, the impact of poverty and degradation becomes an even greater disadvantage in child development. Fraser (2004) states this combination of poverty and race, "leads to differential opportunities for health care, employment, education, and accentuates the psychosocial effects of facing discriminatory behavior from individuals and institutes" (p. 37).

In a study of African American families, characteristics found to be significant for a resilient African American family were the sense of belongingness, hard work, and respect for the system (McCubbin, McCubbin, Thompson, Futrell, 1999). "This resiliency of African Americans, in demonstrating personal responsibility for the obligations of being a citizen, has the potential to continue to bridge gaps that exist between the racial denigration and youth aspiration" (McCubbin, et al., p. 237). West (1993) supports this perspective when he states "about one out of every five children in this country lives in poverty, including one out of every two black children"(p. 12). He submits that, "children are in need of large-scale public intervention to ensure access to basic social goods none the less, of which are jobs and job opportunities" (p. 12). Viable, meaningful work experiences are proven remedies in eradicating poverty in the African American population.

It appears that this dichotomy of a societal failing to serve its citizens and citizens who are unable to reach expected success in spite of institutional barriers, has caused astounding suffering and angst among African American male youth. Hare (2002) warns

that "even though there have been major improvements in the quality of life for black families, there should not be a sense of complacency when there still remains deprivation and disadvantaged opportunities relative to the white family in this society. Now as in this country's earlier history, the occupational and educational attainment, health status, housing conditions, incomes and life opportunities of white America are far superior to those of their black brethren" (p.146).

Hare notes that there are vast differences in resources, opportunities and quality of life for black families, largely due to discrimination and erroneous assumptions as to the potential and the competency of African Americans as they reach their adulthood. Hare asserts that "since there is an equal innate childhood potential, the keys to eliminating the over 45 percent unemployment rate of black youth must begin with early perceptions of access and plausible attainment to employment opportunities. The cornerstone of the health of an adult," Hare says, "is the capacity to take care of one's own and ones' own self" (p. 100). Community environments can rely on a new generation of aspiring young people free from past inequities and better able to effect quality citizenship practices much of which can be achieved through quality work experiences.

Young (1964) proclaimed, "America must recognize and assess at a higher value than ever before the human potential of its Negro citizens, and then society must move positively to develop that potential" (p. 235). The gap in the efforts to bring minority children out of poverty and into the more appropriate opportunities in education and employment and citizenship remains wide. Awareness of citizenship practices can initiate the level of exposure for enacting citizenship practices. Resiliency, the internal self-

development, provides the individual with the ability to undertake challenges and achieve goals.

This study examined the awareness of citizenship practices along with the attributes of resiliency in efforts to further identify how the community can respond to rural African American male youth. It is imperative that communities continue to seek effective and innovative ways to intervene and resolve old discriminatory issues.

Problem Statement

This examination looked at research questions important in the context of present day issues in the lives of rural African American male youth. The questions asked are:

1)   What is the relationship between resiliency factors and awareness of citizenship practices among rural African American male youth?

2)   Will information on effective citizenship practices facilitate citizenship practices awareness in rural African American male youth?

3)   Does the level of resiliency in rural African American male youth, between the ages of 12 an 19 inclusively, have an impact on their citizenship practices awareness?

4)   In what kinds of community volunteer experiences do rural African American male youth participate? and,

5)   What are their current educational and employment experiences at each age level?

The research has two hypotheses as stated below:

H_1 = There is a positive relationship between resiliency in rural African American male youth and their awareness of citizenship practices.

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H_2 = Direct instruction of citizenship practices increases awareness of their own citizenship practices in rural African American male youth.

Methodology

This self-administered survey set is designed to measure resiliency skills and awareness of citizenship practices among rural African American male youth. This is a voluntary approach using a convenience sample research design from a rural Florida county population. In a series of three short survey instruments, the youth are asked to respond to a resiliency survey one time, and an awareness of citizenship practices survey twice. There are a total of 58 questions in the three survey instruments. The participants will be asked to respond to the citizenship survey in a pre-post test format. The treatment of this pre-post test format is an informative 8-minute video on four citizenship practices.

The ages of the volunteer participants are 12 to 19 inclusive, with a desired sample (n =200) population from a rural county in central Florida. The design also includes ratio proportions from each of the three geographic areas of the county with approximately 80 participants for the north area, 80 participants from the south central area and 40 from the east area. The data collected underwent an analysis compilation using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) supervised by the dissertation committee. Assuming normal distribution of the sample population with interval/ratio data, initial analysis included descriptive statistics, measures of central tendency with plot graphing, normalcy of univariate and multivariate data, analysis of variance tests and means testing with paired t tests.

The research involved testing the independent variable of resiliency and its impact on the dependent awareness of citizenship practices variable. The objective of this first

hypothesis will be to determine how much of the dependent variable, awareness of

citizenship practices, can be explained by the independent variable of resiliency.

The second hypothesis states that direct instruction of citizenship practices

increases awareness of citizenship practices among rural African American male youth.

An 8-minute CD video on citizenship practices will be viewed by the participants after

taking the citizenship survey. Upon finishing the video survey, participants will be asked

to take the citizenship survey once more. This examination sought to determine if a

youth's awareness of citizenship practices can be increased by instruction.

The resiliency scale, used for this study, is a reliable and valid scale developed by

Wagnild and Young (1987). This scale possesses a priori content validity where

interviews of persons who where characterized as resilient helped to construct items that

reflected the generally accepted definitions of resilience. "Internal consistency and test-

retest reliabilities have been supported, as well as construct and concurrent validity"

(Wagnild & Young, 1993, p.168). The researchers took on a massive random sample

project of 1, 500 subjects. Support for concurrent validity was shown by high correlations

of the Resilient Scale (RS^{TM}) with well-established valid measures of constructs linked

with resilience and outcomes of resilience. These constructs included: self-reliance,

independence, determination, resourcefulness, and perseverance.

The citizenship survey encompassed four (4) elements found in the National

Council Social Studies' 2001 position statement on effective citizenship. These four (4)

areas are: 1) accepts responsibility for the well-being of oneself, one's family, and the

community; 2) seeks information from varied sources and perspectives to develop

informed opinions and creative solutions; 3) uses effective decision-making and problem-

solving skills in public and private life; and, 4) actively participates in civic and community life. These four dimensions can provide information on a youth's capacity and level of awareness of citizenship practices. In addition, this survey provided important information on about how rural, African American, male youth participate in citizenship oriented activities.

Using both of these survey instruments (see attached), the participants were asked to take each of the surveys, assisted by interactive videos. These videos involve a 'talking head' that reads and repeats each question, while the participant follows along and responds to a Likert-scale range of response choices to each question. This method will provide a higher rate of completion of the materials. The citizenship scale instrument has a pre/post test feature. The participants will watch a short, 8-minute video on citizenship practices with an interactive 'flash card' modality on the screen that will hold their attention and help to absorb the information. After the video, the participants were asked to take the same citizenship survey again to measure any differences in citizenship awareness.

Participant Selection

Through association with local, rural African American churches and youth programs, notices were sent out describing the project, and inviting African American, males between the ages of 12 and 19, to participate in the research project as volunteers. On a series of Saturdays, sites within the county were identified, where the participants arrived to volunteer as subjects in the project. They spent one and a half hours involved in two interactive survey videos and one informational video on citizenship. Demographic information was collected during registration after obtaining consent from

the guardian and assent for those participants under 18 years of age. They then proceeded to each of the interactive survey videos. Once completing the project objectives, participants were offered a thank you incentive and a small booklet on how to get started on citizenship. A five ($5) dollar bill and a 'hip hop' cap in choices of black and white are compensation for their participation.

To ensure a sample that reflects the population, five sites were identified in three distinct population areas of the county. Census population data indicate that these five geographic areas have the heaviest populations of African Americans in the county. Three areas in the northern county and two areas in the south-central area have similar proportions of African American residents. The north geographic area has about half of the population as does the south-central area. Conducting the project in these five areas helped to obtain a representative sample of the population in this county.

The guardian and the participant received a full disclosure letter at the time of volunteering for the project. Each day's data and all information was handled with the highest standards of confidentiality and discretion by the principle investigator and placed under lock and key with all other confidential materials from the study. Access to this material is limited to the principle investigator only.

Summary

It is important to examine resiliency in rural, African American, male youth and how that resiliency interacts with their awareness of citizenship practices. There is little known about how rural African American, male youth perceive effective citizenship based on their level of resiliency. Information gained in this study may help to support

greater achievements in educational and employment pursuits for rural African American male youth.

What is known are the outcomes that persist as evidenced by the high percentage of African American males in the United States who are not finding the opportunities and access so necessary for viable citizenship participation (Gordon, 2002; Joseph, 1995; Miller, 1999; Slack & Jensen, 2002; West, 1993). Major inequities continue to exist for African American males as evidenced by high rates of poverty within this population and the levels of employment that is lower than other racial ethnic groups (Census, 2000). African American youth, living in rural areas, are especially at high risk for poverty and lack of meaningful employment opportunities.

This situation has serious implications for youth and their communities. The youth are seriously deprived of quality ways to enhance their potential and develop their talents. "The challenge to rural sociologists is to identify the barriers that prevent rural minorities from claiming their rights of citizenship in this prosperous land". (Ginsberg, 2000, p.121). The author continues by saying that, "as citizens African Americans have a right to adequate education, sufficient income, decent housing, adequate health care, and full employment" (p. 125). Besharov (1999) echoes this position, adding that when "the essential ingredients are attainable, young African American men can help themselves develop into healthy, productive adults" (p. 148). This acknowledgement and affirmation as to their position in community can support educational and vocational/career efforts that reach goals of independence and viable citizenship. As described by McCubbin, et al, (1998), "resiliency of African Americans demonstrates the practice of personal

responsibility for the obligations of being a citizen and offering the promise to continue to bridge gaps that exist between the racial denigration and youth aspirations" (p. 9).

African American youth may be better served toward successful employment and education through programs that are designed to increase awareness of citizenship practices. Citizenship is a vitally important experience for every American. As the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) pointed out in their position statement, the parameters of being an effective citizen begins with knowledge, skills and attitudes (2001). Citizenship can be the interplay among factors such as mutual identification, common life, and the desire to improve well-being. Teir and Goldsmith (1995) note that, "citizenship is not slavery but rather a common agreement to basic communication and interchange that can be understood and regarded with respect" (p. 51). The core element of citizenship appears to be the relationship with others that supports community safety and well-being.

Youth are potentially in jeopardy of greater social relationship loss as rural communities struggle to remain a viable method of American life. The relationship between community and minority youth is a national concern (Filkins, et al., 2000; Greene 2002; Schaps & Lewis 1998; West 1993; Young, 1964). Persistent underutilization of minority individuals in terms of citizenship creates an atmosphere that deepens the decay of life for minority American youth. "The removal of social and institutional barriers that society has created for African American men and boys continues to be a major challenge to American democracy" (Gordon, 2002, p. 204).

Rural African American male youth have been consistently underemployed and underutilized making rural community infrastructure weakened and strained (Gordon,

(2002); Joseph, (1995); McAdoo, (2002); Slack & Jensen (2002). Job and career development through education and apprenticeship, will contribute to the well being of a rural economic structure. Explicit awareness of citizenship practices and resiliency may be key elements toward increased participation of African American male youth in community and in family life.

West (1993) aptly demonstrates the association between citizens and community by saying "one essential step is some form of large scale public intervention to ensure access to basic social goods – housing, food, health care, education, child care and jobs, we must invigorate the common good with a mixture of government, business and labor that does not follow any existing blueprint. Either we learn a new language of empathy and compassion or the fire this time will consume us all" (p. 13). There is reason to believe that citizenship practice, with training and community affirmation, and an infusion of resiliency skill techniques modeling, could open the doors wider for African American male youth who now suffer in poverty and discrimination with diminished access to education and employment.

The ability to 'bounce back', has been a remarkable human characteristic exhibited by protective methods of coping when faced with stressful or adversarial life challenges. As both an innate influence and a learned technique, the ability to effectively buffer oneself from traumatic and stressful events remains the substance of this experience that has culminated into the over arching concept of resiliency (Garmezy & Rutter, 1983; Greene, 2002; Fraser 2004; Norman, 2000; Werner, 1992). Resiliency helps to examine how a person manages to overcome, achieve, and succeed, in spite of life's challenges and circumstances that can invoke shock, despair, and feelings of frustration and hopelessness.

To assess the level of necessary clinical intervention in physical health matters, medical practice uses criteria foe indications of 'at-risk' for trauma. Mental health arenas have adapted this assessment strategy for at-risk indicators such as: drug or alcohol use, relationship issues, delinquency and school drop out problems, unemployment experiences, and, a range of mental health impediments. One side of the at-risk perspective, often used for evaluating and assessing needs for change opportunities, has a corresponding protective factor side used to assess an individual's resilient response for coping and adaptation to stress and adversity. When analyzed together, at-risk factors and protective factors, these elements incorporate the basis of the resiliency model.

Effective practice of citizenship often begins with an awareness of community and the sense of wanting to create well-being for one's self and others. "If we subtract

from what Americans say about mega-issues such as social security, Medicare, and federal tax rates, a good deal of (citizen) political talk refers to gender and distinction, to race and multiculturalism, to identity and respect" (Ricci, 2004, p. 233). Ricci (2004) furthers his observations by making the point, "concerning such matters, critics argue that those who are socially and economically deprived -- say women, Latinos, African Americans, Native Americans, gays, lesbians, the poor and the handicapped -- have difficulty translating the civic rights they possess into the sort of status they deserve" (p. 233).

Opportunities for resources that support and enhance citizenship practices are considerably important to the individual citizen and the community-at-large. Resources include career employment endeavors, adequate housing, meaningful education, access to health care and leisure recreation preferences. All this develops the individual's skills in well-being, practical decision-making and problem-solving, and the skill and ability in community involvement. "The substitution of the word 'community' for 'service' seems to better describe our relationships to communities that are empowering themselves" (Battistoni & Hudson, 1997, p. 21). There is a theme of obligation in practicing citizenship that contributes to secure these opportunities and these obligations. It is a give and take arrangement. Most citizens understand the birthright of nationalism and the right to vote, which Ricci (2004) calls Citizenship I and Citizenship II respectively. However it is Citizenship III, which he says "requires virtuous behavior" (p. 8). He states, "It obligates citizens to use their political resources and skills to participate well, that is, to maintain not just effective laws but also a decent state" (p. 8). The importance of

practicing citizenship cannot be stressed enough as it is the core of how to best realize dreams and strengthen community.

The challenges facing African American male youth are both cultural and economic. Often these issues are not clearly identified for youth to recognize as barriers that limit their access to rights of citizenship. Minority youth living in rural United States have even greater hurdles of access. Slack and Jensen (2002) point out that "rural minorities have traditionally been among the most economically disadvantaged members of American society" (p. 229). From their research the authors suggest that "therefore, trends in their economic status serve as a benchmark for progress toward racial and ethnic equality in the United States" (p. 229). Young African American male youth continue to experience the lack of support and engagement in practicing citizenship. Hare (2002) warns that, "even though there have been major improvements in the quality of life for black families, there should not be a sense of complacency when there still remains deprivation and disadvantaged positions relative to the white family in this society (p 146). The author says, "Now as in this country's earlier history, the occupational and educational attainment, health status, housing conditions, incomes and life opportunities of white America are far superior to those of their black brethren" (p.146).

Kids Count 2003 report by the University of South Florida corroborates this position illustrating through numbers of African American youth registered in each grade in each county and in the Florida school systems. This data is delineated by state and by individual counties within each state. Rural counties are showing disturbing outcomes for minority youth that include low rates of achieving a high school diploma, high unemployment rates, and poor healthcare access (Kids Count, p. vvi). Slack and Jensen

(2002) in their study of non metropolitan areas found minorities to be especially susceptible to underemployment. The authors uncovered the persistent inequality of underemployment stating, "there remains a desperate need for initiatives that target areas of persistent rural poverty, many of which are also home to concentrated racial/ethnic minority populations" (p. 231).

A closer examination of rural African American male youth, their resiliency and their awareness of citizenship practices is an important study area. This population faces unique challenges in living in a rural environment not found in urban communities. Abject poverty, scarce social services, and inadequate educational resources often exist in rural communities that make intervention strategies more difficult and less effective. Determining the level of awareness of citizenship practices in rural African American male youth could be essential in supporting them in their personal aspirations and their educational goals during their formative adolescent years.

African American Male Youth

"Despite the gains of the 1960's blacks today still lag behind whites in the areas of education, economics, and politics" (Joseph, 1995, p. 21). Joseph describes staggering findings from the U.S. Census data that not only highlight the educational disparities existing for African American male youth but the economic inequities, health issues, and detrimental social factors that plague this population. A realistic picture develops that substantiates the basic premise that without a completed public education, African American youth cannot compete in the work arena which then progresses to the inability to adequately support a healthy , viable , adult life.

"Economic disparity is the most glaring gulf separating African Americans and white Americans" (Joseph, 1995, p. 25). This is supported from the 2000 U.S. Census where the medium income for African Americans was $29,423., compared with the median income for all American households of $41,994. leaving a disparate difference of $12,571. Therefore, African Americans household earnings is only 70% of what all Americans household earnings (U.S. Census, 2000).

Rural communities require strong economic development to remain viable and self supporting. As an example, many African American citizens in rural communities own inherited property in which they live, yet are barely able to afford the taxes or the home repairs and improvements. They are unable to keep up with the needs of home ownership and to fully support their children's educational needs. This situation exacerbates the economic problems they face, both situationally and generationally. "People of color are increasingly faced with problems, including devolution of their institutions, individuals, values, and artifacts related to their cultures" (McAdoo, 2002, p. 21). Young African American males are in an even more precarious life circumstances when they live in rural environments on the U.S. The issues of raising children in rural America effect even core family economic needs which are more problematic than for families in urban communities. These problems include: lack of employment opportunities, fewer child care resources, and a lower income accrual. "If deterioration of rural employment continues through the decade, and if the trend toward more female headed families also continues, then from both sources, many rural communities will experience a rise in poverty rates" (Ginsberg, 1998, p. 133).

Researchers have looked at variables that appear to serve as links enabling

children to develop academic and psychosocial competence in spite of geographic

parameters (Brody, Flor, Gibson, 1999; McCubbin, Thompson, Thompson, Futrell, 1998;

Elder & Conger, 2000; Conger, McLoyd, Wallace, Sun, Simons, Brody, 2002). Common

to the many studies on race and employment is the influence of those families who set

goals that emphasize education, and promote respect for competence.

Hare's (2002) position is clear as he states, "while African American families

view education as a major avenue of social mobility, schooling has generally not operated

to equalize opportunity for African Americans" (p. 164). Perry (2000) amplifies the

inter-dynamics of color that can occur in school milieus where White teachers must

reflect on how cultural differences of class race and gender are associated with learning.

The author makes several statements to develop his case that White teachers, such as he,

must look at "who we are in relation to the schools and communities in which we work.

Initially this seems to be predetermined by skin color and the dominant white society's

preconceptions of the community's cultural norms. But this is an on-going conundrum

that we must consistently address in a positive acknowledgement of differences" (p. 177).

The author's position makes a powerful connection between respecting cultural

differences and the achievement of positive outcomes to protect and encourage greater

self-esteem and personal accountability in youth. For youth of color this becomes an

important aspect of human development. Greater recognition of diversity and competence

helps in every aspect of learning and social skill-building across lines of gender, race and

class.

Self-esteem is a highly researched construct across many disciplines, focusing on varied age populations, using a variety of methods and instruments (Shavlin, Bunting, Lewis, 1995; Bagozzi, 1993; Bollen, 1993; Ross, 1992). Rosenberg's (1964) early definition of self-esteem is "the positive and negative orientation toward oneself; an overall evaluation of one's worth or value (p. 22). He devised a Self-Esteem Scale (SES) that is widely used to measure self-esteem in children and adolescents. Much of Rosenberg's work examined how social structural positions like race or ethnic status relates to self-esteem. A recent study of the relationships among Black consciousness, Self-esteem and academic self-efficacy in African American men, utilized the Rosenberg Scale among male college participants (Oketch & Harrington, 2002). The results of the study found that Black consciousness appears to be an important construct to use in understanding self-esteem and academic self efficacy in African American males.

This and other studies like it were the subject of research methods by Ross (1992). The author reviewed a number of studies to explore the relationship importance of race and its impacts on self esteem and delinquency. His conclusion emphasized that because "self-esteem has different meanings for persons of different races, it should be conceptualized accordingly" (p. 621). The author argues that because of this differing race perspective on self-esteem that "we cannot specify any causal relationship between self-esteem and delinquency" (p. 621). He posits that to improve research design, measuring self-esteem in African Americans would be more clearly understood from a social control perspective. Current methods of measuring self-esteem among various populations of African Americans appear to have relatively healthy self-esteem levels. Indicators often used to evaluate African American youth self-esteem are: low rates of

suicide among these youth, strong racial identity, and dependable extended family systems (McCreary, Slavin, Berry, 1996; McCubbin & Osbourn, 1995).

Nettles and Pleck (1989), concentrate their study on the incidence of risk outcomes for black male youth in the following seven areas: health, school completion, employability, police involvement, risky sexual behavior, alcohol and drug use, and psychological symptoms including suicide (p. 148). The authors suggest that these areas are helpful in the assessment of protective factors and outcome enhancements for youth in turns of family, community, and education. Hare (2002) notes that there are vast differences in resources, opportunities, and quality of life between white and black families, largely due to discrimination and erroneous assumptions as to the potential and the competency of African Americans as they reach their adulthood. Hare asserts that since there is an equal innate childhood potential, the keys to eliminating the over 45 percent unemployment rate of black youth must begin with early perceptions of access and plausible attainment to employment opportunities. "The cornerstone of the health of an adult," Hare (2002) states, "is the capacity to take care of one's own and one's own self" (p. 100).

Gordon (2002) highlights the issues of educational achievement in African American males as he states that it is important to be mindful that boys as a group, not just African American boys, exhibit lower performance on a variety of dimensions compared to girls"(p. 3). The author presents a multi-variable perspective as to the discrepancies that further an African American male's inability to maintain educational achievement. He sums it up as the, "problems of socio-emotional competence not only diminish academic achievement but they also complicate efforts to remediate problems in

skill acquisition by males" (p. 7). This socio-emotional competency can be seen as stemming from resiliency protective factors and risk factors. Gordon (2002) sees socio-emotional competence as essential to school success so that effective instruction and effective learning can take place. Rural African American male youth have witnessed these painful dilemmas attempting to make sense of their place in the greater community.

"Blacks in the South have fewer life chances because they have lower incomes" (Ginsberg, 1998, p. 188). Lower incomes stem from influences of race, low quality education, and marginal employment opportunities in rural communities. Ginsberg (1998) submits that "Institutional discrimination has systematically maintained blacks in relative poverty with fewer life chances" (p. 189). Job discrimination only reinforces a negative stereotype acting as a disincentive for blacks to aspire to their career aspirations and in black youth their inner creative values. It is critical for African American male youth to draw upon their resilient skills to resist the overwhelming odds they face in education, employment, and the rural environment in which they live.

Resiliency

As researchers endeavor to identify the internal and external working of how life traumas and challenges are buffered or resisted, there has emerged an overall construct that is explained by the concept of resiliency (Garmezy 1991; Rutter, 1983; Greene 2002; Fraser, 2004). Risk factors encompass life experiences that increase the possibility of negative outcomes. Risk factors can be specific endeavors that bring about stress or trauma. It also can entail a cumulative grouping of events that can contribute to the risk of negative outcomes. Assessment by risk factors alone is not an adequate method to assess or evaluate children's needs. "Rather, people actively engage with their

environment and the ways in which they do so play a major role in determining whether their experiences are risky or protective in their effects" (Rutter, 1992, p. 422).

In the 1970s, practitioners and researchers looked at psychiatric disorders in children (Garmezy 1983; Rutter, 1987). They could see that risk-assessing only partially explained how some children could overcome their traumas while other faltered. Through their studies they identified protective factors which were present and contributed to their patients' ability to 'bounce back' from trauma. The authors separated these protective factors into two general groups: 1) personal factors, with a strong biological component like physical health and temperament in addition to social environmental experiences such as self-esteem and mastery beliefs. The second set of protective factors is environmental resources such as family income and community social support.

Werner (1992) in the 1980s also found remarkable experiences among a population in Kauai, Hawaii that could not be explained by risk alone. Multiple protective factors existed in this population of island adults appearing instrumental in promoting successful adult development. "these include competencies and sources of informal support, that already exist in the extended family, the neighborhood, and the community at-large, and that can be utilized to enlarge a child's repertoire of problem-solving skills and his self-esteem and self-efficacy" (Werner, 1992, p. 267). Protective factors are those internal and external practices that help resist, buffer, or prevent risk from overly affecting one's life. Risk and protective factors are interactive elements that provide a meaningful and viable tool for assessment and evaluation, it also has become a way in which to conceptualize resiliency.

Currently, resiliency is considered to be an integral human experience that only impacts people during critical life moments but sustains over time in one's daily life. Greene's (2002) definition posits that resiliency is "the unpredicted or markedly successful adaptation of the individual to negative events, trauma, stress and other forms of risk" (p. 339). From this definition it becomes clear that resiliency is a fluid skill that can be drawn upon at any point on the continuum of the human experience from stress at one end to traumas on the other. In a similar paradigm, studies on resiliency have furthered the research on individuals and families that expands the elemental levels of resiliency within the triad of risk, vulnerable, and protective factors. Included in the paradigm are self-esteem, self-control, initiative, attachment, self-efficacy and humor (Wolin & Wolin, 1999; Greene, 2002; Norman, 2000; Fraser, 2004).

"Only recently has resiliency research accumulated enough solid data to begin to offer program planners productive strategies for prevention and interventions" (Smokowski, 1998, p. 339). Resiliency holds promise with practitioners because it expects positive adjustment and competent resolve to perceived or real adversity. Providing services to disadvantaged children should have outcome measures showing where risk has been averted and protective factors have been mobilized toward positive adaptation creating distance from poor judgment and impulsive behavior. In a study specific to African American families and economic pressure, authors Elder and Conger (2002) found that "economic pressure was related to the emotional distress of caregivers and the caregiver relationship in African American families" (p. 190). The economic stress problems disrupted parenting practices and caused their children to have lower

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positive resilience. Economic problems can originate from common issues having to do with availability of jobs, home upkeep, and budgeting for monthly family obligations.

In an earlier study of rural African American families headed by a single parent, Brody, Flor, and Gibson (1999) suggest that "there is reason to believe there are links between and among a child's competence, the maternal parent's efficacy beliefs, developmental goal setting and parenting practices" (p. 119). The authors were able to determine that parents who are confident about their child-rearing effectiveness despite economic adversity, had also set developmental tools for their children. In turn, this parental attribute enhances the child's' ability to set their own goals, to plan, and to persist until the goals are reached. In a summary of an assessment tool, Greene (2002) points out that "practitioners must consider multisystemic strategies appropriate to a client's life context and position across the life course" (p. 81). Some of these strategies include identifying interventions that are important for rural African American male youth. This includes: "basic needs for safety, illuminate opportunities, challenge oppressive situations, build personal capacity and enhance community power" (Greene, 2002, p. 81).

Studies on resiliency often promote resiliency in individuals and families (Fraser, 2004; Greene, 2002; McCubbin, et al, 1998; Norman, 2000). A social support network for individuals and families is an optimal approach highlighted in resiliency literature (Fraser, 2004; Greene, 2002; Walsh, 1998; Werner & Smith, 1992). Resiliency factors such as competence, self-esteem, trust and self-efficacy play into this concept where boys and especially African American boys require meaningful academic intervention aside from the inordinate amount of discipline for their present and future successes. Social

resources in rural communities are scarce and limited but do exist and can be accessed to assist

Employability is greatly influenced by the level of achievement in academics. Protective factors can be drawn upon for youth to seek and secure jobs that support their financial needs and encourage on-going competency skills. Military and job corps have been traditional ways in which African American youth have truncated the inevitable poverty and cultural barriers that exist for black men in the U.S. If structured goal setting and achievement has not been obtained in youth, it is a typical practice among African American males to seek low skill labor jobs on an intermittent basis to have some income some times. Labor jobs require intense physical endurance not usually tolerated for long periods of time, therefore, this hard labor work can only be done for a few months at a time. Niemonen (2002) points to this issue of employment opportunities saying that, "young Black men are disproportionately excluded from applicant pools based on a practice by employers who, having characterized young blacks as deficient in values, attitudes, and skills recruit in the White neighborhoods instead. Therefore, by the mere address of the applicant there begins a discriminatory cycle in the job market" (p. 126). Although not as strongly argued, the author presents some indications regarding the same experience in how personal references provide better job opportunities. With the lack of job access due to neighborhood affiliation there is also some evidence that the absence of referral is a detriment to job access as well.

Continued discussion on resiliency and its theory is developed in the context of resiliency theory in the next segment. The influence of one's resiliency skill can be of great benefit to address life's challenges and opportunities. Rural African American male

youth are capable of utilizing their resiliency ability while engaging in effective citizenship practices.

Citizenship

The National Council on Social Studies (NCSS) produced a 10-point position statement on 'Creating Effective Citizens' with the focus on youth and their educational awareness of citizenship practices (2001, p. 319). The council defines an effective citizen "as one who has the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to assume the 'office 'of citizen' in our democratic republic" (p. 319). Citizenship practice continues to be an important aspect of a person's self-efficacy and long-term quality life experience. Young people can benefit from a clear sense of their rights and their responsibilities as citizens. The Council's edict emphasized three areas of being a citizen which are: strong democratic values, knowledge of our nation's decision-making processes, and the impact our nation has on the global scene. The Council points to personal accountability as an attribute in developing into an effective citizen. To illustrate, there are four of the ten points that are particularly indicative of personal responsibility, which are: 1) accepts responsibility for the well-being of oneself, one's family, and the community; 2) seeks information from varied sources and perspectives to develop informed opinions and creative solutions; 3) uses effective decision-making and problem-solving skills in public and private life; and, 4) actively participates in civic and community life.

Roche (1992) says, "the politics of citizenship has for generations formulated its goals, fought its battles and found its voice in the discourse of rights" (p. 246). The author then suggests that "citizenship also needs to be able to speak, to act, and to understand itself in the language of its personal responsibility and social obligation in the

discourse of duties as well as rights" (p. 246). In most public school curriculums there is no explicit instruction on citizenship practices. Young people may not even understand that they need to deduce what is the virtue and value of being an American citizen. The important connection between duty and rights may also be so understated that youth are unable to make the necessary associations between the two corresponding elements of citizenship practice. Schudson (1998) purports that "citizenship practice has this dual activity which can be invisible, transparent, or not obvious enough without instruction" (p. 301). "People do not always see the connection between 'my' rights and 'yours, or between 'mine' and 'ours', or between my rights and responsibilities, but those connections can be made" (p. 290). Crucial to an individual's citizenship development is the mindfulness of the community that provides meaningful social support. Schudson adds that, "Rights are not necessarily opposed to community…however rights redefine the character of community" (p. 293). Therefore, citizenship practice becomes a 'hands on' activity begun in youth for a lifetime of opportunities to exercise rights and personal responsibility.

Ricci (2004) provides a clearly delineated multilevel concept in citizenship. He begins by describing what he calls Citizenship I referring to "a person's legal status, to whether or not, one is entitled to reside in a specific country and, in modern times, carry its passport (Ricci, 2004, p. 7). Citizenship II concerns the experience of "an active sort of belonging, with political participation as its hallmark (p. 7). It is Citizenship III that Ricci describes as more difficult to define because this level requires, "virtuous behavior". "It obligates citizens to use their political resource and skill to participate well, that is, to maintain not just effective laws but also a decent state" (p. 8). This third kind of

citizenship optimizes the individual's responsibility to understand community experiences and pursue activities and practices that reward the greater democratic good for all peoples.

In discussions of American citizenship the French observer Alexis de Tocqueville came to America to see democracy in action. "He was the first modern thinker to predict that Western society would be organized along democratic lines and that in America, more triumphantly that anywhere else, democracy would be identified with modern commerce" (Mitchell, 2002, p. 33). The young, 30-year-old Tocqueville, in the 1800's, traveled throughout the country recording his observations about class, race, economics, social differences, regional differences, and the overarching laws that constitute a greater society of democracy. He was fascinated by this 'national experiment' with the Constitution at its center. Mitchell (2002) points out that in Tocqueville's time, "The only sure thing was that democracy was an almost totally novel phenomenon, one that was strictly speaking a product of the modern age, with a principle of equality that powerfully shaped an existing body of anterior and independent modes of thought and feeling" (p 35). The American idea of citizenship is a distinctive mix of law, nationalism, and civic activism. Democracy dictates that citizens project participation in the democratic scene at some time and on some level. "If all of the people can participate some of the time, in some of the responsibilities of governing, then strong democracy will have realized its aspirations" (Barber, 1984, p. 267).

Unlike in early colonial America, contemporary voters are a diverse group of people across class, race, creed, and gender lines. Now, in the twenty first century, it is time to affirm these differences and find the common ground in citizenship. Alibhar-

Brown (2001) suggests we actively participate in encouraging 'a vibrant common citizenship culture', which can foster genuine respect, equality, and consideration across various groups and diversity that together with tough anti-discrimination measures may just give the kind of country that so many of us yearn for" (p. 55).

Prototypes for what is suggested here have been examined by researchers to develop models of citizenship participation. Crouch (2000) offers two such model types of citizenship focusing on strengthening citizen practices. The first encompasses models "which are designed to strengthen the engagement of citizens in the established institutions of the polity" (p. 154). For example, participation in volunteer civic organizations often provides communities with avenues for leadership development and proactive service projects. Individuals who are active within communities are more capable to understand and promote diversity with an affirmation of a system of inclusiveness.

The second model Crouch (2000) suggests are those models which "seek to enhance citizens' capacities to act, without necessarily leading them to recognized channels (p. 151). As example, when citizens exercise their right to vote it is incumbent upon them to also research the issues on the ballot. Voters help themselves by gathering information through media, debates, and local forums. Mitchell (2002) notes that, "Tocqueville saw America as critically engaged saying Americans of all ages and conditions and all dispositions constantly form associations" (p. 237). Based on these models, African American male youth have a place in their communities as 'vibrant' citizens. Service to the community encourages both rewarding activity and helps develop within the person meaningful skills and abilities that enhance adult maturation. Those

who participate as citizens obtain practice in socialization and the skill of information gathering for quality decision-making and problem-solving. Citizenship practice creates and overall sense of responsibility for the well-being of their self, their neighborhood, and their community. "This associative value provides social trust, and helpfulness with public spiritedness" (Battistoni & Hudson, 1997, p. 10).

Acquisition of citizenship practices can require individuals to undergo a process that often is called assimilation. Yet, for African American youth specifically, it is a process that can feel like 'treason' to their culture and their race. 'The socio-economic and cultural networks of modern democracy makes this identity displacement, the precondition for full citizenship, a practical impossibility" (O'Brien & Penna, 1996, p. 191). Rural African American male youth will benefit from an inclusive atmosphere that allows them to fully develop their duty as an American citizens with access to their rights, and to equal education and employment, without having to feel as if they must abandon their valued race identity that helps them buffer discrimination and prejudice.

The influence of 'information highway' thorough internet access to all possible subjects and experiences has raised the expectation of a employable skills and long term financial support for one's family. 'Creative skills are in ever greater demand at a time when the nature of the workplace is undergoing rapid and unceasing transformation, and manufacturing has increasingly given place to other creative industries and the provision of services" (Crick, 2001, p. 71). The author submits that American culture needs an ever widening appreciation for differences that in actuality bring communities more financial and human resources upon which to rely. The author views citizenship as a "lifelong process, which links rather than separates generations" (Crick, 2001, p. 113). For rural

African American male youth, this kind of citizenship perspective holds promise for strengthening the support and development of the democratic structures and viable means of social and educational redistribution which can make the real exercise of citizenship possible for all.

Summary

Citizenship is indeed an important aspect in American life. It is an opportunity that is reciprocal between the citizen and the community. Clearly, facilitating continual and routine efforts for rural, African American, male youth in their aspirations for future productive citizenship is both an obligation of youth and a community responsibility to provide opportunities for citizenship practices.

The number of African American males who can achieve a stable and strong economic status is far below this population's potential. Gordon (2002), strongly emphasizes that "despite enormous gains in educational attainment and marked improvements in employment opportunities, black males continue to be over represented among the poor in the United States" (p. 126). The author further asserts that "it is alarming that from the study's findings, black males account for a larger percentage of the poor than they do of the population as a whole" (p. 127). There is an increase in the number of black males reporting no income at all, which appears to contribute to the declining labor force participation rate. This lack of a living wage for black males has its roots the lack of educational and work opportunities. African American male youth and the communities-at-large would benefit from meaningful support and mentoring, helping to prevent and at the least avoid, this historical and archaic notion of underemployment based on racial barriers. Besharov (1999), echoes this position, adding that when "the

essential ingredients are attainable, young African American men can help themselves develop into healthy, productive adults" (p. 148). This acknowledgement and affirmation as to their position in community with support in their educational and vocational/career efforts helps to reach goals of independence and viable citizenship.

The purpose of this study is to examine the resiliency of rural African American male youth and their awareness of citizenship practices. It is important to examine resiliency in rural, African American, male youth and how that resiliency interacts with the awareness of citizenship practices. In the case of rural, African American, male youth, there has been a biased schism in the reciprocal nature of citizenship relationships due to social and racial barriers. By enhancing the confidence and resiliency in African American male youth, the community has the opportunity to support youth self-actualization by encouraging not only the awareness of citizenship practices but to provide access and opportunity that will help youth become quality citizens. Schudson's (1998) conclusion includes a powerful observation, where "all that is required to criticize the present state of affairs is to know that some serious injustices persist, that some remediable conditions that limit human possibility lie before us, and that resources for reconstituting ourselves can be found" (p. 313).

CHAPTER III

RESILIENCY THEORY

The framework of resiliency has been characterized by identifying strengths from which a person manages to endure or cope with stress and trauma. Over the last few decades the resiliency construct has emerged from a number of clinical and academic view points. "Research into the question of risk and resilience has certainly identified the fact that a large percentage of children, whose lives expose them to diverse kinds of physical and psychic risk, in fact 'defy the odds' and go on to lead conventionally-defined 'successful' lives" (Howard & Dryden, 1999, p. 322). The authors suggest that "if resilient research is to make a difference and build on the best work that has preceded it, future studies should explore multiple conceptions of resilience and take account of the complexity of social systems within which children are embedded" (p. 324).

Currently, the framework has been conceptualized by a three-sided elemental set of factors: risk, vulnerability, and protective. Risk factors, adopted from the medical field's physical health assessment approach, are utilized by researchers to structure behavioral observations of children in terms of deficits and needs. Vulnerability attempts to explain how some people who are at risk are more likely than others to develop a negative outcome. "The far reaching range of risk research, which embraces a broad band of risk factors to which children and adults can be exposed-- some may eventuate in disease or disorder, which identifies vulnerability, -- but others, in many instances, may be overcome and lead to positive adaptive behavior, which identifies resilience" (Garmezy, 1991, in Haggerty, p. 341). Protective factors are characteristics one adopts to

buffer the negative impact of risk factors. "Protective factors, both internal and external, help people resist or ameliorate risk" (Greene, 2002, p. 34).

Research as to the effects of risk, vulnerability, and protective factors on African Americans and their youth has been investigated to some extent (Gordon, 2002; Greene, 2002; Haggerty, et al, 1992; Joseph, 1995; McCubbin et al, 1998; Norman, 2000). Nettles and Pleck (1995) concentrate their study on the incidence of risk outcomes for black youth noting that, "there are a number of risk issues that stem from racism and prejudice, holding low expectations for their education and future career opportunities" (p. 171). Less examination has been pursued in how rural life or living in non metropolitan communities impacts African American male youth in the United States. It is important to examine resilience and its theory and then to apply it to rural populations of African American male youth.

Early Works Leading to Resiliency

Since the early 1970s, research in childhood development has linked risk, vulnerability, and protective factors to a phenomenon characterized by positive coping and adjustment to stress and trauma often expressed as resilient qualities. Author Gramezy (1991) one of the preeminent researchers to assess what would become the construct for resiliency, pointed out that " as we seek to understand the roots of resilience and the role of protective factors in reducing risk, defining such interconnections becomes an important research agenda" (p. 120). These early studies explored the developmental conditions of children living in disadvantaged or dangerous circumstances who were subject to critical incidents of socio-environmental hazards where, it was likely that behavioral and emotional problems existed due to the exposure of risk factors

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(Garmezy, 1991; Haggerty, et al., 1992; Oketch & Harrington, 2000, Rutter, 1987; Werner, 1992; Wolin 1991).

The examination of resilience encourages a strengths-based foundation that creates quality assessment seeking identification characteristics of competence in personal behavioral functioning. "Child-related risk and protective factors associated with maltreatment can be thought of as biological and psychosocial attributes or characteristics" (Fraser, 2004, p. 100). Resiliency appears to encourage and support an individual's ability to meet life's challenges effectively with reduced risk advantages. Self-esteem, self-efficacy, hardiness, and self-control are characteristics often used to describe a resilient person (Garmezy, 1991; Greene, 2002; Haggerty, et al., 1992; Norman, 2000; Rosenberg, 1964, Rutter, 1987; Werner, 1992; Wolin 1991).

Theorists of resiliency have viewed the resilient construct as complex, and that resilience is encouraged by many socio-biologic and spiritual processes in and around the individual's environment. Furthermore, resilience appears to have a multisystemic pattern that can occur over the span of ones' life. Fraser (2004) has offered a number of insights into the ways in which children learn self efficacy with a primary emphasis on the presence of caring relationships, meaningful social support, and safe community environments.

The resiliency perspective gained convincing prominence through the 1970s and 1980s. The ground breaking longitudinal study, produced by Werner (1992), focused on targeted cultural and economic adaptations in a resiliency model. Werner (1992) wrote, "The principle goals of what came to be known as the Kauai Longitudinal Study were: 1) to document in natural history fashion, the course of all pregnancies and their outcomes

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in the entire island community until the surviving off spring had reached adulthood, and 2) to assess the long term consequences of peri-natal complications and adverse rearing conditions on the individual's development and adaptation to life" (p. 262). It was an important longitudinal examination of the concepts of resiliency in those children who successfully coped with risk factors encompassing biological, psychological, and socio-economical challenges. The study sought to identify what protective factors impact the recovery of difficult childhood development experiences that can lead to successful adulthood transitions. It found that there were transitions that did produce positive well-being and a positive functioning set of coping skills. It was found that social support and a self-efficacy attitude was paramount to developing a 'buffering' method against risk and vulnerability helping to overcome health and poverty challenges.

Werner's (2002) longitudinal study, 'The Children of Kauai', helped to frame the remarkable recurring instances of children growing up in risk environments who later as adults found resilient ways to overcome those risks and forge a good life with less risk for themselves and their families. The concepts, of internal assets and external conditions helping to reduce risk and enhance adaptation, are viewed as protective factors. Other prominent investigators considered protective factors intricately important in the management and recovery practice for people experiencing risk issues. Further research into resiliency has captured varied aspects of the factors that lead to a person's overall strength and resilience capabilities.

In other research during these early decades, researchers Garmezy (1991) and Rutter (1987) were exploring psychological treatment modalities for children within the model of protective and risk factors. These experts noticed significant successes in using

techniques and interventions that recognized the child's inner ability to utilize behaviors that protected them from re-experiencing the initial difficult traumas. It also pointed to an individual's ability to gain continued effective coping mechanisms that are useful over time for healthier functioning with family and significant others. "There is a need to pay attention to the suggestions that the psychopathological effects of risk experiences are strongly moderated by how individuals cognitively and effectively process their experiences and how the resulting working model of relationships is integrated into their self concept" (Rutter, 1999, p. 144). Rutter (1999) has done extensive work in the psycho-sociological discipline whose decades of interest in childhood disorders has focused on what can be instilled in the individual to counteract the risk and the resulting negative behavior. If protective factors can be developed early in childhood it can have a cumulative effect in an individual's life whereby, the more these factors are present in childhood the more likely they will continue to be displayed over a lifetime.

Garmezy (1991) and Werner (1992) were also instrumental in shifting research design and perspectives to a more balanced position using deficit, or risk, in concert with attribute, or protective, which formed the basis for the construct of resilience. In their work resiliency emerged as a strength-based perspective that had a multi level systemic methodology. They began to identify 'self righting' tendencies observed such as competence, confidence, and respect. An overarching precept to resiliency revealed the importance of positive interpersonal relationships as core to successful children and subsequent successful adulthood. Further research helped to complete the development of resilience as a measurable and valuable asset in human coping and stress management functioning.

Broadening Resiliency to Other Target Groups

Researchers, since the early days, have made significant contributions to the work of ascertaining the essence and the functional attributes of resiliency and the multi level systemic factors involved in determining the usefulness of being resilient (Fraser, 2004; Greene, 2002; Haggerty, 1992; Howard & Dryden, 1999; McCubbin et al, 1998; Norman, 2000; Smokowski, 1998). Being resilient is framed as the human attribute that can be called upon to withstand adversity, cope in face-to-face acute life circumstances, and manage trauma. Throughout the development of resiliency theory and its application, resiliency appears to have some existing features such as the development of autonomy, initiative, and social control for greater reliability and stamina. Greene (2002) provides a useful definition stating resiliency as, "the unpredicted or markedly successful adaptation of the individual to negative events, trauma, stress and other forms of risk" (p. 339).

Although studies originally were interested in children, other target populations have been examined. Studies on adolescence have identified three basic themes that promote resiliency. These themes are: personality characteristics such as self-esteem; nurturing family environments; and, social support systems upon which the family can rely for personal growth and mentoring (Conger & Elder, 1994; Elder & Conger, 2000; Fraser, 2004). These themes emphasize how protective factors can be developed and sustained for quality adolescent maturation.

Another study organized risk and protective factors into three levels of environmental, family, and individual (Fraser, Kirby & Smokowski, 2004). Here, protective factors within each level help to further establish the multi-systemic nature of resiliency. It appears that when a resiliency foundation is developed within the individual

and fostered in family interrelationships, there can be a greater initiative to access community resources such as educational, occupations and social opportunities.

Wagnild (2003) conducted several studies on resiliency in people over the age of 59. The focus was on exploring the qualities and characteristics of resilience and successful aging. Using a resiliency scale survey, "resiliency appeared to be related to participant characteristics of good health, a positive outlook on life and having a socially supportive network" (Wagnild, 2003, p. 48).

The term resilience emanates from the medical health field. In a study on mothers and their children's health potential, resilience was investigated in terms of family lifestyle practices. Monteith and Ford-Gilboe (2002), explored the relationships among mothers' resilience (health potential), family health-promoting activity (health work), and mothers' health-promoting lifestyle practices (competence in health behavior) in families with preschool children. The authors found that, "mothers' resilience and health work were most strongly related to different, but complimentary, aspects of other's health-promoting lifestyle practices" (p. 383). The two aspects related to the mothers' health resilience were health responsibility and physical activity. This kind of study, that combines health resilience with lifestyle activities, is an important aspect of the construct of resiliency. It provides insight in to how practices and expectations in family systems impact the way in which individuals in the family build coping skills that can impact their physical health, either effectively or ineffectively.

Other studies have been focused on family resiliency and how the interrelationships among family members, coupled with the influences of socioeconomic factors on the family, impacts the buffering capacity for resilient families (Conger &

Elder, 1994; Fraser, 2004; McCubbin et al, 1998). Poverty is an all consuming negative influence. "Poverty directly reduces the quality of food, shelter, health care, education, and transportation that a family can afford and to which children have access" (Fraser, 2004, p. 1). Neighborhood deterioration, crime, and environmental pollution and hazards are further indicators of poverty. It is imperative that families in poverty be ever vigilant in order to buffer the many issues that poverty inherently controls. This area in family resilience research, searches for helpful tools and strategies that lead to quality intervention and prevention, helping to effect positive change and advantageous growth for family functioning.

There is a complexity to being resilient which requires coaching and guidance to fully be able to construct appropriate developmental stages. Howard and Dryden(1999), view resiliency integration functioning by saying " if resilience research is to make a difference and build on the best work that has preceded it, future studies should explore multiple conceptions of resilience and take account of the complexity of social systems within which children are embedded" (p. 324). They suggest community outcomes that make resiliency a community expectation with practical application. Emphasis placed on youth to consistently and routinely engage in employment can produce greater focus on their education, building a lifetime work ethic, to increase opportunities in adulthood that can support themselves and others they care about. "Family and community supporters are key in helping to shape the life course trajectory of many at-risk adolescents" (Besharov, 1999, p. 134). Rural African American male youth warrant this kind of focus in their communities which enhances their levels of resiliency and encourages their participation as citizens.

Resiliency in African Americans

Cultural attributes can greatly influence the interactions of risk and protective factors within families, and the individual family members. Cultural values, mores, and expectations play significantly in shaping the meaning of family life and to what level there is socio-economic support for family members. In the United States, membership in certain cultural groups can place some families at greater risk of vulnerability due to poverty, discrimination, and injustice, all of which represent important risk factors that require corresponding protective factors (Conger, Wallace, Sun, Simons, McLoyd & Brody, 2002; Fraser, Kirby, & Smokowski, 2004; Gordon, 2002; West, 1993; Joseph, 1995; Norman 2000; Perry, 2000). Cultural standards, therefore, help shape critical family resiliency perceptions and practices. There can be events, rituals, and patterns within the family that either preclude accessing resources or encourage accessing resources for support and affirmation.

It is important to investigate how families manage accessing resources, including identifying the ways in which families are prevented from accessing resources. Both experiences are critical in identifying ways to advance coping strategies helping to offset stress and trauma. Norman (2000) emphasizes that, "Cultural sensitivity and competence are critical to the selection and refinement of the resiliency factors chosen for enhancement, to the development of enhancement strategies that respond to the cultural context of the target population, and to the development of more culturally and contextually sensitive measures to evaluate the efficacy of prevention efforts" (p. 223).

Looking at family resiliency within cultural and ethnic environments also requires the presumption that within the culture, families represent a wide range of uniqueness,

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depending on their own experiences, such as their existing levels of education, employment, social connections, and community involvements. Families represent relational systems embedded within the cultural framework that influence the meanings, coping strategies, and support systems (Gordon, 2002; McAdoo, 2002; McCubbin, et al, 1998; Joseph, 1995). "The family's dimensions of interpersonal relationships, community relationships, and relationships with nature, the family's development, well-being and spirituality, as well as the family's structure and functioning, are taken into account, guided by the goals of harmony and balance" (McCubbin, et al, 1998, p. 37). Affirming the strengths that come from cultural support and coping, encourages families and individuals to maintain their positive ethnic and racial socialization practices. This is inextricably important in African American life for the health and well-being of individuals, families, and the community.

Research has explored resiliency among African American families, in the context of both the historical and present day challenges of oppression and prejudice which they regularly face (Fraser, 2004; Gordon, 2002; Greene, 2002; Haggerty, 1992; Hare, 2002). Other oppressive societal factors examined in studies of African American family include, individual and institutionalized racism, immigration, loss of housing, decline of support for affirmative action, reduction of appropriate services, decline in employment opportunities and even continued denigration in the media.

Poverty and racism have been identified as key risk factors for serious childhood social problems including unemployment. (Brody, Flor & Gibson, 1999; Ginsberg, 2000; Hare, 2002; Joseph, 1995; West, 1993). For decades unemployment rates for African American adolescents has been closely linked with increases in technological skill and

proficiency for which minority youth rarely receive training access (Gordon, 2002; Hare, 2002; Joseph, 1995; West, 1993). "One major reason for the high unemployment of black youth is the shortage of jobs" (Joseph, 1993, p. 26). Joseph points out that there is meager access to jobs for a great many African Americans who have been unable to complete for jobs due to lack of unemployable skills and poor rates of high school graduation. Therefore, it becomes increasingly important to understand how African Americans, and the diversity within African American communities, are able to draw from sources of resiliency within the family and from the greater community that can offset these serious oppressive life conditions.

There are multiple challenges for African American adolescents and their families in raising children to be competent, trusting, and confident towards effective adulthood (Brody, et al, 2004; Greene, 2002; McAdoo, 2002; McCubbin, et al, 1998). Greene (2002) emphasizes that "the socialization of white children and children of color differs because of messages received from the broader society about the value and identity of a child's ethnic group" (p. 258). And yet, African American families often effectively manage child rearing practices utilizing protective factors which include: supportive social networks, extended family relationships within the family unit, religious and spiritual principles, non-relatives who are as kin to the family, and positive racial identification (Gordon, 2002; Greene, 2002; McAdoo, 2002; Norman, 2000).

Church and religion within the African American community has served as a cornerstone source of affirmation of worth and dignity, spiritual strength, and mutual aid within the African American community. African American community churches have historically sponsored sustainable human service programs as meaningful family support

within the community. "By providing young African American children with strategies to resist discrimination, families can effectively raise their children in an oppressive society" (Greene, 2002, p. 252).

Discrimination and oppression are principal risk factors for African American youth as seen here especially in terms of educational commitment and economic achievement. "They (African American youth) are unable to successfully compete with others for jobs, and as such, educational disadvantages also impact on wages, unemployment, and poverty" (Joseph, 1995, p. 25). This combination of poor multicultural sensitivity for quality education, with the resulting employment limitations, not only discourages African American youth from succeeding in school, it belies an accompanying set of mannerisms from a youth culture that subscribes to purposefully lowering their academic achievement and reducing their commitment to their future goals.

Hare (2002) mentions a five-dimensional concept about marginalization and its impact on youth, where a primary attitude appears as if youth, facing such overwhelming odds, gives up the struggle choosing instead to live according to the status or role that the dominant society has arbitrarily assigned according to race and gender (p. 33). In addition, it has been noted that young African American students may become less committed to education when in their experience there are few parental role models demonstrating academic achievement or economic advancement (Fraser, 2004; Ginsberg, 2000; Hare, 2002; Nettles & Pleck, 1995).

"Although there is a rich body of research on resiliency, much of the literature fails to include minority youth or does not take into consideration their distinctive racial

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and environmental circumstances" (Miller, 1999, p. 493). Miller suggests that, "since educational achievement has long been considered as signifying resiliency among adolescents, that attention to these protective factors for African American adolescents requires a closer look at racial socialization for their greater academic achievement" (p. 494). Essentially, this indicates that proactive strategies for maintaining a sense of self must be especially sensitive to the protective aspects of being black in a racially prejudiced society in the U.S.

Rural Environments and African American Male Youth

Quality protective factors can be actuated to deflect and assuage the stress and trauma of racism and prejudice. Greene (2002) points out that , "Because culture may act as a potential protective mechanism and may contribute to resilience, often binding a group together and offering a set of norms and values that assist people in facing stress, culture is an important component in the discussion of how to raise resilient children in an oppressive society" (p. 246).

A positive parent-child relationship is one such protective factor that creates a sense of trust and caring that can assure more collaborative decision-making when important issues emerge such as school performance and vocational choices. Within the resiliency construct family relationships emerge as pivotal in African American youth life experiences (Basharov, 1999; Elder & Conger, 2000; Norman, 2000). As an important protective factor the interrelationships in family offer opportunities for positive social relationships and can increase the likelihood of sound coping skills and the development of self-esteem along the dimensions of the resiliency continuum. Self-esteem is an important characteristic of being human. Nettles and Pleck (1995) note that most

empirical studies find that blacks have self-esteem comparable to whites at all ages (p. 163). Ross (1992) cautions that "efforts are needed to ensure that cultural experiences, which shape the self-esteem of blacks and other racial groups, are reflected in these various dimensions" (p. 621). The author notes that studies on black self-esteem can be misleading because there are a number of self-esteem instruments, in which the results of each cannot be easily compared to each other, leaving a gap in accuracy of self-esteem measurement in most studies including those of African American populations. "Moreover, such studies reflect a basic disregard for the axiological differences between African and European-Americans' definitions of self-esteem; these definitions are shaped by forces unique to each race" (Ross, 1992, p. 611). Studies that incorporate accurate definitions of race pride help in gauging the level of positive coping strengths and augments self-esteem qualities. Theoretical perspectives on achievement-related behavior among black youth have focused on the role of social and race identity and social relations.

Resiliency-based concepts that are pertinent to this discussion relate to race pride as an important aspect of adolescent development, which include friendship patterns, social connections, and school support for achievement and self-esteem. Close friendships particularly with friends who value education, and active family support for achievement are important protective factors that instill well-being. "Peer support also buffers the effects of economic pressure on psychological well-being" (Voydanoff & Donnelly, 1999, p. 331). Friendships that are developed through shared values with aspirations of achievement becomes particularly important for African American male youth, who are typically excluded from the full array of peer associations and

extracurricular school opportunities due to discriminating social parameters. The authors restate that, "such friendships may contribute to constructive activities and interactions during time spent without an adult" (p. 332).

In another perspective authors Murry, Bynum, Brody, Willert and Stephens (2001) highlight that, "there is evidence that in rural African American families, structured home environments, positive mother-child relationships, and parental school involvement appear to help youngsters in their formative years. In turn, these behaviors predicted high academic performance, good social skills, and few behavioral and emotional problems." (p. 142). In studies of African-American families living in impoverished rural areas there is an ability to promote and maintain resiliency in youth from a synergistic set of experience between and among parents and their children. "Effective parenting promoted competence in children that in turn supported self-efficacy on the part of parents regarding their parenting and reduced their risk for depression. This cycle in turn promoted the social and emotional competence of younger siblings" (Brody, Kim, Murry, & Brown, 2004, p. 462).

Efforts can be directed at strengthening naturally occurring sources of protection and designing protective structures that enhance an adolescent's ability to be resilient. Authors Nettles and Pleck (1995) concentrate their study on the incidence of risk outcomes for non-metropolitan black youth in the following seven areas: health, school completion, employability, police involvement and risky sexual behavior, alcohol and drug use, and psychological symptoms and suicide (p. 148). Corresponding protective factors exist for resiliency-building. School completion is paramount to an individuals self esteem, self-respect and future opportunities. The quality of the school experience for

African American youth enhances progress. Employability is greatly influenced by the level of achievement in academics.

"Children and adolescents who have many opportunities for education involvement, growth and achievement are less likely than those without such opportunities to reject prosocial values out of frustration and anger"(Fraser, 2002, p. 43). A community can promote resiliency and help protect children from becoming involved in unsuccessful life patterns, including personality disorders and violence. Joseph (1995) points out that, "Every black child who becomes involved in the juvenile justice system weakens the black community, for the strength of any race lies in its youths" (p. 173). Rural, African American, male youth who are encouraged to develop high rates of resiliency techniques with citizenship practice skill-building, may well heighten their self-confidence, maintain positive self-esteem, and bolster their inner resolve to be fully engaged in society and consequently the society is made better by their very presence.

Summary

The relationship between community and minority youth remain a national concern. Persistent underutilization of minority citizen potential has at its roots an unjust atmosphere that deepens rather than lessens the decay and depression of life for African American youth. Historically, this has been an issue that Social Work activist, Whitney Young brought forward in his book, To Be Equal, saying, "America must recognize and assess at a higher value than ever before the human potential of its Negro citizens, and then society must move positively to develop that potential." (1964).

African Americans, through the centuries, have found remarkable ways to endure, adapt, and remain in an authentic place of self-respect, while effecting community

response for rights of education, employment and property ownership (Gordon, 2002; Miller, 1999; West, 1993; Young, 1964). African Americans have accomplished these feats while demonstrating personal responsibility as an effective citizen. It is this citizenship perspective that creates potential in bridging gaps that exist between racial denigrations and youth aspirations.

Resiliency theory offers a strengths-based perspective measuring outcomes for greater protective strategies against risk and vulnerability. Two particular areas, that encourage protective factors and improve outcomes of self-actualization for African America males in the U.S., have been emphasized in this discussion. The first suggests that interventions, designed with knowledge of culture, are integral to resiliency integration functioning. As example, Werner (1992) notes that within the Asian-Pacific culture, "the life stories of the children of Kauai now grown into adulthood, teaches us that competence, confidence, and caring can flourish, even under adverse circumstances, as children encounter persons who provide them with the secure basis for the development of trust, autonomy and initiative" (p. 267). The African American culture has sustained and encouraged their race of people to withstand bigotry and hatred, choosing instead to protect themselves as much as possible.

Interventions must be designed around neighborhoods, churches and civic organizations led and supported by local African Americans while genuinely affirmed and supported by the greater community. " The essential ingredients are attainable – supportive parents and teachers, investments in schools, mentors , summer jobs, and youth programs at critical stages in the lives of young African American men can help them develop into healthy, productive adults" (Besharov, 1999, p. 148). Response to

resiliency work with African American youth has quality results when services are provided within the context of existing coping mechanisms within the culture that build on existing assets of peer and social support networks. This approach will help African American male youth add to their repertoire of effective protective behaviors and attitudes.

A second dimension concerns program designs that incorporate child developmental processes, heightening knowledge, management skills, and personal meaning constructs. Smokowski (1998) posits, "Improved school readiness may lead to the formation of a resilient string of competence or self-efficacy-building experiences. Specifically, improved school preparation fosters positive teacher reinforcement that, in turn, adds to student self-esteem, motivation, school commitment, and perhaps academic performance in later years" (p. 353). Therefore, services and programs for African American youth must to be sensitive to cultural protective factors to ensure this self-efficacy-building that Smokowski (1998) presents saying, "Youth can better relate to experiences and learning opportunities that with time and encouragement, especially when handled with an authentic regard for their life and cultural perspective" (p. 355).

McAdoo (2002) states "parents influence not only what children bring to the school setting when children begin school but also how well children acquire school-related skills throughout the school years (e.g., working with the child on homework). These activities can influence other behaviors, such as study habits, which are likely to affect the achievement and attainment of children and adolescents" (p. 143).

Where resiliency is a key to empowering human behavior and development, awareness of citizenship practices could to be an imperative dynamic support. There may

be a positive relationship between resiliency and the awareness of citizenship practices which could strengthen a community's ability to serve African American male youth in rural United States. Ginsberg (2000) submits, "It is proposed that conscience and the sense of civic obligation among those in power be challenged to make concessions for improving the welfare of those with little power" (p. 126). This suggests, among other things, that making resiliency a community expectation enriches a community.

Studying rural, African American, male youth focuses on their current level of existing protective factors and their current level of awareness of citizenship practices. Data from such examinations is important for rural communities to approach the development of programs and policy that can better address this undeserved, often ignored population. An examination of resiliency and rural African American male youth and their awareness of citizenship practices, is warranted given the challenges of breaking discriminatory racial barriers.

Rural, African American, male youth who are encouraged to develop high rates of resiliency techniques with citizenship practice skill-building, may well heighten their self-confidence, maintain positive self-esteem, and bolster their inner resolve to be fully engaged in society and consequently the society is made better by their very presence. This associative dynamic enables youth to participate with others who respect differences while pursuing their own aspirations and goals, in a supportive milieu. As every adolescent, African American male youth needs a sense of a welcoming greater community, to instill core protective factors, which prevent and deter at-risk activities. There can be a sense of belonging to a multi-cultural society that honors differences and acknowledges the richness of diversity as a positive and essential way of living together,

bound by faith, moved by attainment, and inspired by the limitless nature of human

ingenuity.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

This section provides the methods and procedures utilized in this research study. A full description of the process, including outcomes of a pilot of the research, helps to comprehensively outline the research's goals and objectives. Great care was taken to engage the participants in the survey process that helps to strengthen the overall response measures in each of the four (3) survey instruments. Dillman (2000) notes that social exchange, the motivated actions of an individual to bring about an expected reward or trust return from others, is a fundamental aspect in survey research (p. 14). Adolescents require active and even interactive processes to maintain attention and ensure accuracy in response choices. Dillman (2000) makes a number of important points as to how social exchange can be reinforced in survey research. These elements include: providing rewards, show positive regard, make the survey interesting, give social validation, and make the task appear important (p.15-21).

An innovative format of compact disk (CD) video media was tailored for the participants in order to obtain the elements of social exchange outlined above. Each of the two short surveys will be in CD format. Each will include Africa American 'talking head' young adults stating the questions twice, paced with eye contact, and sincere interest in motivating participants to respond from their 'authentic' place rather than from expectation. In addition, contemporary beat music is integrated into the design of the electronic survey with a colorful background. This active format is intended to entertain

and engage the participants, holding their attention to the process while responding to the survey questions.

It is important to examine resiliency in rural African American male youth as it relates to the awareness of citizenship practices. There is little known about how rural African American, male youth perceive effective citizenship based on their level of resiliency. Information gained in this study may help to support greater achievements in educational and employment pursuits for rural African American youth.

Problem Statement

This examination will look at research questions important in the context of present day issues in the lives of rural African American male youth The questions asked are: 1) What is the relationship between resiliency factors and awareness of citizenship practices among rural African American male youth?

2) Will information on effective citizenship practices facilitate citizenship practices awareness in rural African American male youth?

3) Does the level of resiliency in rural African American male youth, between the ages of 12 an 19 inclusively, have an impact on their citizenship practices awareness?

4) In what kinds of community volunteer experiences do rural African American male youth participate? and,

5) What are their current educational and employment experiences at each age level?

Hypothesis Testing

The research has two hypotheses as stated below:

H_1 = There is a positive relationship between resiliency in rural African American male

youth and their awareness of citizenship practices.

H_2 = Direct instruction of citizenship practices increases awareness of their own

citizenship practices in rural African American male youth.

Research involved testing the independent variable of resiliency and its

relationship on the dependent variable of awareness of citizenship practices. The

objective of this first hypothesis will be to determine how much of the dependent

variable, awareness of citizenship practices, can be explained by the independent variable

of resiliency.

The second hypothesis states that direct instruction of citizenship practices

increases awareness of personal citizenship practices among rural African American male

youth. An 8-minute CD video on citizenship practices was viewed by the participants

after taking the citizenship survey. Upon finishing the video survey, participants were

asked to take the citizenship survey once more. In this pre-post test design, the

examination emphasis was on four citizenship practice dimensions: Accepts

responsibility for the well-being of oneself and one's family; Seeks information from

varied sources and perspectives to develop informed opinions and creative solutions;

Uses effective decision-making and problem-solving skills in public and private life; and,

Actively participates in civic and community life. This examination sought to determine

if a youth's awareness of citizenship practices can be increased by instruction.

Subjects viewed an 8-minute video on specific citizenship practices. In this instruction, descriptions of citizenship practices are closely related to the statements made in the citizenship instrument. The supposition assert that with more knowledge and understanding of the nature of citizenship practices, subjects can learn more about their own citizenship practices. Taking the survey after the video may increase the subjects' ability to more accurately respond to the same questions. This may significantly change the level of awareness of their own citizenship practices.

Study Design

This self-administered survey was designed to measure resiliency and awareness of citizenship practices among rural African American male youth. This was a voluntary approach using a convenience sample research design from a rural Florida County population. In a series of two short survey instruments, the youth were asked to respond to a resiliency survey and a citizenship awareness survey. The participants viewed interactive videos of each survey. The 'talking head' read and repeated each question, while the participant followed along and responded on a Likert-scale range to each question. This method provided a strong rate of completion.

The participants were asked to respond to the citizenship survey in a pre-post test format. Completing the resiliency survey once and the citizenship practices survey twice, there was a total of 58 questions in the three survey series. The participants watched a short 8-minute video on citizenship practices with an interactive modality on the screen that held their attention and helped to absorb the information. After the video, the participants were asked to take the citizenship scale again to measure any differences in their own citizenship practices.

It may be key for African American male youth in rural United States to utilize citizenship practices to achieve greater opportunities in education and employment. Looking at the relationship of resiliency to citizenship may improve the futures of African American male youth in our rural communities. A community's strength and efficacy relies on citizens and their ability to contribute to the vitality of their environment. Together resiliency and citizenship practices, can enhance self-efficacy in African American, male youth.

Independent Variable

Greene (2002) provides a useful definition of resiliency as, "the unpredicted or markedly successful adaptation of the individual to negative events, trauma, stress and other forms of risk" (p. 21). In much of the research using resiliency-based efforts experts use interventions that recognize an individual's inner ability to utilize behaviors that protected them from re-experiencing different traumas. Resiliency also supports an individuals ability to develop and maintain effective coping mechanisms that are useful over time for healthy relationship functioning.

To measure subjects' resiliency, a scale developed by Dr. Gail Wagnild and Heather Young was administered. The 26-item Resilience Scale (RS^{TM}) measures the degree of individual resilience, which is considered a positive personality characteristic that enhances individual adaptation. All items are scored on a 7-point scale from 1 = disagree, to 7 = agree. All items are worded positively and reflect accurately the verbatim statements made by participants in the initial study on resilience conducted by Wagnild and Young (1993). Possible scores range from 26 to 182 with higher scores reflecting higher resilience. The strengths of the RS^{TM} include its internal consistency reliability,

concurrent validity with established measures of adaptation, and preliminary construct validity indicated by the factor analysis. Wagnild points out that "the internal consistency of RS^{TM} is respectable as demonstrated in a number of studies (.76-.91)" (p. 173). Correlations have ranged from .67 to .84 (p<.01) which are respectable and suggest that resilience is stable over time (p. 173). The questions reflected the theoretical definition of resilience that include the concepts of self-reliance, independence, determination, mastery, resourcefulness, and perseverance.

Dependent Variable

Citizenship practices is the dependent variable for this study. The National Council of Social Studies (NCSS) produced its10-point position statement on 'Creating Effective Citizens' with the focus on youth and the educational development of citizenship (2001). The Council defines citizenship as "a citizen's competent knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to assume the 'office of citizen' in a democratic republic" (p. 319). Of the 10 points, four (4) points or dimensions on effective citizenship will be incorporated into a 16-question survey. The four dimensions are: 1) accepts responsibility for the well-being of oneself, one's family, and the community; 2) seeks information from varied sources and perspectives to develop informed opinions and creative solutions; 3) uses effective decision-making and problem-solving skills in public and private life; and, 4) actively participates in civic and community life.

The surveys goal were to assess the youth's level of awareness of citizenship practices in his own life. Responses to each statement will be on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 ratings from 'never', 'almost never', 'sometimes', 'often', and 'always'. The higher the response rate, the higher the awareness of citizenship practices. In addition to testing

awareness of citizenship practices, the survey used a pre/post test for differences. The

participants were asked to respond on the citizenship survey on once again after viewing

an 8-minute video on the four (4) specific areas of citizenship practices. After the video,

the participants were asked to take the same citizenship survey again to measure any

differences in citizenship practices in their own life.

The desired outcome was to determine any increase in awareness of their own

citizenship practices by way of responses on the post citizenship survey. With explicit

instruction on citizenship, youth may better recognize in what practices they actually

participate that are considered citizenship practices. The participants may understand

more explicitly how they have contributed to the well being of themselves, their families

and their communities.

Using Custom-Made CD Videos

The participants were asked to take each of the surveys assisted by interactive

videos. These videos involved a 'talking head' who is an African American male young

adult who read and repeated each question, while the participant followed along on a

survey sheet and responded to a Likert-scale range of response choices to each question.

With an interactive 'flash card' modality on the screen that is intended to hold their

attention and help to absorb the information, sop that participants enjoy the CD video

format and be more able to complete the surveys. Each CD video was designed for

optimum interaction with male youth.

The CD design begins with a modern beat introduction fading to an African

American young adult guide. These guides help the participants through the surveys by

saying each question twice in a steady paced cadence as the participants follow along on

their paper survey, selecting their personal scaled responses. Dillman (2000) explains that tailored design surveys help to create respondent trust and a perception of increased rewards with reduced costs for being a respondent which helps with the overall accuracy in responses (p. 27).

The Sample

The research design is a convenience sample (N= 99) of rural African American male youth ages 12 to 19 inclusive. Through association with the local African American churches and youth programs, notices were sent out describing the project and the desire to invite volunteers to participate who fit the subject criteria. To ensure a sample that reflected the population, five sites in three distinct African American populated areas of the county were selected. The guardian and the participant received a full disclosure letter at the time of volunteering for the project before the consent and assent forms were offered.

On designated Saturdays, from 9am to 3pm at these pre-approved designated churches, subjects were welcomed to participate in a one hour and 20 minute research process asking for their opinions and views on resiliency and citizenship practices. All subjects were accompanied by their guardian, showing identification, and the relationship to the guardian with proof of residency. The subjects were advised of the voluntary nature of the research with an offer to sign the assent along with the guardian's consent to participate. Those volunteer participants aged 18 and 19 were asked to sign consents. The sample was drawn from a rural Florida county. There were three representative areas of the county with five planned sites for the research. Through population census (2000) data these three areas of the county have a significant proportion of African American

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residents. This reflected a strong representation of the entire county population for this racial group.

Subject Participation Itinerary

1. Schedule church and community room sites located convenient to African American neighborhoods in five major towns of the county for a series of Saturdays from 9am to 3pm.
2. Advertise through churches and community agencies the call for rural African American male youth volunteers between the ages of 12 and 19 inclusive, to be surveyed, fully describing the parameters and the objectives;
3. Once the required consents and assents are obtained, guardians and participants are provided a comfortable relaxed environment assisted by a team of 5 adults.
4. Those youth volunteering to participate were:
   a. logged in as volunteer participants/assigned a unique number for anonymity;
   b. provided materials for full information on the research
   c. once signatures obtained, interview guardians and subjects on demographic information, guardians are then escorted to a lounge area to view a 30-minute video on citizenship practices and participants are escorted to the first of four survey stations;
   d. participants escorted to resiliency station to complete the resiliency survey (8 minutes);
   e. participants escorted to the citizenship pre test station to complete the citizenship survey (5 minutes);
   f. participants escorted to video on citizenship practices (8 minutes);
   g. participated is escorted to citizenship post test station to complete the citizenship survey again (5 minutes);
   h. participants escorted to incentive table for choice of 'hip hop' cap and $5.00;

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i. handout on citizenship is provided. Exit research.

All information and materials gathered for the research will be held in the strictest confidence. The principle investigator will place all research materials, consents/assents, and files in a locked receptacle for access only by the principle investigator.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

The research study will invite rural African American male youth volunteers between the ages of 12 and 19, inclusive, to participate by responding to a three-part survey on resiliency and citizenship. As required by law and ethics, the study in its total is reviewed and approved by the University of Central Florida's Institutional Review Board.

Pilot Study and Focus Group

A rural church, in a nearby Florida county, was the site of a pilot and focus group session, where rural African American male youth (N = 12) were invited to participate in a pilot of the research project. All components of the proposed project were in place. A Saturday date was established and rural African American male youth and their guardians came to the facility to participate in the project. Following the steps from log in, consent/assent, to focus group session, twelve (12) rural African American male youth completed the entire process.

Following the completion of the study, twelve (12) participants and three mentors stayed for a focus group luncheon to gain feedback on the research project. No guardians choose to attend after the consents were signed. The rural African American male youth were asked questions on resiliency and citizenship comprised of their overall feelings about the questions and what were the project's strengths and weaknesses? The youth

were very pleased with the video CD presentations of the surveys. They were highly responsive to the resilience scale and mentioned how they answered the statements based on their own experiences. The older teens were very pleased with being asked their opinions on all of the materials. The younger youth were more reserved in their comments. They did, however, like the movement and the pace of the process moving from one video area to the next. Most youth stated that the 15-minute video was too long. They would have preferred a shorter 'to-the-point' message about citizenship. Two participants did have some confusion as to why they would take the same survey on citizenship so soon after the video.

No guardians were present for the focus group. They dropped of their child and either came back long after the pilot was complete or made arrangements for their child to return home. This was a disappointing area of the pilot project as there was no guardian feedback. The three mentors were very encouraging about the materials and the research. They were impressed with the youths' interest and the ease with which they managed the survey process. The mentors referred to this as 'user-teen friendly". No youth at any time wanted to stop their process. They were all very enthusiastic and attentive in their desire to complete their surveys.

From the pilot and focus group session, the principal investigator will consider the following items. The 15-minute treatment video could be shortened to an 8-minute video with multiple subtitles running along the bottom of the screen. The pilot consisted of twelve (12) youth participants and three (3) mentors which was a good supervision ratio. The number of mentors will need to be increased to ensure this quality of youth

supervision and performance. The space requirements for the project were excellent during the pilot, which sets the standard for future space requirements.

Data Analysis

The data collected will underwent an analysis compilation using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) supervised by the dissertation committee. The sample population (N =99) of participants completed the survey process. Assuming normal distribution of the sample population with interval/ratio data, initial analysis included descriptive statistics, measures of central tendency with plot graphing, normalcy of univariate and multivariate data, analysis of variance tests, means testing with matched t-t test procedures.

Descriptive statistics were generated for all study variables. The central limit theorem provides the basis for determining the study's sample strengths. The data in the frequency distribution was summarized to provide a clearer picture of the study's results. Measures of central tendency were described the sample distribution by range, mean, mode, median, and standard deviations and will be used to determine the variability of scores from participant to participant. This univariate method of examining the data's normal distribution qualities will help to further describe the probability values of the theoretical population. Frequency distributions are often visually created into histograms, and bar chart techniques to better analyze the data. This involves examining participant responses on the two quantitative variables of resiliency skills and citizenship practices awareness to help describe that relationship between the two variables. The objective is to determine how much of the dependent variable, citizenship practices awareness, can be explained by the independent variable resiliency skills

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Hypothesis I examines the relationship between resiliency in rural African American male youth and their awareness of citizenship practices. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient is the statistical method that represents both the magnitude of the relationship between the two variables and the direction of the relationship, which in this study is believed to be a positive one. This is an important statistical procedure that measures the strength of association between resiliency and citizenship practices. It reflects how closely scores on the two variables go together. Use of scatter plotting will show the extent to which there is a linear relationship of the two variables. The statistical value indicates the direction of the relationship between the two variables. A positive relationship will be indicated by an increase of scores on the independent variable with an increase of scores on the dependent variable. The magnitude of the correlation coefficient will indicate the strength of the relationship and the two variables with a correlation value closest to ± 1.0.

An additional statistical maneuver is to measure covariance or how scores covary. By converting raw scores to deviation scores, a measure of how far each score deviates from the mean will be obtained. This covariance procedure is the average of the products of the deviation scores on the two variables and can measure the direction and the magnitude between the two variables helping to further describe the samples qualities. The Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient is the total statistical process that provides the strength of the association between the two variables. It also describes the linear relationship between the two variables and produces an index of the strength of the relationship between the two variables indicating the direction of the relationship.

Hypothesis II examined whether direct instruction of citizenship practices increases awareness of citizenship practices in rural African American male youth. The matched t-test statistical procedure relied on several assumptions: the scores are independent of one another; the scores in the populations are normally distributed; and, there is homogeneity of variance. By comparing the scores before the treatment and the scores after the treatment, the analysis determines whether the mean differences arise by chance or represent a true difference between population means. By conducting this statistical t-test for level of significance, a confidence interval can help to determine any changes in participant awareness of citizenship practices once viewing instruction of citizenship practices.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was constructed to compare means of the pre and post grouping scores along with the demographic data in order to determine whether the observed differences between them represent a chance occurrence or a systematic effect. The ANOVA compares the variability of scores within a group with the variability between the group means. If the variability between the group scores is considerably greater than the variability within group scores then the treatment of citizenship instruction will have been effective.

Demographic information is nominal or ordinal scale level and can be statistically analyzed for differences in terms of age, education, head-of-household relationship to subject, volunteer experiences, and employment experiences. Means differences testing were used to determine the differences and comparisons among the subjects' demographic factors. Using nonparametric statistical tests, through Chi-square distributions, examine the categorical data. Looking at the observed and expected

frequencies to determine the 'goodness of fit' examines how closely the observed frequencies fit the theoretically expected frequencies. Chi-square distribution is a theoretical distribution used to approximate the exact probability of the particular sampling distribution. Chi-square for two-way designs or contingency table analysis will be helpful when looking at two independent variables and a dependent variable in the form of a frequency count for proportions, probabilities, and percentages. Further use of nonparametric and parametric statistical methods will be used as is appropriate and useful to test for significance.

Summary

This methodology section discussed the details of the study's intended design, sample population and procedures for data analysis and data collection. It is imperative that rural African American male youth are empowered in their pursuits of self actualization and responsible adulthood. Resiliency is a key to that empowerment. Awareness of citizenship practices may improve the futures of rural African American male youth in the United States. The methodology of this research helped to ascertain the extent that rural African American male youth embody resiliency and are aware of citizenship practices.

The study helped answer the question as to whether or not there is a marked relationship between resiliency in rural African American male youth and their awareness of citizenship practices. Through guided videos, rural African American male youth participants will respond to surveys on resiliency and citizenship practices. By way of statistical analysis, tests for significance will describe this relationship. The study includes demographic factors that describe the sample's rural African American male

youth by age, current status in education, employment, community volunteering, household size, and household income.

Using an innovative format of interactive compact disk (CD) videos to encourage attention and accuracy in response to the survey questions, rural African American male youth subjects have more trust in the activities and provide authentic well though out responses to the surveys. Dillman (2000) accentuates this need for participant trust saying that, "people are seen as more likely to complete and return self-administered questionnaires if they trust that the rewards of doing so will, in the long run, outweigh the costs they expect to incur" (p. 26). Participants in the pilot focus group said they believed their responses were accurate because the videos helped them think about the questions. They liked the music introductions and the 'talking head' African male Americans on the screens. The participants noted they were comfortable with the instruments and could give responses not out of expectations but out of interest in their honest opinions. Overall, they felt that this project was fun, interesting and let them say what feel and think about their experiences in rural United States.

The importance of gaining further insight into the resiliency of rural African American male youth and their awareness of citizenship practices provides important baseline information for a rural community whose vision is to provide quality educational and employment opportunities for this population. The results of this study are described in this next chapter as it relates to this sample population's levels of resiliency, and awareness of citizenship practices.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF DATA

This study sought to determine the relationship between resilience in rural African American male youth and their awareness of citizenship practices. Resiliency is defined as the unpredicted or markedly successful adaptation of the individual to negative events, trauma, stress, and other forms of risk (Greene, 2002, p. 339). The concept of citizenship practice encompasses the enhancement and promotion of effective social and intellectual development. To examine these variables electronic survey sessions were set up at nine (9) sites in a rural central Florida County. Ten (10) demographic elements were also used to validate the sample as representative of the rural central Florida County used in the study. The results of the survey series are presented in this section.

The survey series included a standardized scale on resiliency, a pre/post citizenship practices survey, and a citizenship practices instructional treatment on 16 points of effective citizenship. Participants were asked to complete the entire survey series in one forty-five (45) minute session. Once participants completed the resilience scale (RS^{TM}), they moved to the survey on citizenship practices. After competing the 'pre' citizenship practices survey, they then they viewed an 8-minute instructional video explaining the sixteen (16) points of citizenship practices. Once finished viewing the instructional video, participants were asked to the complete the survey on citizenship practices once more as a 'post' survey on awareness of citizenship practices.
The citizenship practices questionnaire was constructed from sources produced by the National Council of Social Studies (NCSS).

There were ten (10) demographic elements relating to the participant: town of residence, age, years lived in the county, last grade completed, household income, employment experience, community volunteer experience and guardian information included: relationship to participant, level of guardian education, and current employment of guardian. Demographic data analysis was used to gain a cohort description of experimental participants.

Data were analyzed to investigate two hypotheses: (1) there is a positive relationship between resilience and awareness of citizenship practices; and, (2) that direct instruction would increase the impact of the awareness of citizenship practices. The results and full descriptions of these analyses are presented in this section.

Background

Ninety-nine (99) subjects who were from a rural county in central Florida, between the ages of 12 and 19 inclusive, participated in the study over the summer of 2005. This voluntary approach, using a convenience sample research design, was originally planned for five (5) sites. It was then expanded to include nine (9) sites to increase outreach and participation within these three distinct areas that have a predominance of African American residents in the county. Although the original goal was a 200-subject sample, the ninety-nine (99) subject sample is a vigorous sample size, representing approximately 25 percent of this particular population in this rural county. The availability of subjects in the summer of 2005 was diminished for several reasons as described below.

The expansion from five to nine sites was necessary for a number of reasons. The primary reason was largely due to unusual and inclement weather conditions. Throughout

the summer of 2005, there was a continual stormy experience which deterred those who do not have transportation and could not walk to the site without getting drenched from the soaking rains.

A second prevailing influence was accessibility due to a lack of participant transportation to the original sites. Lack of transportation is a common in rural settings because the family vehicle is used for work priorities first and there is minimal public transportation. A third reason for low participation in the survey was the perception that the event was a 'test'. There was some belief from participants that they could not convince friends to participate because it appeared to be a 'test'. Even though the incentive was very marketable (hip-hop cap and a five dollar bill), there was an apprehension tied to participation. As subjects participated in the survey process, they appeared to understand the task and gave the process their undivided focus. The research depended on referral and church announcements to build community confidence in the project. The expansion of site events from five (5) to nine (9) helped to build community confidence that helped to increase the participant representation throughout the county.

The Survey Process

The survey process consisted of four (4) TV/DVD stations, each with its own interactive electronic questionnaire presentation. Participants were handed a packet of three paper surveys that corresponded to the four survey stations. Participants were asked to take each survey in sequence of: 1) resilient scale; 2) citizenship practices (pre instruction); 3) instructional video treatment; and, 4) citizenship practices (post instruction). The participants scored each of the surveys assisted by interactive videos. These videos involved a 'talking head', an African American male young adult, who

reads and repeats each question, while the participant follows along on a survey sheet and responds to a Likert-scale range of response choices. Participants enjoyed the CD video format and were easily able to complete the surveys within the allotted time at each station. Each CD video was designed for optimum interaction with male youth.

Station One (1)was a face-to-face interview where ten demographic elements were obtained to help characterize the sample's environmental experiences including participants' own employment and volunteerism experiences. Station Two (2), the resilient scale, began the series of interactive surveys. This scale was created and standardized by Drs. Gail Wagnild and Heather Young (1988) for the purpose of "identifying the degree of individual resilience, considered a positive personality characteristic that enhances individual adaptation" (p. 167). It is a 26-item questionnaire on a Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Internal consistency and test/re-test reliabilities have been supported as well as construct and concurrent validity. "The strengths of the resilient scale include its internal consistency, reliability, concurrent validity with established measures of adaptation, and preliminary construct validity indicated by the factor analysis" (Wagnild & Young, 1988, p. 173).

When participants completed the resiliency survey at Station Two (2) they moved to Station Three (3) for the citizenship practices survey. The National Council of Social Studies defines an effective citizen as "one who has the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to assume the 'office' of citizen in our democratic republic" (p. 319). In 2001, the National Council of Social Studies (NCSS) published a 10-point position on being an effective citizen. Of the 10 points, four (4) were selected to construct a scale on

citizenship practices, for this study. This survey emphasized the personal responsibility of being an effective 'citizen', encompassed in four (4) of the Council's 10-points.

The citizenship practices survey was extrapolated from the four points so that four (4) questions addressed each of the four points, creating a 16-item questionnaire on a Likert scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always).. This survey is utilized as a pre/post test design to determine whether explicit instruction on citizenship practices treatment can help youth better recognize how the choices and activities in which they participate are in actuality citizenship practices. A benefit of this survey was to aid participants in a more explicit understanding as to how they contribute to their personal well-being and the well-being of their families, and their communities.

Once participants completed the citizenship practice survey at Station Three (3) they moved on to the 8-minute instructional video on the 16-points of effective citizenship in Station Four. The video refers to an enlarged poster positioned alongside the TV/DVD listing the sixteen points of effective citizenship that is described in the video. All participants were exposed to the treatment. The number of young people in the community that fit the criteria for this study was relatively small and did not lend itself to a comparison design.

After viewing the video, the participants moved to Station Five (5) where they again score the same citizenship practices survey used in Station Three (3). The purpose of this video training session is to improve their understanding of what it means to be an 'effective citizen'. Participants now take the survey again, after they have had direct instruction on citizenship practices. Participants were observed as very interested, willing, and eager to provide their personal assessment in the surveys.

Analysis of Data Overview

The central limit theorem assumes that, with sufficiently large samples, every social phenomenon is normally distributed and that the characteristics of the distribution of values approximate the general population from which a sample is taken (Shavelson, 1996, p. 53). In this study, a convenience sample of participants occurred seeking as many subjects as possible from the general population of African American male youth in a rural county in central Florida. Several preliminary investigations were necessary including using the mean and median comparisons to look for skewness, attempting to examine possible biases encompassing the statistical analysis.

To begin the analysis of this research data, the independent variable, resiliency, and the dependent variable, awareness of citizenship practices, were measured by scaled instruments. Subjects completed surveys on resiliency and awareness of citizenship practices, resulting in a score for each. The variables were interval level measurement, upon which statistical procedures important to the study were utilized and include: the mean, variance, standard deviation, regression, t-tests for significance, and Pearson's correlation coefficient.

Two predictions are considered for examination. Along with demographic information, descriptive and inferential statistics are used to check for normalacy of the data, using charts and graphs for visual and statistical scrutiny. Much of the sample's data was normally distributed (N = 99).

Population and Demographic Characteristics (All respondents)

The research design was a convenience sample (N = 99) of rural African American male youth, ages 12 to 19 inclusive. The subjects were advised of the voluntary

nature of the research. The study was conducted in areas of the county that have considerable proportions of African American residents. From the U.S. Census Bureau (2000) the county's population was 62,500 of which approximately 9,000 were African American residents. The 2000 Census reported that there is 16.1 percent rate of children under the age of 18-years-old which calculates approximately 1,500 African American children in this central Florida County. The local school board of this same county has data for children in grades kindergarten through 12th grade which accounts for approximately 1,200 African American school age children. These general approximations provide a rough estimation of forty-eight (48) African American males per age from birth to 19-years-old. There are clusters of predominantly African American residents in several towns and outlining unincorporated areas in the county.

The research project sought out sites at churches and community buildings within these areas of predominantly populated African American areas to help ensure proportionate representation of African American male youth with the sample. The study was conducted during the summer months only. In this way, there could be less of a contamination effect of the study sample to the community as a whole. In addition, repeat visits to a similar site within the county were not made on subsequent weekends. The subjects were less apt to have conflicts of availability since school was out of session for the summer. School in session generally comes with sports and other weekend school activities that would interfere with participation in the study. Additionally, the study was conducted during weekend days when it was more likely that the legal parents or guardians were available to sign the consent to participate. The following Tables describe

the demographic data gathered from participants as a group. Table 3 presents the

demographic characteristics of the research subjects by age and grade completed.

Table 3: Demographic Frequencies (All respondents)

Participant by Age & Grade Completed (n=99)	Frequency	Percent
Age		
12	19	19.2%
13	16	16.2%
14	14	14.1%
15	10	10.1%
16	13	13.1%
17	12	12.1%
18	7	7.1%
19	8	8.1%
Grade		
4th	1	1.0%
5th	6	6.1%
6th	17	17.2%
7th	10	10.1%
8th	15	15.2%
9th	11	11.2 %
10th	16	16.2%
11th	15	15.2%
12th	8	8.1%

In ascending order from youngest participant to oldest participant there were 19

subjects aged 12 (19.2%), 16 subjects aged 13 (16.2%), 14 subjects aged 14 (14.1%), 10

subjects aged 15 (10.1%), 13 subjects aged 16 (13.1%), 12 subjects aged 17 (12.1%), 7

subjects aged 18 (7.1%), and 8 subjects aged 19 (8.1%). This is a good representation of

the range of ages with some diminished representation among the 18 and 19-year-olds.

These adult teenagers were more reluctant to participate. They are more influenced by the

peer perceptions believing the survey event would not be 'worth' the effort to enter the

site room and participate. Participation is perceived as a 'child' activity or a controlled

activity where once they entered the site they would not be allowed to leave at will. The

adult teenagers, who did participate, however, were very earnest and sincere in their participation and felt free to express their opinions and ideas.

Participants' last grade completed in ascending order from 4th grade to 12th grade show frequencies in the following order: one subject completed the 4th grade (1.0%), 6 subjects completed the 5th grade (6.1%), 17 subjects completed the 6th grade (17.2%), 10 subjects completed the 7th grade (10.1%), 15 subjects completed the 8th grade (15.2%), 11 subjects completed the 9th grade (11.1%), 16 subjects completed the 10th grade (16.2%), 15 subjects completed the 11th grade (15.2%), and 8 subjects completed the 12th grade (8.1%). None of the participants have gone on to additional schooling, either vocational or academic learning.

There were 15 participants aged 18 and 19, with only 8 of those participants completing the 12th grade. There were twenty-five participants aged 16 and 17, of which 15 have completed the 11th grade. The remaining fifty-nine (59) participants aged 12 to 15, have completed grades 4th through 10th. Being an effective citizen requires employment experience. Living in rural environments in the United States makes getting a job and keeping a job a challenging effort. Youth living in rural America know the challenges of finding work. Minority youth exponentially understand the difficulties associated with holding on to work. Table 4 presents participant experience in employment and volunteerism.

Table 4: Participant Experience in Employment & Volunteerism (All respondents)

As a Group (n=99)	Frequency	Percent
Job Experience		
Current Job Experience	47	47.5%
Past Job Experience	13	13.1%
No Job Experience	39	39.4%
Volunteerism		
No Experience	31	31.3%
One or two events	60	60.7%
Three +	8	8.1%

Almost half of the participants (47.5%) are currently working in some capacity. Some are working full time, some part time, and some are picking up jobs as they can on a day-to-day basis. About one third of the youth participants offered in conversation with the survey team after completing the survey, that a parent or other family member expects them to work, but finding the dependable transportation needed to keep a job is very difficult. They are also expected to be help relatives at jobs on weekends and evenings and receive cash for their efforts. In addition, finding a 'good job' is very problematic according to the youth. Even minimum wage jobs that are more than part time, are difficult to obtain and sustain. The costs to get to work and back, often are prohibitive for a part time employment position. In spite of this, youth report that they do work from time to time mostly for family or neighbors.

In the last six months, over sixty percent of participants have volunteered at least once or twice. Eight percent of the participants reported volunteering three or more times in the last six months. Nearly one-third of the participants (31.3%) have not volunteered in community events or activities. Most of their volunteer opportunities were with their church or school. Some participants offered a perception that they are not often asked to help at community functions.

Table 5 outlines the demographic data on the participants' guardians. The table includes the frequencies of the relationship of the guardian to the participant, the guardian's level of education, and the guardian's employment status.

Table 5: Participants' Guardians' Level of Education & Employment Status

As a Group (n=99)	Frequency	Percent
Guardian Relationship		
Self	15	15.1%
Parent	66	66.7%
Grandparent	7	7.1%
Other Relative	11	11.1%
Guardian Education		
No High School Diploma	22	22.2%
High School Diploma	52	52.5%
Post High School Education	10	10.1%
Guardian Employment Status		
Employed	51	51.5%
Disabled	23	23.2%
Retired	2	2.0%
Unemployed	8	8.1%

NOTE: The remaining 14% in Guardian Education and Guardian Employment Status are 18 & 19-year-old Adult Teens.

Fifteen of the participants were 18 and 19 years old and therefore were categorized as not having a guardian because they are of legal adult status. Nearly sixty-six percent of the participants' guardians were one or both parents. Seven percent of the participants' guardians were one or both grandparents, and eleven percent of the participants' guardians were other relatives, such as an aunt and/or uncle, sibling, or cousin.

The Guardian Education category showed twenty-two (22) guardians (22.2%) with no High School Diploma. Fifty-two of the guardians (52.5%) did achieve a High

School Diploma either by completing school or obtaining a General Education Degree (GED). Ten of the guardians (10.1%) have achieved post High School Education such as some college, college graduate, or other vocational training.

The Guardian Employment ratings showed fifty-one (51) of the guardians (51.5%) are currently employed. Twenty-three of the guardians (23.2%) were disabled, two of the guardians (2.0%) were retired, and eight of the guardians (8.1%) were unemployed. The fifteen participants who were legal adult age, most have had employment or are now employed. Adjusting for those participants who are of legal age the figures show that nearly two thirds of the guardians (62.3%) are either employed or retired. This is a strong indication of the work ethic and effective citizenship practices of the participants' guardians.

Information in Table 6 describes the frequencies of participants' Household Size and Household Income.

Table 6: Participants' Household Size & Income (All respondents)

As a Group (n=99)	Frequency	Percent
Household Size		
1	8	8.1%
2	9	9.1%
3	26	26.3%
4	13	13.1%
5	27	27.3%
6	12	12.1%
7	4	4.0%
Household Income		
$5,000 – 15,000	18	18.2%
$15,001 – 25,000	29	29.3%
$25,001 – 35,000	18	18.2%
$30,001 +	34	34.4%

There are eight (8.1%) participants who live on their own. Nine participants (9.1%) live in households of two persons. In ascending order, the following remaining

household sizes are as follows: twenty-six of the participants (26.3%) are in 3-person households; thirteen of the participants (13.1%) are in 4-person households; twenty-seven of the participants (27.3%) are in 5-person households; twelve of the participants (12/1%) are in 6-person households; and, four of the participants (4.0%) are in seven-person households. There were no households in the study that exceeded seven-persons.

In terms of household income, participants in the study present income levels as follows: eighteen of the participants (18.2%) are living within the $5000 to $15,000 range, twenty-nine of the participants (29.3%) are living in the $15,001 to $25,000 range, eighteen of the participants (18.2%) are living in the $25, 001 to $35,000 income range, and thirty-four of the participants (34.4%) are in living the $35,001+ income range. The household income frequencies identified that nearly half the subjects live in households with incomes under $25,000, with just over half of the subjects living in households with incomes over $25,001. One third of the subjects live in households with incomes over $35,001.

Bivariate Analysis & Hypothesis Testing

This study's interest was to examine levels of resiliency in rural African American male youth. A standardized scale was created and utilized by Wagnild and Young (1993). This Resilient Scale (RS^{TM}) is a twenty-six item survey used to measure the degree of individual resilience. Items are scored on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Totaling all items arrives at an overall resilience score. Possible scores range from 26 to 182 with higher scores reflecting higher resilience. Scores of 147 and above are considered high scores, with scores of 121 to 146 falling within the mid-range, and scores lower than 121 are considered to reflect less

resilience. Authors Wagnild and Young (1993) found that their efforts to standardize the resilient scale (RS^{TM}) with various subject cohorts, demonstrated that a "reliability coefficient alpha has shown a strong pattern (r = .61 to .91) in standardizing efforts." The resilient scale (RS^{TM}) has been used for over 10 years with consistently good results.

Shown in Figure 1 is the resilient scores distribution which includes the mean and standard deviation ($\underline{M}$ = 130.1, sd = 25.39) and indicates a score set in the high mid-range to the high range in scores. In determining the level of resiliency in this county's sample of rural African American male youth, the Resilient Scale (RS^{TM}) measures the degree of the participants' resiliency. Although the distribution is slightly skewed, the median score (133) points to more than half of the scores are in the mid-range, suggesting a quality resiliency level in this sample population.
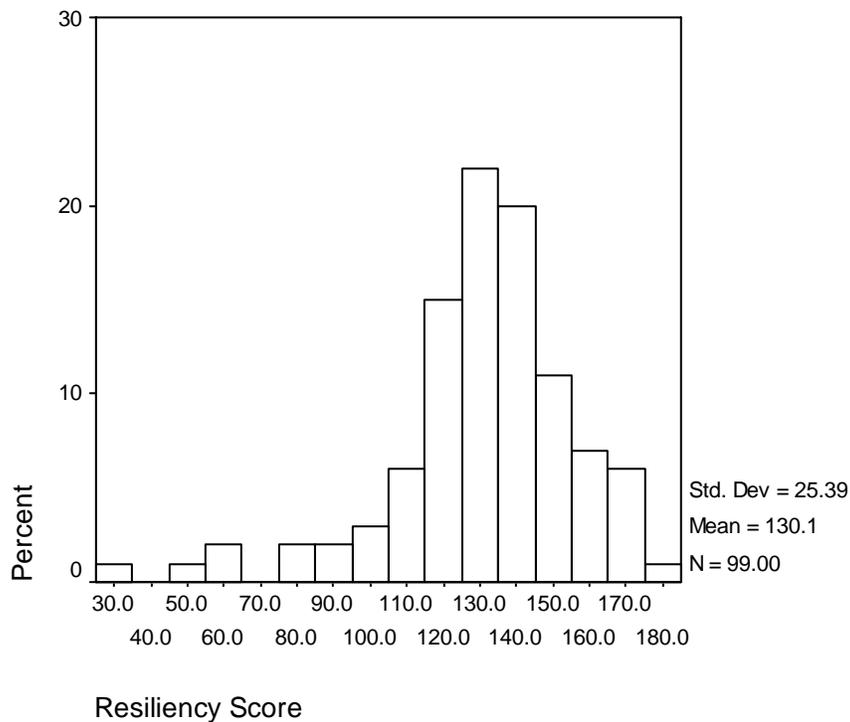

Figure 1: The Resilience Scale (RSTM) Range

To determine the level of awareness of citizenship practices in rural African American male youth, a 16-point questionnaire on citizenship practices was designed to measure the degree of individual awareness of citizenship practices. Items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (never) to 5 (always). Totaling all items arrives at an overall awareness of citizenship practices score. Possible scores range from 16 to 80, with higher scores reflecting higher awareness of citizenship practices. Scores of 56 to 80 are considered high, scores from 32 to 55 falls within the mid-range, and scores lower than 31 are considered to reflect lesser awareness of citizenship practices. Five of the 16-point questions are phrased in the negative, and therefore are scored backwards on the 5-point Likert scale from 5 (never) to 1 (always).

Figure 2 below illustrates the scores from participants taking the citizenship survey prior to viewing the instruction video on citizenship practices (Pre). It reflects a mean score ($\underline{M}$ = 56.03, sd = 7.36) with a range in scores from a minimum of 39 to a maximum of 76 and is a normally distributed score set.

Std. Dev = 7.36
Mean = 56.0
N = 99.00

Citizenship Pre Score

Figure 2: Citizenship Practices Survey Scores Prior to Viewing the Instruction

Figure 3 below, presents the scores from the same participants taking the

citizenship practices survey after viewing the 8-minute instructional treatment video on

the 16-points of effective citizenship practices (Post). It reflects a mean score ($\underline{M} = 57.93$,

sd = 7.28) with a range in scores from a minimum of 41 to a maximum of 80 and is a
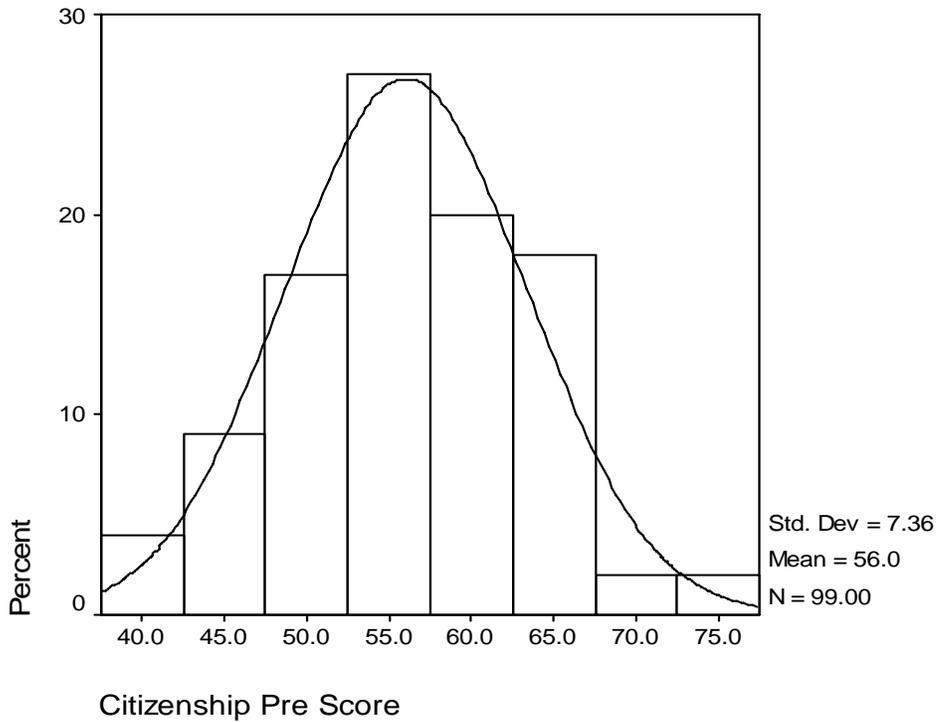
normally distributed score set.
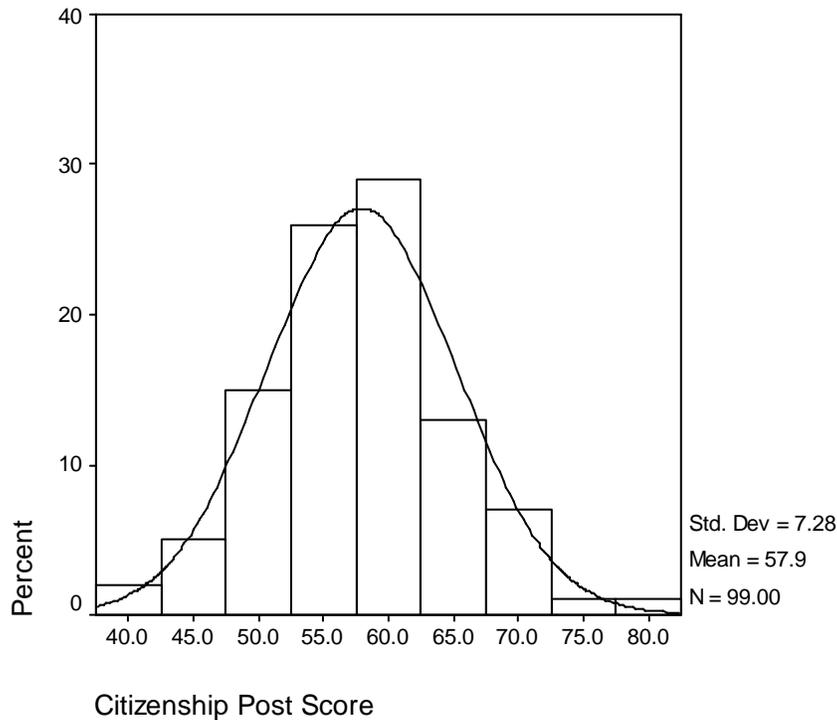
Figure 3: Citizenship practices survey scores after viewing the instruction

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis I

Hypothesis I in this study posits that there is a positive relationship between the resiliency in rural African American male youth and their awareness of citizenship practices. Resilience is the independent variable, with awareness of citizenship practices as the dependent variable. There are two sets of scores for awareness of citizenship practices. The first set of scores are participant surveys done prior to participants viewing an instruction on citizenship practices (Pre), and the second set of scores are participant surveys done after participants viewed an instruction on citizenship practices (Post). The tables and the figures below display the statistical significant findings of this study in three illustrations using the citizenship practices (post) data. Using the scores of

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awareness of citizenship practices (post), which are the scores of the survey after

participants viewed the video, provides a more accurate picture of the relationship

between resiliency and awareness of citizenship practices, given that the post scores

reflect participants' newly gained insight into their awareness of effective citizenship

practices. Table 7 presents the Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient,

representing the magnitude of the relationship between the two variables and the

direction of the relationship. The test statistic reveals a highly statistical significant

relationship between resiliency, in this sample of African American male youth, and their

awareness of citizenship practices with a positive direction (r =.256, p = 0.005 one-

tailed). Using the scores from participants' resiliency survey (RS^{TM}) and the scores from

participants' survey on citizenship practices after the instruction treatment, there is a

statistically significant correlation at the one-tailed level (0.005).

Table 7: Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient
Correlations

Descriptive Statistics	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Resiliency Score	130.10	25.39	99
Citizenship Post Score	57.93	7.28	99

Correlations

		Resiliency Score	Citizenship Post Score
Resiliency Score	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.256
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.010
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	63182.990	4644.707
	Covariance	644.724	47.395
	N	99	99
Citizenship Post Score	Pearson Correlation	**.256	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	4644.707	5194.505
	Covariance	47.395	53.005
	N	99	99

** Correlation is significant at the 0.005 level (1-tailed).

In a second statistical procedure using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to exam the importance of the variable relationship, the procedure again looked at resiliency in this county's rural African American male youth and their awareness of citizenship practices. Table 8 displays the F-test for significance through SPSS procedures resulted in a prediction equation on resilience and citizenship practices awareness (post) as: Post Cit = 48.4 + .074 x R ($p = 0.01$, $F = 6.825$, $df = 98$).

Table 8: F-Test for Significance in Resiliency and Citizenship Practice Awareness (Post)

Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.256	.066	.056	7.07

Predictors: (Constant), Resiliency Score

F-Test for Significance/ANOVA[b]

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	341.442	1	341.442	6.825	***.010**
Residual	4853.063	97	50.032		
Total	5194.505	98			

* significant at the 0.005 level (1-tailed)
Predictors: (Constant), Resiliency Score; Dependent Variable: Citizenship Post Score

Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	48.365	3.729		12.969	.000
Resiliency Score	0.0735	.028	.256	2.612	.010

Figure 4 displays the 'best fit' regression line for the resiliency scores of participants and their corresponding citizenship scores after viewing a citizenship practices (Post) instruction video. This displays, in graph form, the statistically significant positive relationship of resiliency and awareness of citizenship practices that demonstrates the previous corresponding prediction equation.

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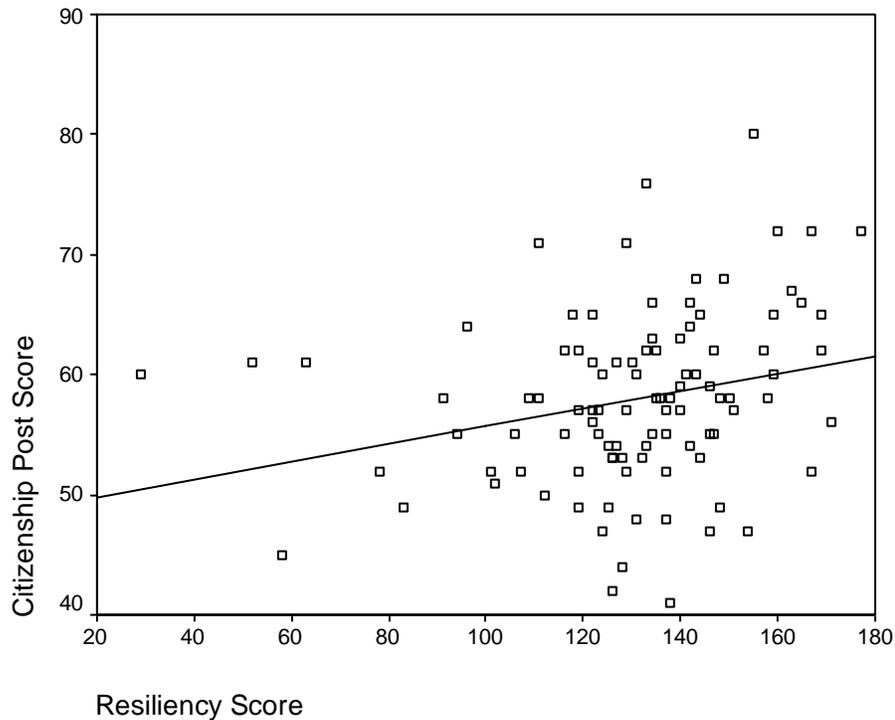
Figure 4: 'Best Fit' Regression for Resiliency and Citizenship Practices Awareness

From all indications this leads the researcher to reject the null and find that there

is a positive statistically significant relationship between resiliency in rural African

American male youth and their awareness of citizenship practices (post). Perason's

Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient has demonstrated the strength of the

relationship ($p = 0.005$, one-tailed). The F-test for significance ($F = 6.825$) provided a

second way in which to exam the relationship between the two variables of resiliency and

awareness of citizenship practices. The best fit model of regression demonstrates a

statistically significant relationship ($p = 0.005$) between the participants' resiliency scores

and their corresponding awareness of citizenship practices (Post) scores. The Hypothesis

I is accepted with participants' resiliency scores positively related to awareness of

citizenship practices (Post) scores.

Hypothesis II in this study questions whether direct instruction of citizenship

practices can increase awareness of citizenship practices in rural African American male

youth. Using the paired t-test statistical procedure requires accepting the assumptions for

t-test significance which includes: the scores are independent of one another; the scores

are normally distributed, and, there is homogeneity of variance. By comparing the

participant survey scores prior to the instruction video (Pre), with the participant survey

scores after the instructional video (Post), these assumptions of t-test significance were

accounted for. In the analysis of mean differences statistical procedures indicate a level of

significance that is more than chance. Table 9 displays that the t-test/paired samples one

tail test shows that participants had significantly (p=.0015) different mean citizenship

practices awareness scores from before and after the instructional video.

Table 9: Paired t-test for Significance

Paired Samples Statistics

Citizenship	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre Score	56.03	99	7.36	0.74
Post Score	57.93	99	7.28	0.73

Paired Samples Correlations

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Citizenship Pre Score & Citizenship Post Score	99	.629	.000

Paired Samples Test

Citizenship	Paired Difference in Means	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of Difference		t	df	Sig. (1 tail)
				Lower	Upper			
Post – Pre	1.90	6.30	0.63	3.16	0.64	**2.998**	98	**.0015**

The Paired t-test for significance procedure compares each of the participant's citizenship awareness (Pre) score with the same participant's citizenship awareness (Post) score. The procedure maintains the ordering of all participants and compares each participant's paired scores so that predominantly those participants with a high pre test score also scored high in the post testing. Similarly, the participants who scored low in the pre-test scored in the lower range of the post-test. In some cases, scores varied somewhat with differing score comparisons yet even so, the Pearson's correlation coefficient (r = .629) is strongly significant for sample size (p = .000, n = 99). The pre and post measures are positively correlated and as expected in t-testing the matched pairing maintained the ordering which is statistically significant. Not only the participant average increased but the whole group increased from the treatment video of direct instruction on citizenship practices.

From all indications this leads the researcher to reject the null and find that direct instruction of citizenship practices can increase awareness of citizenship practices in African American male youth in this rural county in Central Florida. Through the use of an 8-minute instructional treatment, participants were provided with information on citizenship practices. These findings suggest that, at least in the short run, citizenship education benefits all of the participants. The outcome data indicates that the paired t-test pre/post scores of the participants shows a highly statistical significant difference between the citizenship practices scores (p = .0015, df = 98, t = 2.998) in favor of increased awareness of citizenship practices.

The instructional poster of 16-points of citizenship practices was displayed along side the viewing of the 8-minute instructional video treatment. Once the participants

completed the process of surveys participants were welcomed to congregate outside of the survey room. There, participants were offered refreshments and often engaged in an open, informal conversation which included their observations and views of the study. Participants shared that they thought the process was cool. They referred to the 16-points of citizenship practices poster and talked in general about how to better their decision-making and their future goals. Participants chose certain points of the instruction that they thought were interesting and wanted to talk about volunteering and finding viable meaningful work.

Summary

The focus of this research examined two hypotheses regarding African American male youth (N = 99) living in a rural central Florida County. One hypothesis was to determine the relationship between resiliency in African American male youth and their awareness of citizenship practices. The second hypothesis was formulated to examine whether direct instruction of citizenship practices increases the awareness of citizenship practices in rural African American male youth.

All tests enabled rejection of the null hypotheses. Both Hypothesis I and Hypothesis II were found to be statistically significant. Using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) several procedures were used to determine a basis for each hypotheses' strength. In Hypothesis I, Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient evaluated the data which resulted in a statistically significant ($p = .005$ one-tailed) relationship between the participants' resilience scores and their awareness of citizenship practices (Post). Hypothesis I was further supported when looking at their resilience and their awareness of citizenship practices in F-test approach to data analysis. In a third procedure

offering a graphically view of the positive relationship between resiliency and citizenship practice awareness the best fit model of regression demonstrated a statistically significant relationship (p = .005, one-tailed) between participant's resiliency scores and their corresponding awareness of citizenship practices (Post) scores. The null hypothesis is rejected. Participant scores in resiliency are positively related to their scores in awareness of citizenship practices The results suggests that the higher the resilience score, the higher the awareness of citizenship practices in this population of rural African American male youth. This is a very important finding in that both resilience and citizenship practices are 'teachable' concepts from which rural African American male youth can benefit. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

Hypothesis II examined a pre-post test of significance looking at participant scores on awareness of citizenship practices. It was determined through paired t-test analysis that citizenship instruction does significantly increase mean citizenship practices scores (p =.0015, t = 2.998). Participants completed a survey on citizenship practices taken before viewing an instructional video on citizenship practices. Participants then completed the same survey on citizenship practices again after viewing an 8-minute instructional video on citizenship practices. It was strongly anticipated that there would be a strong positive relationship between resiliency in African American male youth and her awareness of citizenship practices. Once the procedure for two tailed revealed a statistically significant correlation (p = .000, r = .629) there could be a further procedure to confidently state that the one-tail, paired t-test for significance could also indicated a statistically significant relationship (p = .0015) in awareness of citizenship practices when

direct instruction of citizenship practices was provided to rural African American male youth in this sample population. The null hypothesis was rejected.

This chapter has examined the relationship of resilience and awareness of citizenship practices in this population of rural African American male youth. In addition, examination of the impact that direct instruction on citizenship practices can have on the awareness of citizenship practices with rural African American male youth was carefully investigated. Data analysis using Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, F-test for significance, best fit regression, and paired t-test for mean differences resulted in statistically significant findings. The null was rejected for both Hypothesis I and Hypothesis II.

There is a significant positive relationship between resilience in rural African American male youth and their awareness of citizenship practices. There is also a significant positive t-test for comparing means in pre-post testing on awareness of citizenship practices when direct instruction is offered. The results showed a significant impact on this population when providing direct instruction on citizenship practices. There are other areas of examination as to what other variables may be influential in impacting resiliency and citizenship practice awareness that can be investigated in future study. This current hypothesis testing has important implications for this population that will be further discussed in Chapter 6. Conclusions, implications, limitations, and future studies will be comprehensively addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMENDATIONS

This chapter will explore the importance of this research study and its implications for the resiliency and the awareness of citizenship practices in rural African American male youth. Included, in this discussion is how the research can be furthered and what it means to policy, services, and programs for rural African American male youth. Throughout the summer of 2005, ninety-nine African American male youth, from a rural central Florida County, participated in a set of surveys looking at the relationship between their level of resiliency and their awareness of citizenship practices.

In the section on, *Conclusions: The Importance of Resiliency,* the focus is on the study's findings and the impact of resiliency in the rural African American male youth participants. Resiliency is believed to be an inherent set of behaviors and thought processes. It is also a 'teachable' aspect for one's life sustaining assets and tools. Youth in this study reveal themselves, at least in this survey, to have high levels of resiliency. There was a positively skewed distribution of resiliency scores in this research study. It indicates that this sample population of rural African American male youth showed positive evidence of resiliency ability and skill.

The section on *Conclusions: The Importance of Citizenship Practices* accentuates the need for more civic instruction and modeling efforts for rural African American male youth. With less civic instruction in public schools it is even more necessary to find ways to help them gain access to these important concepts and practices. This chapter includes

a section on the *Limitations* of the research primarily due to the convenience sample design.

The value of rural African American male youth, their families, their neighborhoods, and their communities can be enhanced through studies like this one to help the established economic development officials address the disparities in this population's employment gaps. A full review of *Research Implications*, *Policy Implications*, and *Recommendations* are offered in this chapter to focus on efforts that protect, encourage, and create a place for rural African American male youth to succeed.

Background Review

The methodology, of three (3) electronically enhanced paper surveys on resiliency and a pre-post survey set on citizenship practices, was an effective design for the hypothesis testing. The treatment for the pre-post citizenship practices was a direct instructional video on citizenship practices. An innovative CD video medium was used as a unique and effective survey method. The participants were asked to take each of the surveys assisted by interactive videos. These videos involved a 'talking head' who, as an African American young adult male, read and repeated each question, while the participant followed along on a survey sheet, responding to a Likert-scale range of response choices to each question. Participants enjoyed the CD video format which helped them to complete the surveys.

Each CD video was designed for optimum interaction with male youth. Dillman (2000) explains that, "Tailored design surveys help to create respondent trust, and a perception of increased rewards, with reduced costs for being a respondent, which helps with the overall accuracy in responses (p. 27). This innovative format of compact disk

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(CD) video media was tailored for the participants, in order to obtain the elements of social exchange outlined above. Each of the two short surveys were in CD format. Each included Africa American 'talking head' young adults stating the questions twice, paced with eye contact, and an obvious, sincere interest in motivating participants to respond from their 'authentic' place rather than from expectation. In addition, contemporary beat music was integrated into the design of the electronic survey with a colorful background. This active format was intended to entertain and engage the participants, holding their attention to the process while responding to the survey questions.

The first instrument consisted of a standardized twenty-six-item (26) survey on resiliency, accompanied by the interactive video to capture the perspectives of the participants. This was followed by a sixteen-item (16) survey on citizenship practices in a pre-post design that was also through interactive video. The treatment of the pre-post citizenship practices procedure, was direct instructional video on citizenship practices. By comparing the survey scores before viewing the citizenship practices video instruction, with the scores after viewing the citizenship practices video instruction, the resulting analysis was shown to be statistically significant. Two hypotheses were posited and the data was processed through the functions of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) which revealed statistically significant outcomes for both. The null hypothesis could be rejected for each of the study's research hypotheses.

Hypothesis I stated that there is a positive relationship between resiliency in rural African American male youth and their awareness of citizenship practices. There was found to be a statistically significant ($p = .005$) positive relationship between resiliency in rural African American male youth and their awareness citizenship practices. In the

Resilient Scale (RS^TM) instrument, this cohort of rural African American male youth demonstrated mean and median scores ($\underline{M}$ = 130.1, sd = 25.39) which represents a solid mid to high range set of resiliency scores. This is an encouraging finding that helps emphasize the importance of resiliency as a protective factor that rural African American youth can use to offset the societal biases that exist when growing up Black in America.

Hypothesis II stated that direct instruction of citizenship practices increases awareness of their own citizenship practices in rural African American male youth. The scores for awareness of citizenship practices, both pre and post instruction, were normally distributed. Moreover, this study identified that with direct instruction, this sample population responded positively, at least in the short run, to learning more about citizenship practices. A brief instructional video was presented, designed to increase awareness of citizenship practices, at least in the short term, for participants in this study. In this study indications are, that through direct instruction, there is a statistically significant (p = .0015) impact on participants' awareness of citizenship practices. Research analysis of a pre-post t-test, using a citizenship practices video instruction, appears to help participants add to their awareness of citizenship practices.

These findings are set within the sobering context of data that portrays the critical social issues in which this sample population of rural African American male youth encounter. Issues include social competence, educational opportunities, and access to quality employment, which are often in the deficit column during their growing adolescent development. There warrants a heightened need for strategies and interventions that can increase self-actualization in this population of adolescents in the United States. In this central Florida County, where the research was conducted, the

demographic data display these deficits in the lives of the county's African American

male youth population. The most prominent statistic is the staggering reality that only

forty-six (46) percent of African American males achieve high school graduation.

As example of the high risk experiences these rural youth face, in most rural

communities, employment opportunity is perceived to be based on an individual's

entrepreneurial capability. Many cottage industries, merchant venues, and agricultural

vocations are the substance of rural lifestyles for which African Americans are often

deprived based purely on race criteria. It is another aspect of discrimination for which

African American male youth often face. This study effectively highlights the strong

protective levels of resiliency and awareness of citizenship practices, which can help to

offset perceptions that rural African American male youth are ill prepared to be a part of

the community's economic infrastructure.

Conclusions: The Importance of Resiliency

"Despite the enormous progress made in 'race' relations, as through dismantling

segregation of schools and public access, and the emergence of African American

political elites, racism is alive an well in America" (Hare, 2002, p. 8). The author

continues by saying that the challenge in this on-going social justice effort of equitable

opportunity and access is to approach each person as an individual rather than as a

representative of a stereotyped group. In this way, newer approaches for African

American male youth to be productive and viable workers would promote individual

gains while allowing race pride. The author suggests that a new culture and conversation

may prove more fruitful than any other harmonious discourse across purported 'race'

lines and still allow for addressing matters of ethnic and cultural discrimination (p. 29). It appears that resiliency is important in that dialogue.

Even though there warrants focus on all differing populations of African Americans in the United States, there are definite grounds for particular focus on the rural adolescent and young adult African American male. Focus on the rural African American adolescent male may indeed work to the advantage of the entire rural African American population's well-being and efficacy which, correspondingly becomes an advantage to the greater rural community.

Over centuries, African American males have been subjected to various prejudical and discriminatory practices. By lifting these prejudices African American male youth can further access their right to equality and their desire to effectively provide for their families, their neighborhoods, and their communities. Without persistent effort to impact these incessant prejudices and racist positions, there will be no equality for anyone. McAdoo states very clearly that, "an important issue is why the negative image of black males and fathers is so strongly embedded in the psyches of so many professional family social scientists" (McAdoo, 2002, p. 4). The author goes on to explain that the reasons for this embeddedness lie in three historical circumstances: economic isolation, enslavement, and the carryover of African family forms that differ from Western forms. Concentrating on resiliency skill and ability with rural African American male youth can help to effect change towards more equitable life experiences while reducing these race issues.

The contemporary portrayal of African American men in the media only adds to negative images. It perpetuates racism towards African American men throughout their lives which is unjust and illogical. This racism has isolated them from such necessary and

basic democratic rights in the world of work and education and is seemingly and unfortunately ingrained in the fabric of Western societies. It has been the resiliency of African Americans that helped them persevere and gain their rights to access and opportunity.

"Resiliency is the unpredictable and marked successful adaptation of the individual to negative events, trauma, stress, and other forms of risk" (Greene, 2002, p. 339). African Americans meet daily challenges of many forms of racism such as, color bias, prejudice, and institutional racism. Resiliency is a core proactive factor necessary to offset the cultural barriers found in American society which often prevent black youth to succeed and achieve. There several qualities within resiliency, which include attachment, resourcefulness, self-efficacy, and self-esteem, most of which can be enhanced through instruction and practice.

Wagnild and Young (1993) offered five such elements of resiliency as they developed their Resilient Scale (RS^{TM}). These elements included: *equaniminity*, the balanced perspective of life; *meaningfulness*, a sense of purpose in life; *perseverance*, the ability to keep going despite setbacks; *existential aloneness*, the recognition of one's unique path and the acceptance of one's life; and, *self-reliance,* the belief in one's self and capabilities.(p. 167). Wolin and Wolin (1999) suggest that *trust*, *initiative*, *attachment,* and *self-control* are several important aspects of resiliency (p. 74). There are other elements important to mention having to do with *physical health*, *positive temperament*, *self-esteem*, and *social support* that have its place in the realm of resiliency attributes (Haggerty, 1992, p. 203). Most of the elements associated with resiliency have an accommodating aspect that lends itself to instruction.

The importance here is that this study's rural African American male youth, on the whole, were adequately aligned with resilient characteristics. This sample population had a positively skewed distribution of resiliency scores which indicates they have developed skill and ability to successfully adapt to negative events in their lives. A model of services and interventions may utilize this strong resilient attribute, helping to increase their economic opportunity potential beginning with their education.

Other studies have found resiliency to be an integral part of one's ability to persevere and succeed in school (Fraser, Kirby & Smokowski, 2004; McAdoo, 2002; McCubbin, et al, 1998). Helping youth to access more of their inherent resilient tendencies, by learning through instruction and practice, can potentially better their opportunities in life's meaningful educational and vocational experiences. As example, by obtaining the knowledge of the concept of initiative, an element of resiliency, one can then recognize and practice inventiveness, resourcefulness, and ingenuity. The possibilities are unlimited, which makes resiliency both an inherent quality and an extrinsic characteristic from which a person can build effective citizenship skills.

Fraser, Kirby, and Smokowski (2004) support this aspect of direct learning of resiliency by saying that, "resilience is related with having a 'resilient temperament' or with personal characteristics of resourcefulness, such as achievement, motivation, efficacy, and high intelligence. And although resilience emerges in some children for a tenacity of spirit and personal attributes, resilience appears to be less a personality trait than the dynamic interplay between adversity and a variety of both personal and environmental assets that suppress or mediate risk" (p. 22).

Resiliency teaching and practice for a group of youth, such as the sample population of this research study, has important implications. In the rural central Floridian county in which the study was conducted, statistics for the last seven years have shown a persistent, unsatisfactory low high school graduation rate of forty-six (46) percent of African American male youth in the county. This means fifty-four (54) percent of this population is dropping out before they have completed their baseline education. As described in previous illustrations, the most prevalent reasons for this low graduation rate among this study's African American male youth are both historic and systemic.

Historically there have been artificial societal barriers constructed to control and diminish access and opportunity for African American males in the United States. The current system of discriminating against African American male youth truncates their educational pursuits to the point of poor school mentoring and poor recognition of their resiliency strengths. With more emphasis on their strengths that continue to build on their attributes such as, initiative, trust, and self-control, rural African American male youth can better reach their aspirations. These and other characteristics of resiliency can be advantages to youth in their living environments such as school, home, neighborhoods and community where teachers, family, neighbors, and other adults can recognize these youth attributes especially through mentoring.

There are many forms of mentoring. In the Consumer Guide (2005) of the Office of Research, Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) of the U.S. Department of Education, mentoring is, "from the Greek word meaning enduring--is defined as a sustained relationship between a youth and an adult. Through continued involvement, the adult offers support, guidance, and assistance as the younger person

goes through a difficult period, faces new challenges, or works to correct earlier problems. In particular, where parents are either unavailable or unable to provide responsible guidance for their children, mentors can play a critical role" (p. 2). The guide notes that there are two types of mentoring: natural, and planned. Natural mentoring occurs through friendship, collegiality, teaching, coaching, and counseling. In contrast, planned mentoring occurs through structured programs in which mentors and participants are selected and matched through formal processes.

Adults can accentuate their mentoring role with resiliency skill-building practices. In services and programs for rural African American male youth, they can be encouraged to build up protective factors while reducing risk factors in their lives. It is suggested that resiliency accommodates instruction and positive direction for rural African American male youth. Through intentional development of materials that focus on the elements of resiliency, communities can improve the rate of educational achievement with equal success in helping African American male youth inside and outside of the classroom and in their personal lives. Youth must be encouraged to learn through practice and example how to integrate into their own lives the steps and objectives of resourcefulness, achievement, motivation, effective problem-solving, sound decision-making, trust, and enterprise, all of which resides within the concept of resiliency.

Conclusions: Importance of Citizenship Practices

For several decades, instruction of civics has become minimized in public school curriculums throughout the nation. In fact, civics is not a mandatory subject in most of public educational systems across the United States. At best, it is an elective, at worst it does not exist in the school curriculums. However, civics is at the core of being an

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effective American citizen. Without the focus at school, citizenship practices are all but lost to our youth. Citizenship practice is a learned set of skills that, without reinforcement, becomes less and less viable in adolescent development. The National Council on Social Studies (NCSS) purports that "at every grade level, students should have opportunities to apply their civic knowledge, skills, and values as their work to solve real problems in their school, their community, the nation, and the world" (2001, p. 319). It is incumbent on the community to help youth learn how to develop skills in effective citizenship practices.

There is a reciprocal dynamic between effective citizenship practices and the way in which youth contribute to the family and to the community. For example, as youth are guided in the principles of effective problem-solving techniques, good decision-making practices will follow. In the NCSS's position statement the council suggests that, "students should be provided with opportunities to participate in simulations, service-learning projects, conflict resolution programs, and other activities that encourage the applications of civic knowledge, skills, and values" (p. 319).

From this study's sample population, the research indicates that awareness of citizenship practices can be enhanced by direct instruction. The scores from the rural African American male youth of this study were paired in a pre-post measure to test the level of understanding information about practicing citizenship. Using an 8-minute instruction on 16-points of citizenship practices as the treatment, participants' scores indicated that, at least in the short run, when direct instruction on citizenship practices is offered, there is a statistically significant (p= .000) change in their awareness of citizenship practices as indicated by the pre/post test for significance. These young

people have a role to play as effective citizens in a democracy. The community and the youth can work hand-in-hand to promote the common good by empowering youth to exercise their obligations as citizens for overall community well-being.

The study helps to highlight how important it is to further personal responsibility. At its core is the ability to practice effective citizenship. Of the ten (10) points in the NCSS's position statement, four are directly related to personal responsibility. The four points are: 1) Accepts responsibility for the well-being of oneself, one's family, and the community; 2) Seeks information from varied sources and perspectives to develop informed opinions and creative solutions; 3) Uses effective decision-making and problem-solving skills in public and private life; and, 4) Actively participates in civic and community life. The questions on the survey illuminated the areas of personal responsibility to effective citizenship practices (see Appendix B).

The study's examination, of citizenship practices in rural African American male youth, found that, at least in the short run, they are able to understand and engage in the concepts of citizenship practices. The results, from youth participants' responses, found that there was a statistically significant impact in their understanding and awareness of citizenship practices. Questions like 'I show I care about people by sharing the responsibility for the situation' and 'I help my community by being a volunteer' are met with strong affirmation from the youth's responses. The scores from the pre/post t-test were statistically significant ($p = .000$) and demonstrates that this population of rural African American male youth has the ability to learn and respond to questions of personal responsibility in the context of effective citizenship practices.

"The corner stone of the (mental and physical) health of an adult is the capacity to take care of one's own (significant others) and of one's own self" (Hare, 2002, p. 100). Here, the author furthers the value of developing civic characteristics that can encourage the mechanisms through which successful career employment is made possible. Personal, mental, and physical health are aspects of one's life that is paramount to accessing opportunities. This accentuates the importance that for every American to access not just any job, but a job that lends itself to a career and a fulfilling life's vision and passion.

Another civic characteristic is community partnership. Youth who have the recognition and affirmation from the community-at-large often cull a synergistic experience of connection and enhancement of community relationships that often add to an overall prosperity for society. It can also enhance a greater economic foundation on many levels of rural American life including the well-being of the individual, the family, the neighborhood, and the community-at-large. Therefore, rural African American male youth could greatly benefit from volunteering in the community.

Community partnership often begins with volunteerism. Often people find ways in which to engage in the greater community interests in helping serve others who are in need of help with health, economic assistance, and other related social services. Volunteerism is a way in which effective citizenship practices are developed and sustained. Individuals and groups, who volunteer their time and effort for their communities, often help to increase the local economy, local partnerships, and local politics. Examples of volunteerism include endeavors such as, building housing for first time home owners, helping provide financial support to children with debilitating health challenges, and ensuring that the areas' environments are clean and toxic free. Here,

youth involved in volunteering, meet and connect with others, which, over time, develop

a youth's community partnership base.

From volunteering, youth are exposed to opportunities to seek information and

advice from others. People in this environment of volunteering to help may have

suggestions for solving current problems, or suggestions as to how to manage stress

effectively. In active environments with adult volunteers, there is opportunity for youth to

meet and interact with adults who model values in personal health, regard for educational

pursuits, and social competence. In this way, rural African American male youth are

exposed to a greater variety of information, beliefs, vocations, and even ethical practices.

Improved outcomes for youth have at its root the experiences of positive adult

relationships that characterized by trust, affirmation, and meaningful collaboration.

Youth can be more prepared for life's challenges when they are in environments that

offer this kind of camaraderie where encouragement and affirmation can be trusted. Here

youth will receive suggestions on where to read up on information to handle life's

challenges, or how to proceed on a plan with focus and directness. Participating in

community activities provides youth endless inspiration and knowledge for reaching their

personal goals and employment objectives.

"Citizens in the twenty-first century must be prepared to deal with rapid change,

complex local, national, and global issues, cultural and religious conflicts, and the

increasing interdependence of nations in a global economy' (NCSS, 2001, p. 319). The

council strongly advocates that "our students should leave with a clear sense of their

rights and responsibilities as citizens" (p. 319). An important implication from this study,

directs attention to the importance of a community giving rural African American male

youth positive opportunities to participate in work and voluntary experiences. This kind

of preparation can increase an overall self-actualization process without the artificial

barriers of racism and bias that currently exist and retard wholesome development to

adulthood.

Limitations

This study derived its sample of subjects by convenience and availability,

therefore the sample is not a true random sample of the theoretical population. In an

effort to create as close a representative sample without randomization, the study was

conducted on nine (9) separate days, in five (5) different community settings where a

predominance of African Americans reside. Consequently, this study can only speak to

this particular population with little generalizability to other geographical areas or

communities of African American youth.

A second area to consider is that of the study's examination of awareness of

citizenship practices rather than measuring the participants' actual practices of

citizenship. This emphasis of seeking information about the participants' awareness

levels of citizenship practices, although valuable, is not the same as measuring what

indeed they actually do to practice citizenship. Additionally, it is to be noted that this

study's results, from rural African American male youth (N = 99), are viewed in the

context of the participants' responses at the time of the survey. Therefore, the results are

described, that at least in the short run, as there were statistically significant outcomes

from their responses to resilience and awareness of citizenship practices.

Despite these limitations, the findings hold keys to the way in which rural African

American male youth can adopt techniques and strategies that will influence their future

access and opportunities in education and employment successes. With the help of an interactive video surveying design, this population responded to the questions with some candor. Follow-up studies would be beneficial to examine what, if any, possible long-term effects would arise from this sort of informational surveying and instructional presentations. The study's information may lead to useful interventions and programs, aimed at increasing the high school graduation rate among this population and therefore increasing economic security for themselves and their families.

Research Implications

Emerging from this research is an encouragingly positive profile of rural African American male youth. This population often is portrayed in negative terms of maladaptive behaviors. These portrayals tend to be artificial and can only exacerbate the negative profiling of African American male youth. These portrayals are discriminatory barriers that often diminish personal achievement and success. This research study highlights a population of African America male youth, between the ages of 12 through 19, who are well-equipped to develop into successful adults, functioning in family, community, education, and career aspirations.

The results suggest, from this sample group of rural African American male youth, that at least in the short run, possess more than adequate ability to learn the concepts of citizenship practices. It appears that through the pre-post treatment video instruction, participants gained further and more accurate knowledge of citizenship practices. This may indicate that citizenship practice is an important asset for meeting life's challenges. Rural African American male youth deserve on-going structured

experiences with mentoring and guidance to actively learn and practice techniques for building satisfactory long-term, character-building citizenship practices.

The importance of the family, in respect to protective and risk factors, is well established (Garmezy, 1991; Greene, 2002; Norman, 2000; Werner, 1992), yet this alone does not fully assist rural African American male youth in surmounting obstacles of institutional racism and prejudice. What is necessary entails increased methods of stewardship outside of the home for this youth population to actuate positive results to increase productive citizenship methods. Programs, for African American male youth, help to bridge the focus from family to community for more mutual accountability. Youth in this atmosphere can receive affirmation more consistently and regularly. With more positive exposure in the community comes more positive recognition that can dispel old discriminatory portrayals of the Black male. Programs designed for African American male youth will promote more effective access to sound educational and employment goals.

Additionally, programs, with this population in mind, will encourage the natural adolescent developmental processes upon which social competence is built. Greene (2002) points to social competence as a hardy component of self-preservation which often appears to develop in the midst of adversity (p. 302). The author suggests that individuals draw upon systems that generally foster competence in such a fashion as to help protect the self from difficult conditions. These are the kind of services and programs inextricably needed for young African American males who, for generations, have been disenfranchised from such positive and resourceful avenues of child and adolescent development.

Programs designed to promote social skills and social competence in rural African American male youth would help to promulgate an extrafamiliar social environment with rewards, recognition, and proficiency towards reinforcement of healthy belief systems. An intended consequence of such pragmatic designs would be to raise up social competence to a level where rural African American male youth can uphold positive social behaviors while preventing serious risk factors that have plagued them for decades. Social competence consists of opportunities for active participation in social environments, as well as opportunities for effective participation in community enterprises. Social competence is related to the full use of one's resilient capabilities. Recognition for participation is an important aspect of civic activities that often motivates maturity and many aspects of good character. Currently, our rural African American male youth are faced with multiple risks that require more prevention. Such risk factors include: improper sex activities, drug and alcohol use, impulsive and aggressive violence, and other potentially habitual negative behaviors. Civic practices, among other things, can help to prevent these risk issues (Howard & Dryden, 1999; Schudson, 1998).

Resiliency and citizenship practices are two interactive concepts that can positively impact African American male youth in their American rural life. The research on resiliency and awareness of citizenship practices indicates that rural African American male youth have substantive attributes that point to their potential ability to be successful achievers in any area of career choice. This is important because achievement is a precursor for normal adolescent development. In this central Florida County, from which the research sample was drawn, there is a consistently low graduation rate among this adolescent population of African American males. This is certainly an unacceptably low

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rate of high school achievement in any target population. From this research investigation it is noted that this low rate may not be because of lack of resilience or awareness of personal responsibility as American citizens. Rather, there may be other cultural and societal influences such as, discriminatory school tracking practices, harsh discriminatory juvenile law enforcement customs, and discriminatory barriers to entry level jobs for black male youth that have become significant barriers for these young people.

Access to developing social competence, volunteerism, and a community spirit have been truncated for African American male youth and are known barriers that have existed for decades (Ginsberg, 2000; Gordon, 2002; Joseph, 1995; Miller, 1999; West, 1993). Further innovative and instructional interventions would benefit rural African American male youth in their pursuit of quality adult development. In rural environments there are important reasons for wanting African American male youth to achieve and sustain there future goals because their historic communities are depending upon them to do so.

A more implicit effect in creating access and opportunity for rural African American male youth has to do with the essential economic stability not only for local African American neighborhoods but for the greater communities throughout the county. When looking at the African American neighborhoods within the county, it is evident that each of these neighborhoods has a prevailing existence of land and home ownership handed down through the generations of Black Floridians. After the civil war, in 1865 and up to the turn of the 20th century, enough freed men and women found central Florida to be amenable to raising families and living in communities where they could be property owners. There was, of course, a dominant attitude of racism and prejudice that

randomly and insidiously jeopardized Black citizens' rights, but in most cases, they were able to obtain and maintain their property rights. They were also able to will their property to their children. These long-time, Black-owned neighborhoods are known in the vernacular as the 'subs.'

To this day, many of the home owners in the 'subs' continue to will their estates to their children, however, this practice is experiencing a frustrating lack of resources from the current generation to afford the taxes, or the needed renovations that come with home ownership. The legacy of historically Black-owned property is in jeopardy. It can only be perpetuated by the next generation's ability to pay the taxes and afford that upkeep and renovation of the inherited property. It is equally imperative that rural African American male youth engage in services and programs that support them to this end, as the next generation of Black property owners. "Children and adolescents who have many opportunities for economic development, growth, and achievement are less likely, than those without support, to reject pro-social values out of frustration and anger. They are more able to achieve their hopes and aspirations" (Fraser, Kirby,& Smokowski, 2004, p. 43).

There is an important economic context to understand why there needs to be more effective focus on creating avenues that encourage competent adolescent development in rural populations. The results of this study certainly help to direct that focus with persuasive findings that rural African American male youth have statistically significant levels of resiliency, and at least in the short run, statistically significant learning outcomes from direct instruction on citizenship practices. With these interactive characteristics reinforced enacted, rural African American male youth can better access

opportunities in education and employment that can help to uphold the integrity of the historically Black-owned homesteads.

Policy Implications

Youth, in rural American life, face unique economic challenges finding work, and maintaining viable transportation. The major challenge is finding meaningful work. The U.S Census Bureau (2000) data provides important insight into these challenges. In data, specific to the rural central Florida County, from which the sample population was taken, a broader picture of the county's demographic and economic circumstances are extrapolated. The county's population is approximately 62,500 of which 9,000 or 13.8 percent are African American. The median income (2000) is $42,073, with the head of household's income as $16,830. The census also points to business factors that include: 518 private non-farm establishments with paid employees, 2100 merchant and services industry, over 500 distribution and factory outlets, with only fewer than 20 minority-owned firms.

Productive employment is the cornerstone of any American's ability to sustain the well-being of one's self, ones' family, and one's community. Employment must be viable and sufficient to cover not just the basics of daily living, such as shelter and utilities, but gainful employment is necessary for meaningful success in supporting family and community. Rural African American male youth have been consistently underemployed and underutilized, making rural community infrastructure weakened and strained (Gordon, 2002; Joseph, 1995; McAdoo, 2002; Slack & Jensen, 2002).

Geographic influences for minority youth also increase limited access to educational and employment opportunities. African American male youth, living in rural

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geographic areas, continue to be an underutilized human resource for local economic growth in the U.S., largely because of the low economic development that does not go beyond agriculture and mercantilism (Slack & Jensen, 2002). High rates of unemployment and underemployment of African Americans evidenced by data from the U.S Census Bureau (2000) show that rural African Americans are only about half as likely as rural white Americans to be employed.

It may be helpful to compare the total population of the U.S. with the total population of African Americans to gauge the enormity of the issues African Americans face in the U.S. According to the U.S. Census Bureau data, the total number of all employed Americans is approximately 72.2 million workers out of the total U.S. population of 281.4 million. Of that, 72.2 million workers, 6.6 million are in poverty, which equals nine (9) percent of the total population. Of the 34.3 million African Americans in the U.S., there are 8.2 million workers of which 1.8 million are below the poverty level. This equals twenty-two (22) percent of African Americans in poverty and represents more than twice the poverty rate than that of the general population.

This picture, of the United States' current poverty issues, includes all geographic areas of rural, urban, and suburban. It highlights how stunning an impact employment issues are for rural minority communities throughout the U.S. For African American male youth in rural geographic areas, these pervasive poverty experiences, diminishes their ability to support their families or create savings for the future and old age. Poverty is the most pervasive barrier facing rural minority youth (Greene, 2002; Joseph, 1995; Gordon, 2000; Slack & Jensen, 2002; West, 1993).

Public policy statues, such as the most recent "*No Child Left Behind Act*", and other rules and laws for children with educational learning disabilities, with efforts through community-based child safety programs, and the juvenile justice system, indirectly provide services to rural African American male youth, but does not effectively serve them in ways that protect and provide them with skills and strategies to succeed and achieve. Joseph (1995) points to research that exams tracking in schools as it relates to delinquency in black youth. "Tracking is the practice of assigning students to groups based on the school's assessment of the child's ability and potential for the future" (p. 14). The author notes that researchers have found that this tracking is more arbitrary than factual, and that the labeling of students is weighted by class and race. Joseph describes the detriments that students experience from 'tracking' which includes school staff perceptions in the tracking activities that are not substantiated facts (p. 14). It was found that African American male youth are subjected to stricter regulations than their white counterparts, which lead to tougher consequences than their white counterparts.

Even with positive levels of resiliency skills and appropriate protective factors, rural African American male youth experience greater academic failure, the absence of participating in extracurricular activities, and have an increased tendency to drop out of school. In short, African American male youth must employ their reserve of resiliency skills to the extent of exhaustion, just to meet the daily discriminatory tracking practices that occur in American public schools. Joseph contends that these staff discriminatory perceptions in the tracking systems have caused undue strain on the adolescent with unfair outcomes of a greater number of maladaptive behaviors for these youth that does not exist in higher track curriculums (p. 14).

There are many studies that support this issue that rural African American male youth experience tracking to a much greater extent than any other student group which decreases their ability to achieve and contribute to the communities in which they live even though they have appropriate levels of resiliency skills (Gordon, 2000; Hare, 2002; Joseph, 1995). Presently, African American youth lag behind white youth in income, employment, and education (Gordon, 2002; Hogan, 2001; Slack & Jensen, 2002). Addressing the underlying problems for existing racial inequality must continue to produce policies that will bring economic and social parity for rural African American male youth. It is imperative to adequately address the dilemma African American youth face in their rural schools and communities.

Local policy efforts in both education and community development would benefit from an analysis of current processes, seeking ways to direct more positive access and opportunities for rural African American male youth in their education and employment. The study examined the resiliency and awareness of citizenship practices accenting a person's ability to increase their awareness of civic activities including employment and educational opportunities. Local authorities, including elected school officials and council members, often recognize the problems that result from discrimination, but often fail to recognize the artificial barriers that perpetuate inequalities that rural African American male youth must tolerate. When local elected officials seek community development opportunities they would do well to focus on the young citizens of their county who can participate in, not only job training and job placement, but focus on a broader view of community involvement that can contribute to the career-building

perspective for youth as well. Meaningful support of its youth citizenry can strengthen the overall stability of the county's viability.

This research study looked at the concepts of resiliency and awareness of citizenship practices. Each of these concepts has, at its basic premise a personal responsibility and commitment to self-improvement and civic duty. Public policy on education and minority youth employment could identify explicit enhanced structures and funding sources that emphasize resiliency skill building and civic practice opportunities. This study's findings indicate that there is a positive relationship between resiliency in rural African American male youth and their awareness of citizenship. Policy endeavors could provide criteria that support rural African American male youth and their development of these factors could increase youth citizenship practices as an accepted rite of passage. Youth can make important contributions to their communities through civic skill opportunities, such as service projects, conflict resolution programs, and simulations of applications of civic knowledge, skills and outcome-based results.

With policy- driven outcomes, communities could more accurately assess and measure rural African American male youth educational attainment factors to determine how better to increase their successful completion of high school. Using resiliency and citizenship practices guidelines, policy initiatives can provide citizenship practice instruction to help more minority students become aware of ways they can participate in civic activities for more minority student awareness of their own access and initiative to participate in civic activities. Youth participants in the study during informal conversation noted that the video instructional treatment on awareness of citizenship practices offered those insights and idea for civic activities, such as volunteering in their

community more often. At least in the short run, study participants were quite receptive to the instructional video on citizenship practices.

The National Council on Social Studies (NCSS) points to being an effective citizen requires employment experiences. Civic practices lead to employment opportunities and successful educational achievements augments civic aspirations. This is a much needed vision for rural African American male youth in the United States.

The African American community has a responsibility to work towards the reduction of delinquency among African American youth. The African American community is central to the socialization of African American youth through formal and informal networks that help to encourage youth's innate recognition of citizenship practices. Together as a county, officials and voters can bring more complete community vitality for African American male youth with greater opportunities in education and employment career-building.

This effort can create a more vital and stronger inter-related community. "At the community level, recent research has coined the term 'collective efficacy' to reflect the ways in which extra familiar social support and connectedness affect child development" (Fraser, Kirby & Smokowski, 2004, p. 44). The authors posit that child development extends beyond the family and that provision of support is a characteristic of effective neighborhoods with shared values, beliefs, and expectations to the degree to which neighbors are willing to take action on behalf of others in the spirit of protecting and encouraging the next generation.

Recommendations

It is important that research and policy continue to focus on specific issues that can effectively dismantle discrimination and racism that have plagued African American male youth for decades. African American male youth, who live in rural areas of the United States, often experience discrimination much like the African American male youth in urban areas with some unique differences. Issues of greatest importance, for youth in rural environments, consist of fulfilling the basic of expectations of unhindered access and opportunity to quality education and employment experiences. Innovative and successful interventions for rural African American male youth to access these basic expectations are imperative to offset the staggering school drop-out rates and maladaptive behaviors that erroneously characterize this oppressed population. There appears to be potential in creating services that emphasize the relationship between resiliency skills and citizenship practices for rural African American male youth.

As indicated from this study's examination, rural African American male youth have remarkable resiliency as evidenced by their scores on the Resilient Scale (RS^{TM}). Equally important, the study indicated a statistically significant and positive relationship between resiliency and awareness of citizenship practices. It appears that this cohort of rural African American male youth, at least in the short run, has the ability to positively engage in their educational and employment goals. Within resilience are valuable attributes to meet social and emotional challenges which can enhance greater educational and employment achievement. Knowing the attributes of resiliency and adding the teaching of citizenship practices contributes to youth developmental maturity. After school, evening, and weekend programs focusing on the values of citizenship practices

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and the attributes of resiliency skills can help to motivate youth in developing further intrinsic and essential personal character and integrity.

A model of programs and services for rural African American male youth directs the attention and performance in the two areas of resiliency and citizenship practices. The outcome desired would be to measure the contributions to the vitality of local communities and neighborhoods. One such measure would be to determine if there are lower rates of discriminatory processes towards this population as evidenced by higher rates of school graduation and more viable employment rates.

A model of intervention with rural African American male youth could be supported with core fundamental teaching and assignments that emphasize citizenship practices. Programs combining activities that interest male teenagers, such as sports, video games, and music, with earnest civic practices, would be especially beneficial for African American male youth. Integrating action and movement with instructional information in designed formats will help youth to understand the advantages of balancing recreation with civic responsibility to the community. This combination of recreation activities and civic duty activities can ultimately better manage their self image and their skills in citizenship.

Rural African American male youth are well prepared to contribute to the robust fabric of society through effective citizenship practices. Opportunities for citizenship practices such as, volunteerism, part time work, community event participation, and young part politics, are ways in which rural African American male youth can become viable members of their communities. Through mentoring and other programs that

support these youth there are important outcomes for them that help to decrease discrimination towards them and increase their future goals.

Quality education, leading to meaningful work, is vital for any adolescent development. In the case of rural African American male youth, purposeful focus on their needs to achieve and succeed without prejudice can decrease the issues they face living in rural geographic areas of the United States. Currently, communities and their governing officials are burdened with the absence of sufficient remedies to address the outcomes that exist by ignoring the needs of rural African American male youth.

Economic and social issues are costly when ignored in society. Treating societal issues, on the front end with preventative measures, can positively impact not only the child and his family, but the neighborhood and the greater community. A research agenda must be developed to include all areas related to rural African American male youth. These areas focus not only on their educational and employment opportunities, which are paramount to their future, but also on the aspects of their social competence, their volunteer interests, and their family obligations. Clearly, there are important unanswered questions that warrant examination to pursue what more can be developed for rural African American male youth that will aid in the efforts to overcome adversity, and enhance their overall achievement in American society.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the resiliency of rural African American male youth and their awareness of citizenship practices. It is important to examine resiliency in rural, African American, male youth and how that resiliency interacts with their awareness of citizenship practices because the skills from

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both of these concepts can positively enhance adolescent development. Another purpose of the study was to determine if direct instruction of citizenship practices would increase awareness of citizenship practices, at least in the short run. Rural African American male youth have typically faced discrimination and racism in every day life.

Resiliency alone is not enough to protect themselves from dropping out of school, or support them in seeking viable employment. With more explicit understanding of citizenship practices these youth could create more effective coping mechanisms helping to defeat social and racial barriers that persist in their lives. This may create the potential to enhance resiliency in African American male youth, for which the community can respond in more quality citizenship opportunities for youth.

This process of support, for rural African American male youth, is imperative in the development of a local societal infrastructure that can better meet their needs with less arbitrary barriers of discrimination or prejudice. Shudson's (1998) conclusion on the state of citizenship practice and unequal participation, due to barriers of race profiling and biased competition, includes a powerful observation when he says, "all that is required to criticize the present state of affairs is to know that some serious injustices persist, that some remediable conditions that limit human possibility lie before us, and that resources for reconstituting ourselves can be found" (p. 313).

In this study on resiliency and awareness of citizenship practices, evidence lies in favor of rural African American male youth's effectiveness. How these factors impact rural African American male youth and what intervention models would be effective warrants more investigation. Future research may involve examining ways to enhance coping skills, foster social support networks, and further a model for effective

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intervention for those African American males who live in geographic rural areas of the United States. From this study, on the relationship between resiliency and the awareness of citizenship practices, the potential exists to provide a comprehensive model of effective interventions.

Services and programs that are singularly focused on rural African American male youth may well lead to dismantling existing artificial discriminatory barriers. With decreased barriers to opportunity in education and employment, rural African American male youth can concentrate on their personal goals and achievements. The African American community, which is losing its youth in large numbers on a daily basis, has a responsibility to reverse this trend and can do so with a model that includes resiliency and citizenship practices. "Ignoring the problems of its youth will have grave consequences for the black community" (Joseph, 1995).

The number of African American males who can achieve a stable and strong economic status is far below this population's potential. Gordon (2002), strongly emphasizes that "despite enormous gains in educational attainment and marked improvements in employment opportunities, black males continue to be over represented among the poor in the United States" (p. 126). The author further asserts that "it is alarming that from research findings, black males account for a larger percentage of the poor than they do of the population as a whole" (p. 127). The author notes that there appears to be an increase in the number of Black males reporting no income at all, which appears to contribute to the declining labor force participation rate.

This lack of a living wage for African American males has at its roots the lack of educational and work opportunities. With greater civic recognition and more worthy

societal involvement, African American male youth may be able to effect their own future with greater emphasis on their natural and learned capacity for resiliency and awareness of citizenship practices. In this way, both African American male youth and the community-at-large benefit from stronger economic stability in every neighborhood, propped up with meaningful support and mentoring.

This kind of model, that includes resiliency and citizenship practices, may be a quality prevention strategy to decrease the past irrational, yet historical, notions that rural African American male youth are below average intelligence, and are expected to be underemployed based on racial attributes and subsequent racial barriers. Besharov (1999), echoes this position, adding that when "the essential ingredients are attainable, young African American men can help themselves develop into healthy, productive adults" (p. 148). Essential ingredients include wholesome school experiences of academic achievement, extracurricular participation, and social competence. When regular and consistent social experiences exist, the community can respond with a non-discriminatory approach to help support educational, vocational, and career efforts. Rural African American male youth will benefit from this support to reach their goals of independence and viable citizenship unhindered by the past artificial prejudices and unfair profiling.

Intervention modalities with rural African American male youth require a strengths-based perspective that concentrates on how they develop positive attributes and skills. A focus on fostering mechanisms that lead to encouraging resilience and teaching effective citizenship practices would be a beneficial approach for their development. . This research study suggests that resiliency and awareness of citizenship practices in rural African American male youth is a statistically significant positive relationship. There

appears to be the potential to develop effective tools from this pair of factors by which practitioners can effect growth and change in this population of rural African American male youth. The research also points to a significant level of awareness of citizenship practices, at least in the short run, through direct instruction of citizenship practices.

What is central to this work is that both the variables of resiliency and citizenship practices are 'teachable' concepts. There are several institutes and volumes of literature on the concept of resiliency. The qualities of resiliency such as: attachment, trust, self-control, and initiative, are amenable to instruction and application. Paralleling the teachable attributes of resiliency are the features of civics or citizenship practices, well-known to be elucidated through instruction and practice. The NCSS (2001) and its position on effective citizenship, purports volumes of research and teaching materials that help youth learn, practice, and become accomplished in this aspect of American life.

It is an important function for a person to be resilient in the face of life's challenges, especially in a discriminatory and race-prejudiced society. It also is inextricably essential that an American understand his citizenship rights and obligations. American society often supports competition and a perception of a 'no-holes-barred' attitude in sports, gaming, and media venues. Competition, however, has an uglier side where personal attacks, based on race, become difficult to guard against. African Americans have faced multiple societal 'bullying' that challenges personal worth and self-esteem. While the study is limited to the population of rural African American male youth, all rural youth deserve more beneficial interventions to prevent this insidious type of irrational competition that bases its prejudices on race, color, creed, gender or class. Broader applications to all rural youth including girls, Asian Americans, Hispanic

Americans, and Euro-Americans, certainly has merit in seeking ways in which to access their resiliency and heighten their awareness of citizenship practices. The strategies of resiliency and citizenship practices have its place in the essential work of equal opportunity and protection against this type of 'bullying'.

Crucial to an individual's citizenship development is the mindfulness of the community that provides meaningful social support. Schudson adds that, "Rights are not necessarily opposed to community…however rights redefine the character of community" (p. 293). Therefore, citizenship practice becomes a 'hands-on' activity, begun in youth, for a lifetime of opportunities to exercise rights and personal responsibility.

Acquisition of citizenship practices can require individuals to undergo a process that often is called assimilation. Yet, for African American youth specifically, it is a process that can feel like 'treason' to their culture and their race. 'The socio-economic and cultural networks of modern democracy makes this identity displacement, the precondition for full citizenship, a practically impossibility" (O'Brien & Penna, 1996, p. 191). Rural African American male youth will benefit from an inclusive atmosphere that allows them to fully develop their duty as an American citizens with access to their rights, and to equal education and employment, without having to feel as if they must abandon their valued race identity that helps them buffer discrimination and prejudice.

By enhancing the inherent resiliency of rural African American male youth, the community has the opportunity to effectively support their adolescent development. By encouraging awareness of citizenship practices there is potential to provide access and opportunity that will help these youth become quality citizens. West (1993), aptly

demonstrates the association between citizens and community by saying "one essential step is some form of large scale public intervention to ensure access to basic social goods – housing, food, health care, education, child care and jobs, we must invigorate the common good with a mixture of government, business, and labor that does not follow any existing blueprint. Either we learn a new language of empathy and compassion or the fire this time will consume us all" (p. 13). There is reason to believe that citizenship practice, with training and community affirmation, and an infusion of resiliency skill techniques modeling, could open the doors wider for African American male youth who now suffer in poverty and discrimination with diminished access to education and employment.

APPENDIX A

RESILIENCY SCALE

The Resilience Scale ^{TM}

Directions: Please read the following statements.
To the right of each question, you will find seven numbers,
ranging from "1" (Strongly Disagree) on the left, to "7" (Strongly Agree) on the right.

Circle the number which best indicates your feelings about that statement.
For example, if you strongly disagree with a statement, circle "1".
If you are neutral about the statement then circle "4", and
if you strongly agree then circle "7", and so on.

First read the list of response choices for the statements.
Decide how well each statement describes what you do.

Then **circle** the number in the box that **BEST** matches what you do.

Choose the **ONE**, which is MOST like how you think you are most of the time.

**Choose *ONE* response
for every question.**

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE MORE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	AGREE MORE	STRONGLY AGREE
1. When I make plans, I follow through with them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I usually manage one way or another.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I am able to depend on myself more than anyone else.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. Keeping interested in things is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I can be on my own if I have to.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I feel proud that I have accomplished things in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I usually take things in stride.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I am friends with myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I feel that I can handle many things at a time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I am determined.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. I seldom wonder what the point of it all is.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I take things one day at a time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. I can get through difficult times because I have experienced difficulty before.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. I have self-discipline	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. I keep interested in things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. I can usually find something to laugh about.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

17. My belief in myself gets me through hard times.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. In an emergency, I am someone people can generally rely on.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. I can usually look at a situation in a number of ways.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Sometimes I make myself do things whether I want to or not.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. My life has meaning.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. I do not dwell on things that I can not do anything about.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. When I am in a difficult situation, I can usually find my way out of it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. I have enough energy to do what I have to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. It is okay if there are people who do not like me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. I am resilient.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Thank you very much for giving your straight responses
that help to better know how you see things in your life.**

APPENDIX B

CITIZENSHIP PRACTICES SCALE

CitizenshipPractices

Directions: <u>First</u> read the list of response choices for the statements.

<u>Decide</u> how well each statement describes what you do.

Then **circle** the number in the box that **BEST** matches what you do.

Choose the one, which is <u>MOST</u> like how you think you are most of the time.

Choose *ONE* response for every question.

	NEVER	ALMOST NEVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS
1. Family problems are solved by luck …	1	2	3	4	5
2. It is a sacrifice when I give time and effort to members of my family…	1	2	3	4	5
3. I show I care about people by sharing the responsibility for the situation…	1	2	3	4	5
4. Friends and family help me feel important and appreciated…	1	2	3	4	5
5. I seek information and advice from people who have had the same kind of problems…	1	2	3	4	5
6. There are community agencies to help families and they help my family…	1	2	3	4	5
7. Problems go away by just waiting long enough…	1	2	3	4	5
8. I talk with at least one adult every day that cares about me…	1	2	3	4	5
9. When I have a stressful problem, I feel confused as to what to do…	1	2	3	4	5

10. I feel that no matter what I do to prepare I will have difficulty handling the problems…	1	2	3	4	5
11. I find things to read that give information on how to handle my personal problems…	1	2	3	4	5
12. When something is a problem in my life I try to solve it right away…	1	2	3	4	5
13. My friends and relatives take me to community activities…	1	2	3	4	5
14. As soon as I reach 18 years old I need to register to vote…	1	2	3	4	5
15. I help in the community by being a volunteer…	1	2	3	4	5
16. I try to help other people solve their personal problems…	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you very much for giving your straight responses
that help to better know how you see things in your life.

Are there any comments you would like to write down about the questions?

C

APPENDIX C

IRB APPROVAL LETTERS

Office of Research

July 27, 2004

Ms. Karen Judd
1601 Meadow Street
Wildwood, FL 34785

Dear Ms. Judd:

With reference to your protocol entitled, "Rural African American Male Youth: Citizenship and Resiliency," I am enclosing for your records the approved, expedited document of the UCFIRB Form you had submitted to our office.

Please be advised that this approval is given for one year. Should there be any addendums or administrative changes to the already approved protocol, they must also be submitted to the Board. Changes should not be initiated until written IRB approval is received. Adverse events should be reported to the IRB as they occur. Further, should there be a need to extend this protocol, a renewal form must be submitted for approval at least one month prior to the anniversary date of the most recent approval and is the responsibility of the investigator (UCF).

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 823-2901.

Please accept our best wishes for the success of your endeavors.

Cordially,

Barbara Ward

Barbara Ward, CIM
Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Copies: Dr. Mary Van Hook, Department of Social Work, COHPA
IRB office

12443 Research Parkway • Suite 207 • Orlando

Office of Research & Commercialization

August 10, 2005

Karen Judd
1601 Meadow Street
Wildwood, Fl 34785

Dear Ms. Judd:

With reference to your protocol #05-2775 entitled, **"Rural African American Male Youth; Citizenship and Resiliency"** I am enclosing for your records the approved, expedited document of the UCFIRB Form you had submitted to our office. **This study was approved by the Chairman on 7/21/05. The expiration date for this study will be 7/20/06.** Should there be a need to extend this study, a Continuing Review form must be submitted to the IRB Office for review by the Chairman or full IRB at least one month prior to the expiration date. This is the responsibility of the investigator. **Please notify the IRB when you have completed this study.**

Please be advised that this approval is given for one year. Should there be any addendums or administrative changes to the already approved protocol, they must also be submitted to the Board through use of the Addendum/Modification Request form. Changes should not be initiated until written IRB approval is received. Adverse events should be reported to the IRB as they occur.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 407-823-2901.

Please accept our best wishes for the success of your endeavors.
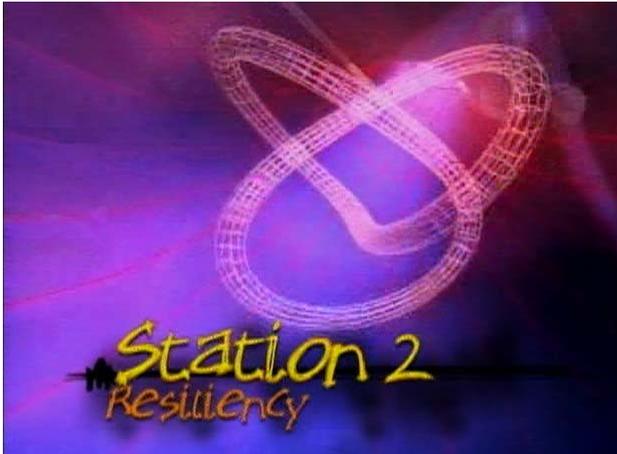
Cordially,

Barbara Ward

Barbara Ward, CIM
IRB Coordinator

Copy: IRB file

BW:cc

APPENDIX D

## COMPACT DISK VIDEO SURVEYS AND TREATMENT

The RESILIENT SCALE (RS^{TM})

A standardized 26-item questionnaire on a Likert scale of 1 to 7 (1987). Possible scores range from 26 to 182 with higher scores reflecting higher resilience.

The CITIZENSHIP PRACTICES SCALE

A 16-item questionnaire on four (4) areas of the National Council of Social Studies's (NCSS) ten-point position statement on Effective Citizenship (2001) possible scores range from 16 t0 80 with higher scores reflecting higher awareness of citizenship practices..
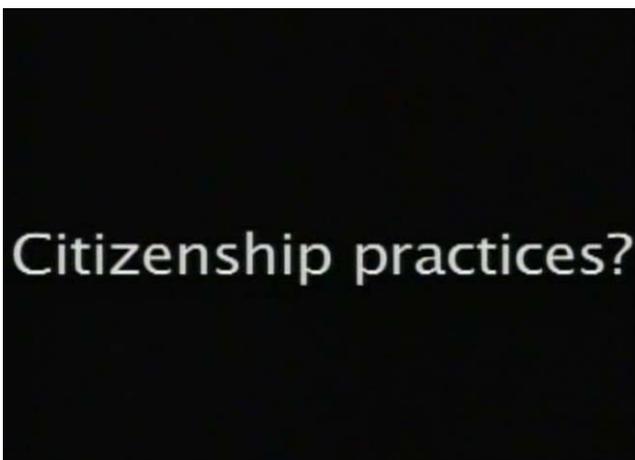
INSTRUCTIONAL TREATMENT ON CITIZENSHIP PRACTICES

An eight-minute instructional video on the 16 points of Effective Citizenship, developed in the Citizenship Practices questionnaire.

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