EXPLORING LIVED EXPERIENCES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ADULTS WHO ATTENDED INNER CITY SCHOOLS ABOUT THE ROLE OF PARENTING STYLES, PRACTICES AND FAMILY CULTURE ON THEIR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

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Exploring Lived Experiences of African American Adults Who Attended Inner City Schools About the Role of Parenting Styles, Practices, and Family Culture on Their Academic Achievement Levels and Socio-economic Status

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December 5, 2014
Without God and family, I am nothing. This research is dedicated to my children Kendra and Jody, my spouse Linwood, my parents the late Nicholas and Naomi Polk Banks who raised me, and my childhood brothers Nick, Vincent, Walt, Dallas and Tony.

I dedicate this research also to my childhood friends and family members who passed away during this effort: my brother Dallas, my first cousin Portia Maxine, who was like my big sister, my younger first cousin Lionel who was a true hustler as a farmer, my niece Sherri who suddenly died a couple of days after childbirth, my favorite first cousin Julius, June Boy to me, who was buried the same day as Sherri, my younger first cousin Lisa, my Great Aunt Malinda, my Great Aunt Alice, my other brother Robert Jr., a couple of family friends and two of my husband’s first cousins as well. After each death, I paused and reflected on the significance of this endeavor, and decided that it is for them that I pursue this goal.

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Abstract

EXPLORING LIVED EXPERIENCES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ADULTS WHO ATTENDED INNER CITY SCHOOLS ABOUT THE ROLE OF PARENTING STYLES, PRACTICES AND FAMILY CULTURE ON THEIR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

Jacqueline Banks Jones, MBA, MAT, Ed.D, Drexel University, December, 2014
Chairperson: John M. Gould, Ph.D.

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study will be to explore the lived experiences of African American adults about their perceptions of the potential influences of parenting style, parenting practices and family culture on their academic and career success. Major inner city communities in America are plagued with several problems that can be linked to its educational system—high dropout rates, high unemployment rates, high crime rates, and high poverty rates. However, despite such dire data, there are graduates of the inner city school district who have achieved much success in life. Although there is a lack of definitive research on parenting styles and African American achievement, there is a significant body of research that has determined there is a direct correlation between parenting style and student achievement. Furthermore, psychologists have determined that there is a connection between the early cognitive development of children and their development of higher order thinking capabilities. For this research, the participants are African American adult alumni of an inner city school district who were interviewed who described their perceptions of the role that parenting styles, parenting practices and family culture played in their academic achievement and
current socio-economic status. Another selection criteria for participants was that the socio-economic factor of median income of the participants exceeded the level for their state. Furthermore, using a semi-structured interview format, the data was coded and analyzed for themes that provide rich, descriptions that may be useful to other districts.

The central research question is “How do African American adults who attended a selected inner city school describe their perceptions about the value of parenting style, parenting practices and family cultural differences in parenting on their cognitive development, educational achievement levels and socio-economic status?” The findings indicate that their relationship with their parents did have an impact on what they have become.
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Research

Introduction to the Problem

Inner city school districts are plagued with numerous problems in their educational system—high dropout rates, low graduation rates, high unemployment rate, high crime rate, adult illiteracy, generational poverty, high poverty rates, and an achievement gap among races (Census, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2010). According to Darling-Hammond (2010, p. 24), during the “1980s, incarceration rates doubled, and by 1993, there were more African American citizens on probation, in jail, in prison, or on parole (1,985,000) than there were in college (1,412,000).”

The recent trends cited above are having a major adverse impact of the country’s economic well-being and standing as a world leader. Darling-Hammond (2010, p. 25) further cites that dropouts “cost the country at least $200 billion a year in lost wages and taxes, costs for social services, and crime”. Furthermore, in a global society, it becomes an imperative that our educational systems face the challenge of preparing all of its citizens to survive and compete within a global context, (Zhao, 2009). Thus, not only must the trends be stopped and reversed, but schools must be increasingly successful in their efforts to educate more of its students so that they can be contributing world citizens beyond high school “[b]ecause the economy can no longer absorb many unskilled workers at decent
wages, lack of education is increasingly linked to crime and welfare dependency” (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 24).

In 1978, Wolf found that a student attending a public school in a large city, in comparison to peers elsewhere in the country, there is more than a 50 percent chance of experiencing lower achievement. In its 2007 report, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) found that achievement gaps still existed between Blacks and their White counterparts in reading and mathematics (Vanneman, Hamilton, Baldwin, and Rahman, 2009). Additionally, Darling-Hammond (2010) found that in 2005, the average Black or Hispanic twelfth grade student was reading at the level comparable to an average White eighth grade student. In its NAEP report, the National Center for Education Statistics (2011) found no significant gains in reading and mathematics in large inner city school districts of which one is the school district in which the researcher resides and works.

However, despite such data, there are graduates of the inner city school districts who have achieved much success in life such as Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, Mayor of Baltimore Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, former Congressman and former President of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Kweisi Mfume, and the recently retired State of Maryland Chief Appellant Judge Robert Bell are examples of alumni who overcame obstacles and achieved success in their chosen occupations. So, what made the difference? How are some graduates of inner city schools able to achieve economic status that exceeds the median income for their state and others are not?
There is a significant body of research that has determined there is a direct correlation between parenting style and student achievement (Dehyadegary, 2012; Aunola, Stattin, & Nurmi, 2000; Maccoby, 1992; Baumrind, 1971). Moreover, child psychologists have determined that there is a connection between the early cognitive development of a child and their eventual development of higher order thinking capabilities which is a result of a child’s environmental circumstances that includes what he or she learns from others (Moll, 2014; Gredler, 2009; Mayer, 2008; Vygotsky, 2007). Vygotsky (1981b, p. 163 as cited in Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992) argued that “[s]ocial relations or relations among people genetically underlie all higher functions and their relationships.” Therefore, this project explored if participants perceived traditionally defined parenting styles, parenting practices, and the role of culture played a role in their academic achievement and socio-economic status. This research was an exploration of the lived experiences of former inner city school district students and their perceptions of the parenting strategies employed by their parent(s) to ascertain if any strategies and skills emerged that could be of use to assist current and future parents of students in the Baltimore City Public School System.

**Statement of the Problem to be Researched**

Research shows there is an apparent discrepancy in knowledge about the lived experiences of African American adults who attended inner city schools and how they perceive the value of parenting style, parenting practices and family cultural differences in parenting on their cognitive development, academic achievement and socio-economic status in life (Hines & Holcomb-McCoy, 2013; Attaway & Bry, 2004).
Finding an actionable solution to this discrepancy about how effective parenting style(s) influence cognitive development, academic achievement and African American’s life status could benefit students and families in an inner city school district by retaining and educating students who will have a greater likelihood for high school graduation and success beyond high school.

Purpose and Significance of the Problem

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study is to explore the lived experiences of African American adults who attended inner city schools, their perceptions about the value of parenting style, parenting practices and family cultural differences in parenting on their cognitive development, academic achievement level and life status. The research will add to professional practice by providing some insight into perceived effective parenting style(s) and practices. If the identifying and use of effective parenting style proves to be a significant methodology for improved student behavior and achievement in the classroom, this will contribute greatly to improving the academic performance of students who will benefit from the most appropriate parenting and proven child development theories that parents can learn about through parent education classes.

Significance of the Problem

In the Baltimore City Public School System, it has been the experience and observation of the researcher that much emphasis is placed upon the classroom teacher to manage the behavior of all students. The system’s culture has adopted the belief that children come to school as they are and it is the responsibility of the teacher to find ways
for all students to behave in a manner that aligns with expectations and results in non-disruptive behavior to instruction, which includes whole classroom, small group, cooperative teams and independent instruction. The home school connection as it pertains to student behavior is mostly about getting parents to support the teacher’s position by encouraging the student to be less disruptive, less defiant and more respectful while in school.

An assumption may be that parents possess the skills and experiences to provide students with the knowledge and to guide in the development of the self-management skills that students need to behave appropriately in a learning environment that does not interfere with the academic achievement and knowledge acquisition of other students. Or, the assumption may be that it is not feasible for some parents nor is it their responsibility to develop in students the tools necessary for success in a learning environment.

As mentioned beforehand, studies show that parenting style is positively correlated with desired student achievement and behavior in the classroom. Conversely, when students are raised with harsh or poor parenting, they are more likely to exhibit defiant and other anti-social behaviors that negatively impact academic achievement. However, there is current research that debates whether there is just one parenting style accepted as being the best when diversity of culture is an apparent factor (Attaway & Bry, 2004). Still, there is an absence of research studies that explore the long term implications of parenting style and student achievement that occurs beyond the high school experience especially for African Americans. There was one peer reviewed study listed on both ERIC and Drexel Libraries that addressed the topic of such African
Exploring the Role of Parenting Style on Life Status

Americans achievement and attending a parochial college that also included the variable of the role of religion (Abar, Carter, & Winsler, 2009).

Studies also show that students who enter the social services system at early ages because of parental abuse or neglect, end up with high absenteeism, low academic achievement and by the early teen years, most of these same males end up in the juvenile justice system and a low percentage of these same students graduate from high school, (Covey, Menard, & Franzese, 2013; Baltimore City Health Department Office of Epidemiology and Planning, August 2009). Covey et al. (2013) argues that the importance of making connections between violence during adolescence and future socioeconomic status and other decisions. Research data indicates that harsh parenting produces negative results such as anti-social deviant behavior (Baltimore City Health Department Report, 2009; Amato & Fowler, 2002; Shute, 2008). Thus, children develop inappropriate higher order thinking skills based on what they have been exposed to or modeled to them “that serve as guides or templates in the child's processing of social cues at various points along a sequence of processing steps” (Heidgerken, Hughes, Cavell and Wilson, 2004, p. 684). Scripts, working models, mental structures and schemata equate to mental models. Classrooms are very social environments and children behave in school according to learned social cues (Moll, 2014; Gillies, 2008). However, parents can be taught culturally relevant parenting skills using interventions like parent education classes that effectively reduce harsh parenting and teach better socialization skills to children, and that could lead “to an amelioration of children's antisocial goal orientations” (Heidgerken et al, 2004, p. 692).
Other research found that aggressive parenting is intergenerational especially with boys whose parents model behavior from their own parents with their own children (Simons, Whitbeck, Conger and Chyi-In, 1991). So parents model parenting techniques that were used on them. Therefore, in order to bring about adaptive change with children, those who are responsible for their parenting can better prepare their children for success in school if they learn how to be more effective in parenting. This, of course, is especially significant if parents lack the knowledge of parenting styles and practices and what may be the best style for their race and culture.

The Audiences That Will Benefit from a Study of Problem

This research will be of use to educators, parents and stakeholders who value the education of all students. This research will inform stakeholders (administrators of schools and other educators, parents, community partners) of possible effective tools in addressing and effectively promoting the most desired parenting style and practices that contribute and elevate desired student behaviors that contribute to the common goal of preparing students for careers and college beyond K 12 education.

Research Questions Focused on Solution Finding

The researcher is interested in how alumni will talk about their lived experiences as well as the contextual perceptions that accompany their recall of such lived experiences. It will be essential for the researcher to suspend all judgment, biases and preconceived notions as she listens to the responses of the participants so that their voices emerge with as much clarity as possible. The purpose is to explore the participants’ experiences and to hear their stories from them. The study will employ one central
question and four sub-questions that are designed to begin the conversation with participants and to dive as deeply as possible into their experiences in order to get from them their view.

Central Research Question

How do African American adults who attended selected inner city schools describe their perceived value of parenting style, parenting practices and family cultural differences in parenting on their cognitive development, educational achievement levels and life status?

Sub-questions

- How do African American adult alumni of an inner city school district describe experiences related to parenting styles and practices of their parents?

- What perceived value, if any, do AA adult participants attribute parenting styles and practices of their parents on the development of their academic achievement level and life status?

- How do alumni of inner city schools describe the role of parenting style and practices on their cognitive development?

- How do alumni of inner city schools describe the role of family and culture on their academic achievement levels and life status?

Further, it is important to keep in mind that the findings may, or may not, illustrate that participants perceive that the parenting style and practices of their parents contributed to their cognitive development, academic achievement and socio-economic
life status. Rather than seek answers, these questions are designed to expand or enhance understanding about the parenting style and practices phenomenon as experienced by African American adults who attended selected inner city schools and the how they perceive the value of their parenting experiences as youth to their adult life status.

Historically, researchers such as Jon Kabat-Zinn states “inquiry doesn’t mean looking for answers” but seeking understanding of the issues or phenomenon (as cited in Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 39).

**Researcher’s Stances**

The researcher’s stance is interpretive, which is sometimes called constructivism (Merriam, 2009). The researcher strives to learn about the participants’ perceptions by exploring the participants’ own lived experiences and attributing meaning to those experiences. Creswell (2010) explains:

> …individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings of their experiences—meanings directed toward certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple…the goal of research then is to rely as much as possible on the participants’ views of the situation. …Thus, constructivist researchers…focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work in order to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants (p. 24-25).

Furthermore, as a social constructivist, the researcher understands that all reality is relative to a person’s perception and understanding of their own personal experiences.
The use of an open-ended interview will allow the researcher to obtain the different and multiple realities of participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). According to Reid, Flowers & Larkin (2005, p. 22), “One-to-one interviews aid this: they are easily managed; allow rapport to be developed; allow participants to think speak and be heard; and are well suited to in-depth and personal discussion., As the researcher and thus the interpreter, I must also acknowledge my own experiences, perspectives and background as a way to position myself in the interpretive process (Creswell, 2013). This is an etic (outside) point of view that must be acknowledged as a way to minimize its impact on the interviews and subsequent interpretation of the data. The researcher must be both receptive and flexible to hear what the participants are saying so that the information is useful for data analysis and will provide rich descriptions as support for interpretation. The researcher adopted an emic (inside) point of view by seeking to find and understand meanings of the lived experiences of the participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

The researcher’s experience includes over five years of classroom teaching experience in an inner city school system. The researcher has more than twenty years of experience working with parents and students who successfully completed high school and graduated from college. The researcher has eight years of college teaching experience of which six years was a historically Black university where a large percentage of students came from inner city areas. However, the researcher was born and raised in a rural area and attended schools in rural-suburban areas that is far different from that she has and continues to experience in inner city schools as a classroom teacher and school leader. Thus, the researcher’s etic and emic points of view are divergent in
terms of a typical school culture and expected student behavior based on her own experiences, her children’s experiences as determined through the researcher’s perspective and her perception of what she is experiencing currently. Additionally, the researcher has over 20 years of experience in writing, interviewing, reporting, publishing, and media relations.

**Conceptual Framework**

The researcher explored the impact of parenting style, parenting practices on cognitive development and student achievement as well as possible cultural differences in parenting. The lived experiences of adults provided data about parent-child relationships that can be gauged against research findings. The data from the interviews was analyzed to ascertain if any themes emerge about these relationships and the current achievement and socioeconomic status of the adults. Figure 1, below, is a visual representation of the relationships.
EXPLORING THE ROLE OF PARENTING STYLE ON LIFE STATUS

Figure 1- Conceptual Framework

The research aimed to address an apparent discrepancy in knowledge about the perceived value of parenting style, parenting practices and family culture in parenting on
the cognitive development, student achievement and socio-economic status of African American adults who attended inner city schools. Therefore, interviews were used to explore lived experiences of African American adults who attended inner city schools and their perceptions about the value of parenting style, parenting practices and family culture in parenting on their cognitive development, academic achievement level and socio-economic status. The exploration looked at three streams of research, The first stream is the impact of parenting styles on a student’s academic achievement (Dehyadegary, 2012; Aunola, K., Stattin, H., and Nurmi,J.E., April 2000; Macoby & Martin, 1983; Baumrind, D. 1967, 1971, 1978. The next stream of research examines theories of cognitive development and the role of parenting styles and practices on cognitive development.(Gredler, 2009; Smagorinsky, P. 2007; Vygotsky, L.S. 1962, 1978; Bruner, 1960). Finally, the third stream of research examines the effect of culture on parenting style for student achievement (McWayne, et al, 2008; Pinder, 2012; Garcia & Garcia, 2009; Wu & Qi, 2006). The research streams provided background knowledge used to conduct the semi-structured interviews so that the questions were asked to get the responses that provide rich descriptions of how the participants view how they were parented, what value, if any, and what role do they attribute to the parenting styles and practices of their parents on the development of their academic achievement level and socio-economic status as well as how do they describe the their role on their cognitive development, academic achievement and life status.
Definition of Terms


2. Academic achievement - The definition of academic achievement refers to the level of schooling you have successfully completed and the ability to attain success in your studies (http://www.yourdictionary.com).

3. Cognitive development - The construction of thought processes, including remembering, problem solving, and decision-making, from childhood through adolescence to adulthood (http://www.healthofchildren.com).

4. College and career ready - when all high school students complete an essential core of rigorous courses, the achievement gaps closes between groups of high school students on college admission and on end-of-course exams, high school students enroll and succeed in rigorous bridge-to-college courses and programs, and the number of recent high school graduates needing remedial courses when entering college approaches zero (Southern Regional Education Board’s Getting Students Ready for College and Careers, 2006).

5. Maladaptive behavior - Maladaptive behavior is behavior that is counter-productive or interferes with everyday living (www.healthline.com).

6. Parenting - The rearing of a child or children, especially the care, love, and guidance given by a parent (http://www.thefreedictionary.com).
7. Parent education program - A parent education program is a course that can be followed to correct and improve a person's parenting skills. These courses may also be geared towards parents who are considering having a child, or adopting one, or are pregnant ((http://www.thefreedictionary.com).

8. Parenting practices - Parenting practices are defined as specific behaviors that parents use to socialize their children (Darling and Steinberg, 1993). Examples include helping with homework, attending school functions, etc.

9. Parenting styles - A parenting style is a psychological construct representing standard strategies that parents use in their child rearing. Parenting style is affected by both the parents' and children's temperaments, and is largely based on the influence of one’s own parents and culture (http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Parenting+Styles).

10. Socioeconomic status is commonly conceptualized as the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation. Examinations of socioeconomic status often reveal inequities in access to resources, plus issues related to privilege, power and control. Adapted from APA’s Socioeconomic Status Office publications (http://www.apa.org/topics/socioeconomic-status/index.aspx).
Assumptions

The data collected for the research is dependent on the richness and accuracy of the descriptions of lived experiences from participants that are based on their perceptions. Thus, one assumption is that participants told the truth without any deliberate fabrication of what they recalled. Another assumption is that the participants had the ability to recall lived experiences that has provided the thick, rich descriptions that were critical to coding and identifying themes. One additional assumption is that the participants shared openly and freely without intentionally omitting aspects of their lived experiences.

Delimitations

Delimitations include several characteristics set by the researcher. The first delimitation is that the participants will all be K-12 alumni of one inner city school district. The second delimitation is that participants will be African American adults. A third delimitation is that the income component of socio-economic status is above the median income for the state in which the school district is located. Other limitations of the research will include the fact that the number of participants will be a small number and all the participants will be volunteers. One final delimitation is the selected phenomenological approach which the researcher feels is the most appropriate for her ontological view of the existence of different perceptions of realities that are contextual.

Limitations

There are some limitations to the research as well that the researcher has no control over. The small number of participants creates the situation wherein the findings may not be transferable to other school districts and families. Another potential weakness
EXPLORING THE ROLE OF PARENTING STYLE ON LIFE STATUS

is the impact that the passage of time may or will have on the participants’ recall ability as well as any changes over time of their perceptions of their lived experiences.

Summary

In its report for 2013, America’s Promise Alliance that was founded by Colin Powell, reported that the high school graduation rate is 80 percent, that in 2013, about 20 percent of students did not graduate high school with their peers, and that 25 percent of African American students attend high schools where the norm is not graduating (http://www.americaspromise.org//dropout-crisis-facts, Retrieved November 4, 2014). Additionally, the Alliance reported that in Baltimore City, in 2012, 34 percent of students did not get a diploma in four years wherein almost 70 percent of the student are cited as low-income (http://gradnation.org, 2014). Furthermore, Carnevale, Smith and Strohl (2010) in their report for Georgetown University’s Center on Education of the Workforce argue that by the year 2018, almost two-thirds of jobs will require some college. Additionally, a lack of education has also been linked to crime and poverty, especially in inner city areas (Census, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2010). However, some students do graduate and lead successful lives. This research explored the lived experiences of such adult graduates of an inner city school district using the tool of semi-structured interviews to get their perceptions on the role of parenting styles, parenting practices and family culture on their achievement and current socio-economic status.

Several leading experts argue that there is a correlation between parenting and cognitive development and academic achievement. Other research argues that If children are deprived of experiences necessary for positive cognitive development, it affects their
ability to exhibit age-appropriate behavior that contributes to their positive learning. If parents lack the ability to use parenting strategies or skills that have been proven to be operative in having positive outcomes in student behavior, research shows that they can be taught parenting styles through practice and training. If parenting skills are improved and practiced, the outcome will be improved student behavior in the classroom and eventual improved academic performance for the student, which is a general prerequisite for success in life beyond the K-14 education years. This project will explore the parenting styles and practices that were used by the parents of graduates of inner city schools whose income is above the median for their state by using semi-structured interviews as a data collection tool. The data consists of their recalled lived experiences and perceptions of those experiences.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction of the Problem

Inner city school districts are plagued with several problems that can be linked to their educational system—high dropout rates, low graduation rates, high unemployment rates, high crime rated, adult illiteracy, generational poverty, high poverty rates, and an achievement gap among races (Census, 2012). However, despite the census data, there are graduates of inner city school districts who have achieved much success in life. There are many examples of alumni who overcame obstacles and achieved success in their chosen occupations. So, what made the difference?

There is a significant body of research that has determined there is a direct correlation between parenting style and student achievement (Baumrind, 1971; Maccoby, 1992; Aunola, et al, 2000; Dehyadegary, 2012). Furthermore, child psychologists have determined that there is a connection between the early cognitive developments of a child which is a direct result of a child’s environmental circumstances that includes what he or she learns from others, and their eventual development of higher order thinking capabilities. Therefore, this research project also includes research on the role of traditionally defined parenting styles, cognitive development, and culture in academic achievement and life status. This research explored current achievement of former inner city school district students and their perceptions of which parenting styles were employed by their parent(s) to ascertain if any strategies and skills can be gleaned that could be of use to assist current parents of students in inner city school districts.

In this inner city school district, it is the researcher’s observation and experience that the classroom teacher is evaluated on the ability to manage the behavior of all students. In
this inner city district, students are grouped heterogeneously so there is varying diversity within the classroom. The teacher is expected to teach the child but often is faced with the task of teaching social skills to children which according to Gillies (2008) has long been regarded as the primary task of parents who are charged with the responsibility of the behavior and development of their children. A common assumption expressed by educators is that if a student lacks the age-appropriate ability to manage his or her own behavior while at school, it is inferred that the parent lacks the skill set to be an effective parent. The district’s system culture has adopted the belief that children come to school as they are and it is the responsibility of the teacher to find ways for all students to behave a way that is alignment with expectations and results in non-disruptive behavior to instruction that includes whole classroom, small group, cooperative teams and independent instruction. The home school connection as it pertains to student behavior is mostly about getting parents to support the teacher’s position by encouraging the student to be less disruptive, less defiant and more respectful while in school.

In general, the educator is expected to provide or instill either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation for students to behave appropriately in the classroom and not the parent. Teachers learn behavior management techniques and strategies as a part of their preservice preparation and ongoing professional development. Research has shown that when parents are provided with parenting education, it has a direct impact on their child’s behavior in the classroom (Heidgerken, Hughes, Cavell and Willson, 2004). Other research findings support the claim that parental behavior plays a significant role in the behavior of children.
O’Connor (2002, p. 560) found that changing the behavior of parents would lead to a change in the behavior of children and wrote that “studies reviewed…provide a sample of the growing number of demonstrations of how changing parenting leads to improved child behavior, and that change can be accomplished through a range of intervention approaches.” This suggests that parents can be taught parenting skills that will result in better behavior of their children. Furthermore, O’Connor (2002) writes that the behavior of parents is internalized by their children and carries over into other settings sharing that “children internalize standards and expectations learned through their interactions with parents and carry them forward to other relationships and settings” (Grusec & Kuczynski, 1997 as cited in O’Connor, 2002, p. 560). Thus, if the behavior of parents does not comply with what is considered appropriate social behavior, their children will act accordingly.

In their study Heidgerken, et al. (2004, p. 684) agreed with O’Connor about internalization of parent behaviors and concluded that “children bring to social situations a database of past experiences (variously referred to as scripts, working models, mental structures, and schemata) that serve as guides or templates in the child's processing of social cues at various points along a sequence of processing steps.” This suggest that there is a direct correlation between parenting and the behavior of their children.

Research data indicates that harsh parenting produces negative results such as anti-social deviant behavior (Baltimore City Health Department Report, 2009; Amato & Fowler, 2002; Shute, 2008). Other research found that aggressive parenting is intergenerational especially with boys whose parents model behavior learned from their own parents that the do with their own children (Simons, Whitbeck, Conger and Chyi-In,
1991). So, parents replicate parenting techniques that were used on them. Children can be expected to behave in school according to learned social cues. So, in order to bring about adaptive change with children, those who are responsible for their socialization through parenting must display and use behaviors that are within socially acceptable norms for a school environment.

**Literature Review**

The intent of the literature review is to examine the research that has been conducted about the parenting styles that lead to academic success in inner city school district with students being career and college ready. In summary, this chapter will look into three streams of research:

1. The impact of parenting styles on a student’s achievement.
2. Theories of cognitive development and,
3. The cultural and ethnic differences in parenting styles, which result in optimal student achievement and behaviors.
Figure 2 - Three Streams of Research
First Stream of Research: Parenting Styles

“Parenting styles impact a student’s social skills that are evidenced in classroom behavior,” (Baumrind, D. 1967, 1971, 1978)

This stream provides several examples of research that have concluded that there is a direct correlation between parenting and student behavior. The purpose of parenting is to bring children to some degree of compliance. Dianne Baumrind (1967) is often cited for identifying the different types of parenting styles and the results they have on children’s behavior.

Parenting Styles Defined

Establishing the link between parenting and their children’s behavior has been difficult. Despite some difficulty due to a variation of factors in a child’s environment, psychologist Diana Baumrind (1967) conducted a study on more than 100 preschool-age children using a combination of research methods that included observations and interviews. She was able to identify important dimensions of parenting that incorporate responsiveness and demandingness:

- Disciplinary strategies (demandingness- what do parents expect and tolerate)
- Warmth and nurturance (responsiveness – how do parents show love and support)
- Communication styles (responsiveness – what is allowed to transpire between parent and child)
- Expectations of maturity and control (demandingness)
Baumrind proposed that most parents display one of three different parenting styles. Further research by others suggested the addition of a fourth parenting style (Maccoby & Martin, 1993) that Baumrind (1971) also included with her original three styles. Thus, four parenting styles have been identified using the four dimensions of parenting:

- The first style of parenting identified is authoritarian wherein the parents expect the children to follow the rules as established by the parents without questioning the reason for the rule. If children fail to follow the rules, punishment is the usual result. According to Baumrind (1991, p. 62), these parents "are obedience- and status-oriented, and expect their orders to be obeyed without explanation." These parents are considered to be non-responsive to their children and have high expectations for maturity and control.

- The second style of parenting is authoritative which is similar to authoritarian in that rules are established for children which they are expected to follow. However, this parenting style differs from the first style because if children do not meet expectations, the parents are more responsive to their children and willing to take into account their children’s questions and tend to be less punitive and more nurturing. Baumrind (1991, p. 62) states that these parents "monitor and impart clear standards for their children’s conduct. They are assertive, but not intrusive and restrictive. Their disciplinary methods are supportive, rather than punitive. They want their children to be assertive as well as socially responsible, and self-regulated as well as cooperative”.

- The next type of parenting style is the permissive parent, sometimes mentioned as indulgent parents. They make few demands of their children and
rarely discipline their children sometimes appearing to more of a friend than parent to their children. According to Baumrind (1991, p. 62), permissive parents "are more responsive than they are demanding. They are nontraditional and lenient, do not require mature behavior, allow considerable self-regulation, and avoid confrontation." Permissive parents are even more willing to listen to their children than authoritative parents.

- The last parenting style is the uninvolved parent who makes few demands of children, is low on responsiveness and engages in little communication with their children. These parents may only serve to fulfill the child's basic needs. They are uninvolved, detached, provide little or no nurturing and in some cases may be abusive by failing to meet the needs of their children.

Baumrind (1971) found direct correlations between the behavior and personality of the parent and the behavior of their respective children. Although she determined again that authoritative parenting style is best for white upper middle class families, she did find some gender differences. She also proposed a new kind of parenting that she called harmonious and recommended further study on it and on the non-conforming authoritative parenting style that was found to be the best for the males in the study. Sixteen Black families were excluded because she felt their parent-child relationships were too different from the other families. This exclusion leaves many unanswered questions for researchers. It is surprising that the data gathered from Black families were considered too different to be included in the original study. However, separately, Baumrind did analyze the data of the Black families she collected wherein she focused only on the females noting that the possible culturally-normed authoritarian parenting
EXPLORING THE ROLE OF PARENTING ON LIFE STATUS

style resulted in females who were more assertive and independent in comparison to their white counterparts (Baumrind, 1971).

Maccoby (1992) examined the evolution of theories regarding how parents socialize their children for successful integration into adulthood. Maccoby summarized that parents need skills in role-making because effective socialization requires an understanding of the child’s perspective but realizes that the parent’s role is longer and larger than the child can understand so a parent’s role is a gradually diminishing dominant process. Thus, as the child ages, the parent-child relationship socialization process changes with the child’s behavior becoming more autonomous and self-regulating. She notes that little research has been conducted on successful socialization process with “less mature parents” (Maccoby, 1992, p. 1015). Of course, the “less mature parents” that Maccoby (1992, p. 1015) talks about are a large demographic in inner city areas so this was an unanswered question of interest to this research focus. If parents are immature, then learning which parenting style and practices are best for inner city students would be of significant benefit.

The Role of Parenting Styles

What role do parenting styles have on child development outcomes, if any? According to an ERIC Digest of parenting styles (1999), the following can occur as a result of the different parenting styles:

* Children and adolescents whose parents are authoritative rate themselves and are rated by objective measures as more socially and instrumentally competent than those whose parents are nonauthoritative (Baumrind, 1991; Weiss & Schwarz, 1996; Miller et al., 1993).
* Children and adolescents whose parents are uninvolved perform most poorly in all domains.

* Children and adolescents from authoritarian families (high in demandingness, but low in responsiveness) tend to perform moderately well in school and be uninvolved in problem behavior, but they have poorer social skills, lower self-esteem, and higher levels of depression.

* Children and adolescents from indulgent homes (high in responsiveness, low in demandingness) are more likely to exhibit problem behavior and perform less well in school, but they have higher self-esteem, better social skills, and lower levels of depression.

Dehyadegary, Yaacob, Juhari; Talib, and Mansor Abu. (2012) conducted research to determine if there was any relationship between parenting styles and academic achievement among Iranian adolescents. The study used the parenting style scale created by Baumrind (1991). The respondents were 382 high school adolescents of which 251 were female and 131 were male who ranged in the age from 15 to 18 years old from some of the high schools in Iran. For this study, the researcher felt that it was best to get descriptions from the participants so that themes could emerge rather than use pre-determined categories. Additionally, there is a deft of research involving adults who reflect on their perceptions of parenting styles and practices through their life stories.

The researchers felt that it was a problem of significance because approximately 27 percent of all high school students were of low academic achievement which could result in negative behavior and outcomes for students. Specifically, Assarian, Biqam and Asqarnejad felt that students “with low academic achievement may be more vulnerable to
problems such as stress, hopelessness, delinquency, psychopathology, and substance abuse” (Assarian, Biqam & Asqarnejad, 2006 as cited in Dehyadegary, et. al (2012).

Past studies show that authoritarian parenting is related to low academic achievement (Attaway & Bry, 2004) and higher levels of school problems (Roche, Ensminger, & Cherlin, 2007). Permissive parenting was also found to significantly correlate with academic achievement (Lee, 2006; Roche, Ensminger, & Cherlin, 2007 as cited in Dehyadegary, et. al (2012). This means that parents with too high or too low demandingness and responsiveness have children with low academic achievement. Past studies have established a positive correlation between authoritative parenting style and academic achievement (Slaten, 2006; Roche et al., 2007; Simons & Conger, 2007; Pong, Johnston & Chen, 2009 as cited in Dehyadegary, et. al (2012). Students with better academic achievement have parents who are more authoritative (Dehyadegary, 2012).

The findings almost parallel the ERIC Digest of parenting styles (1999). Positive correlations for academic achievement and the authoritative parenting style were found. Students who had a parent with authoritative style were more successful in school. On the other hand, in almost direct contrast, their findings indicated that there was a significant negative relationship between permissive parenting styles and academic achievement because students who had parents with permissive style had lower academic achievement in school compared to other students. Additionally, ERIC found that there was no significant relationship between authoritarian parenting style and school achievement.

Dehyadegary et al., (2012) felt that the findings suggest that parents play a significant role in determining the level of academic achievement among students. Thus,
they concluded, that parents need the appropriate knowledge and skills so that they can guide their children’s positive development (Dehyadegary et al., 2012).

Aunola, Stattin, and Nurmi’s (April 2000) research converged in part from Baumrind’s (1967, 1971) conclusions because they concur with the research that found authoritative parenting to be the best for student adaptive achievement strategies. Some gender differences were noted in that males needed more of an authoritarian approach which may be due to their degree of maladaptive behaviors. The study also noted that there was an over-representation of boys in the neglectful parenting style category. The study concluded that parents do play an important role in their children’s use of adaptive achievement strategies and performance. Authoritative parenting results in students having expectations of achievement, staying focused, and having the ability to keep believing in their own abilities. This study points out interesting differences in which parenting style works best for males which is not in agreement with the leading expert, Diane Baumrind. It found that authoritarian worked best with males in general. This finding supports the thought that maybe the best parenting style is situational and responsive in order to meet the needs of the child. However, the divergence is an indication that the traditional effective authoritative parenting style may not be the best for all students.

Baumrind (2012) defended her conclusion that authoritative parenting results in the child that is best socialized for achievement even though the style supports power assertion in conjunction with a warm openness about the reason for the discipline. Authoritarian parenting style also requires an assertion of power; however Baumrind contends that this type of parenting does involve a coercive and forceful demandingness
that is usually in conjunction with harsh or abusive words, deeds or actions that have a negative impact on the social well-being of the child. Baumrind’s defense comes in response from other researchers who state that any kind of power assertion used in the socialization of the child is negative and should be avoided. This approach mirrors the permissive parenting style that Baumrind proposed results in a child that is not properly socialized for high achievement and performance. It is thought-provoking that Baumrind felt the need to defend her earlier work and research findings of which parenting style is best. Still, it opens the door to the possibility that there is not an optimal parenting style for everyone.

Maccoby (1992) examined the evolution of theories regarding how parents socialize their children for successful integration into adulthood. She discussed two theories (behaviorism and psychoanalysis) and concluded by discussing the asymmetry power relationship that exists between parent and child. Maccoby summarized that parents need skills in role-making because effective socialization requires an understanding of the child’s perspective but realizes that the parent’s role is longer and larger than the child can understand so a parent’s role is a gradually diminishing dominant process. Maccoby’s (1992) study supports the research that parents can and need to be taught parenting skills.

**Summary**

Research has found that there is a correlation between parenting styles and academic achievement. Based on the research of Baumrind (1971) and Maccoby (1992) four parenting styles have been classified and identified that depend on varying degrees of demandingness and responsiveness. The four parenting styles are authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and neglectful. Based on the research findings of Diane
Baumrind, the most accepted outcome is that the best parenting style is authoritative for optimal student socialization and achievement. However, in her early research she excluded African American families. Furthermore, there is a lack of research on which parenting style is best for African Americans. A search for peer-reviewed articles on parenting styles and African Americans of research conducted over the past five years yielded only six possible relevant articles. In one article, Hines and Holcomb-McCoy (2013, p. 69) concluded based on the research of others that “empirical research analyzing whether Baumrind's (1971, 1978, 1991) and Maccoby and Martin's (1983) parenting styles have the same outcomes on children of different cultural and racial groups are mixed (Mandara, 2006; Steinberg, Lamborn, Darling, Mounts, & Dornbusch, 1994).” This research will seek to get participant’s perceptions on the parenting style or styles of their parents to explore if there is evidence of agreement with Baumrind’s conclusions or not.

Although there are different conclusions as to which parenting style is best for academic achievement, there is apparent consensus on the impact of parenting on a child’s academic achievement and socialization. Research often makes reference to the parent(s) as the first teacher. The next research stream will examine the role that the parent plays in the cognitive development of a child.
Second Stream of Research: Theories of Cognitive Development

This section examines the impact of different theories of cognitive development on a child’s behavior in social settings like a classroom. These articles discuss the long term outcomes on the development of critical thinking and problem solving skills when there are gaps in the cognitive development of children because of a lack of effective parenting especially during the very early years. If parents fail to show love and support (responsiveness and demandingness) and fail to communicate adequately with a child during the very early years, the development of early language skills will be hindered.

Cognitive Development

Lev Vygotsky was Russian born so all of his original work is written in Russian and requires translations which have resulted in some translation inaccuracies (Gredler, 2009). Some of his work came to forefront in Western culture in the 1980s. His major theories center around the role of cultural signs and symbols in the development of attention, conceptual thinking, language, memory numeric operations and reasoning, the relationship of speech and thinking, and the development process of higher order cognitive abilities. He is often cited in research regarding cognitive development.

Wertsch and Tulviste (July, 1992) examined a few of Vygotsky’s ideas that relate to how children develop and the significance of these ideas today. The writers frame their analysis by explaining that the United States was looking for a new theoretical framework for its educational model and that Vygotsky’s ideas of “zone of proximal development”, “inner speech”, and “egocentric” became prominent (as cited in Wertsch & Tulviste, July, 1992). Vygotsky believed that the impact of external cultural influencers were primary influences on a child. However, Wertsch and Tulviste, (1992)
felt that Vygotsky’s ideas were Eurocentric and that Vygotsky felt there was a hierarchy among cultures. Furthermore, they assert that Vygotsky felt that the cultural input was greater than biological input but he neglected to provide clear and sufficient evidence to substantiate his claims. They also noted that Vygotsky’s views are in opposition to the individualistic concept that is highly prized in American culture and that Vygotsky’s views advocated that because of the impact of one’s environment and social interactions, the understanding of socialization moves from external control to internalization of beliefs. Given the magnitude of the impact on American educational policy, it is disturbing and disappointing to think that educational reform efforts are directly linked to someone who possibly did not value everyone’s culture. However, it presents the opportunity to investigate whether or not Vygotsky’s theories are apparent and applicable in inner city cultures.

According to Gredler (2009), Vygotsky found that speech evolves from a means of communication into a way of thinking and that humans move through the speech development stages of (1) preintellectual (infant babbling) to (2) autonomous (invented words around age one) to (3) naively psychological (things have names and child is in second year of life) to (4) egocentric speech (serves both a social function and a planning/problem-solving function at age three), and finally (5) as an adolescence, speech evolves to the inner speech stage (external talk become internal talk to self between the ages of three and seven) wherein thoughts control actions. The eventual impact on academic achievement is tremendous if a child’s development is slowed in any of this process because Vygotsky found that children with impoverished vocabulary and limited word meanings may not achieve the higher order thinking skills required for both
planning and problem solving that should occur by adolescence. Conscious awareness and self-directed control of one’s thinking activities are essential to the development of higher order thinking skills.

Gredler (2009) in her interpretation of Vygotsky’s works asserts that cognitive development flows from mastering language, writing, counting and other symbols used to master cognitive tasks and that children practice behavior that is modeled before them. Hence, since parents are the first teachers, this modeling is critical to aiding children to control their attention internally through verbal thinking. The development of attention, perception, and memory are critical to mastery of signs and development of conceptual thinking. Students have their parents as their first teacher and the teacher starts with the student at that point of school enrollment and attendance so if the required egocentric speech for making associations and problem solving are lacking, the student begins a school career with a speech, vocabulary and concept gap that fails to recognize patterns that exist in reality. In light of Vygotsky’s theory about the importance of the adult in child development, this finding underscores the importance of parenting styles and parenting (Gredler, 2009).

Peter Smagorinsky’s (2007) interpretation of the central theme of Vygotsky theory about cognitive development revolves around the critical nature of cultural influences. Smagorinsky (2007) wrote

that thinking is a product of cultural practice and so people from diverse backgrounds often frame social situations and how to act in them differently; that thinking is mediated by cultural tools such as speech, which again may be employed differently by people whose backgrounds have reinforced particular
ways of using them; and that exploratory, playful, experimental uses of speech can serve an important role in the development of new ideas (Smagorinsky, 2007, p. 66).

Thus, he proposed that because students come from different backgrounds they will have different meanings and understandings for what is considered the norm in a classroom setting. This can present a problem in the classroom because a teacher may fail to understand a student’s speech patterns and behavior as that student’s norm when in fact the student is behaving in alignment with his or her own environment. Smagorinsky (2007, p. 63) stated that “a number of studies have found that, at least in some African American communities, the behavioral values of school are quite different from those that the students might practice in their home lives.” Thus, there is a disconnect between home values and school values. Parenting education is a tool that can be used to narrow or eliminate the disconnect that interferes with socialization suitable for a classroom learning environment.

Smagorinsky (2007, p. 62) implied that even when people are alone, their thinking involves a sort of dialogue with others, including “those long gone.” So, in a classroom setting, a student will still hear the voices or dialogues of those from home and other familiar environments and act and speak in accordance with those dialogues rather than those in a school culture or of the classroom teacher. Therefore, “people's thinking shapes their physical and symbolic worlds, and their engagement with those worlds in turn shapes how they (and others) think” (Smagorinsky, 2007, p. 62).

Smagorinsky, (2007, p. 62) also accentuated the importance of the relevancy of understanding the importance of cultural differences by stating that “as I read Vygotsky,
his emphasis is more on understanding how people learn to think than on judging the kinds of thinking that people develop.” He felt that Vygotsky was more concerned with how people structure their world using speech, their everyday lives and “and everything else through which they bring order to their surroundings-help to shape the ways in which they and others view the world,” (Smagorinsky, 2007, p. 62).

Bruner (2008), like Smagorinsky (2007) also discussed the relationship between mind and culture and how people internalize rules and norms, and proposed that because of the impact of things external to the individual, people are also subjected to the norms and rules presented by institutions that are internalized as well. Bruner wrote that others have determined that acquired helplessness is attributed to authoritative and less privileged subcultures.

Bruner further illustrated his findings by discussing a case of someone charged with a crime and how the case is separate from the sentencing. The trial is held to determine innocence or guilt; however sentencing can also involve aspects of the cultural influences of the accused that may provide an explanation for the criminal activity. This analysis provides insight into the environmental significance on child development which lends importance to research into cultural differences and parenting styles. It can be extended that because of the significance of the role that a parenting style has on future cognitive development abilities, Bruner’s findings highlight the importance of effective parenting that results in desired positive socialization and achievement of children.

Young Bae (1999) also advocated the importance of culture on development as he discussed theories of learning as a part of human development. Bae (1999) looked first at the theories of Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson, Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, and Carol
Gilligan as to how they differ as well as how they are alike. He specified each stage of development and the expectant adult behavior if a person fails to move on to the next stage. For example, Bae, (1999, p. 14) believes that “therefore, human development is determined by chance or planned events. The individual's environment will both limit and free him or herself, and culture can aggravate the developmental stages through making these stages more or less prolonged and intense.” Thus, the impact of a person’s environment plays a critical role in their development in moving through the stages as identified. Bae (1999) stated that, according to Erickson, if infants do not learn to trust because of inconsistent and inadequate care, they would later on in life behave in certain ways when their needs are not met. They will tend to have feelings of anxiety and uncertainty, will have attitudes of suspicion and fear towards the world and its people, will have a sense of uncertainty when it comes to love, will be less lovable, and they may withdraw into themselves when they are in conflict with others and themselves.

Bae (1999) considered the implications of the stages of development by noting what the possibilities are when there is some interference with the proper process of development. He talked about Freud’s assertion about the correlation between mental and biological development and functioning, and in his belief that children are born with some inherent instincts, like the want to eat when hungry, the want to sleep when tired, and the need for attention and love. Thus if a child is depraved of these basic instinctual needs, it can experience psychological problems throughout life (Bae, 1999).

Bae (1999) deliberated about how emotions affect learning by first focusing on the biological perspective and then the educational perspective. He made that point that the same way memories are stored in the brain, so too are emotions. Bae also shared that
studies show that there is a long-term memorable connection between events and our emotions. Bae lists several emotions that affect learning negatively: fear, anxiety, frustration, depression, helplessness (a combination of frustration and depression), and anger. Conversely, Bae also postulated that some emotions like fear, hope, optimism, approval, esteem, utility and reverence, and enjoyment can have a positive effect on both the willingness and ability to learn. So, if a student connects positive life experiences to learning, then the student will likely be more motivated to learn. He cited Piaget and other psychologists like Carl Rogers, Arthur Combs, and Abraham Maslow as proponents of the value and significance of self-motivation, or intrinsic motivation as the highest, and most desirable form of motivation that can come from an individual. He did not dismiss the role of extrinsic motivators either. Bae’s research findings adds credence to the importance of the role of parenting and its connection to student achievement.

Inner city areas have abnormally high rate of poverty so its impact on cognitive development must be noted. Bruner (1975) presented an analysis on the impact of poverty on early childhood development years that resulted in differences in how children perceive their control over themselves and their environment. Bruner noted three influences affected by poverty: goal setting and problem solving; how children use language, and how children perceive the demands and expectations from parents and teachers. Studies show that if the mother feels controlled externally, then the child is more likely to have a lower IQ and a poor academic performance by the age of 6 or 7. Bruner advocated that the degree of academic achievement is tied to the child’s socio-cultural background. However, Bruner believes that it is possible to change the effects of poverty by fostering an environment wherein the poor know and can take control over
what happens to them. This change must start at home and Bruner feels that unless the
plight of the poor is addressed, it will lead to a collapse of America. Again, Bruner’s
findings also mention the importance of the role of parenting and parenting practices on
the achievement of the child.

**Summary**

There is more consensus than not that there is a direct relationship between the
parenting a child receives in the early years before entering school and the cognitive
development of the child. So much of the language development is dependent on the
communication between parent and child. The child connects to the environment based
on what, how and by whom it is introduced. If there is a gap in the development of
speech during the early years, it will manifest later in a lack of development of higher
order thinking skills. Therefore, the responsiveness of a parent plays a significant role in
the development of speech and will play a role in the academic achievement of a student.

Still, there is a lack of consensus on which parenting style is best for African
Americans (Hines & Holcomb-McCoy, 2013, p. 69). The next research stream examines
the part that race and culture may have in the types of parenting styles and practices that
produces optimal student achievement and desired socialization.
Third Stream of Research: Cultural influences on optimal parenting style

Parenting education impacts student classroom behavior and consequent improved academic performance. “Parent training is the single most effective intervention available for reducing early conduct problems” (Kazdin, 1985; Tanaka, 1987; Taylor & Biglan, 1998).

The role of parenting

"People marched and were hit in the face with rocks to get an education, and now we've got these knuckleheads walking around. . . . The lower economic people are not holding up their end in this deal. These people are not parenting." Bill Crosby, Ed.D

Bill Cosby (PBS, 2004) gave a speech during a program at Howard University in Washington, D.C. for the 50th year commemorative anniversary of the Supreme Court decision of Brown versus the Topeka Board of Education that created controversy because of statements like the quote above. Some were in agreement with his sentiments, others were not. Alvin Poussaint, famed psychiatrist at Harvard Medical School and the Judge Baker Children's Center in Boston, during an interview on PBS said he agreed with the thrust of Cosby’s remarks and went on to say that:

But I think the spirit of what he said was he felt that the black community, particularly people who are not making it, should be paying more attention to education, basically was saying that, and that parents should be paying more attention to good parenting, because a lot of bad things were happening to our youth.

And I think that's pretty obvious that it is. And it's at a crisis proportion in many of our cities. In Baltimore, 76 percent of black males don't graduate from
high school. Of the two million people in jail, about 45 percent are African-American, most have been males. Of the homicides in the country, about 45 percent are African-American males, mostly killing other black people and black males.

So there is a crisis, and the dropout rate from high school is still very high. It's better, but it gets camouflaged in the statistics. In Baltimore again, 50 percent of 9th graders don't graduate from high school. Well, if you get pockets like that in inner city areas like Philadelphia, Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, there's a serious problem for the black community. (PBS, 2004).

Most research supports that parenting plays a significant role in how children develop and impacts their behavior in school. Nancy Shute, in an article in U.S. News about eight disciplining mistakes parents make with parenting, said that “But, paradoxically, not having limits has been proven to make children more defiant and rebellious, because they feel unsafe and push to see if parents will respond. Research since the 1960s on parenting styles has found that a child whose mom and dad are permissive is more likely to have problems in school and abuse drugs and alcohol as teenagers” (Shute, 2008). This coincides with students who display a lack of respect for authority as well as social and physical boundaries in a school setting. Wu and Sen (2006, p. 426) in a study of the effects of parenting on the academic achievement of African American children noted that “other than family SES [social economic status], the most consistent and powerful predictors of academic achievement in elementary school were parental beliefs of their children’s school performance and general abilities, and parent expectations of children's highest educational attainment.” Therefore, if
parents set high standards for their children’s academic achievement, the children would meet this expectation.

Other research findings support the claim that parental behavior plays a significant role in the behavior of children. O’Connor (2002) found that changing the behavior of parents would lead to a change in the behavior of children. He wrote that “studies reviewed…provide a sample of the growing number of demonstrations of how changing parenting leads to improved child behavior, and that change can be accomplished through a range of intervention approaches” (O’Connor, 2002, p. 560). This suggests that parents can be taught parenting skills that will result in better behavior of their children. Furthermore, O’Connor (2002) wrote that the behavior of parents is internalized by their children and carries over into other settings. Thus, if the behavior of parents fails to meet the standards or norms of what is considered appropriate social behavior, their children’s behavior will reflect the internalized observed behavior of their parents. The children will internalize the parenting style of how they are being parented.

**The role of parenting styles**

Previous research (Baumrind, 1967, 1971, 2012) found authoritative parenting style to be most effective in academic achievement for students. This is the traditional view of parenting styles. Still, there is research that examines the traditional view of parenting styles and whether or not it is the best for every student. For most of her research Baumrind’s participants were middle income Caucasians. Other researchers found differences in which parenting style and practices are best for their specific race or culture. This stream presents research that examines these similarities and differences. Additionally, the information that will be gathered from the interviews will be analyzed
to determine if there are strategies that can be shared as a vehicle to improve parenting practices for others in inner city areas.

Pinder (2012) research used an exploratory quantitative approach to determine which parenting practices were used by parents of Afro Caribbean and African American students that resulted in higher academic achievement especially in the sciences. Similar to Wu and Sen (2006), the study found strong correlations between parents assisting with homework, what the student’s expectations were, time watching television, time doing homework for African American students whereas the family practices that resulted in achievement in science for Afro Caribbean students were "parents discuss school progress," "time spent in extra science lessons," and "performance motivation to do science." (Pinder, 2012, p. 732). The author admits the limitations of the study were the sample size and the demographics of the sample even though students were random selected from a pool of science students at a university. It is apparent that more research is needed in the area of parenting practices that result in higher academic achievement for African American students especially since this study notes a strong correlation between watching television and academic achievement.

Wu and Sen’s (2006) research consisted of a longitudinal study using a mixed methods exploratory approach of the relationship between parenting practices and the academic achievement of African American students. The researchers found that socio-economic status is the strongest predictor of academic achievement. However, independent variables like parental expectations, parental involvement, parental belief and discipline styles impacted the dependent variable of academic achievement. The study also found that the parenting style is more authoritative in the younger years and
becomes more authoritarian by the third grade which tends to have a negative impact on achievement. The researchers criticized other studies for biases for comparing low income African American families to affluent Caucasian and Asian families. The study did not find the independent variable of marital status to be as significant as believed by many.

McWayne, Owsianik, Linnie, Green, and Fantuzzo’s (2008) research findings disputed Dianne Baumrind’s analysis about African American children from low income families. Baumrind concluded that these families use more authoritarian parenting styles (harsh parenting methods) whereas this study found no difference in their parenting styles in comparison to other groups. They recommend future parenting studies that include African American families should include extended families and further suggested that measures be culturally appropriate. Garcia and Gracia (2009) investigated which parenting style is best for Spanish adolescents. The study used the definitions of parenting styles proposed by Baumrind (1971) and the 1,416 adolescents were contrasted on four outcomes of self-esteem, psychosocial maladjustment, personal competence and problem behavior. The researcher’s prediction of indulgent parenting style being the best for Spanish children was confirmed, with authoritative being second best followed by authoritarian and neglectful. This study also shared about other ethnic studies that showed that authoritative parenting is not the best across all cultures as many assert. The researchers purported that authoritative parenting is found as being best is because participants are usually from white middle class whose environments reflect the culture of the researchers.
Parenting education

Slade (2006) discussed parenting programs and their potential impact on improving the parenting style and practices of parents. He advocates the importance of getting parents to begin to wonder why their child behaves a certain way; this Slade (2006, p. 645) refers to as facilitating wondering stating that “The simple act of even briefly imagining the child's experience, because it leads to understanding, can be momentous and can transform a parent's representation of the child. And it is only after the parent is engaged in wondering that developmental guidance and knowledge takes on real meaning and vitality” (Slade, 2006, p. 646). The next stage of parent intervention Slade calls eliciting affect as a means to mentalization which is:

the act of making meaning of "hot" and disregulated moments within the self, the other, and the relationship that promotes reflection. This journey can be difficult and requires a skilled person to help the parents to navigate possible painful experiences of their own past. A parent's capacity to-in Selma Fraiberg's (1980) words-"hear her baby's cry" is within most clinical situations contingent on the clinician's capacity to hear the mother's cry. Many of the parents we see are faltering in areas where they themselves have not been held or heard (Slade, 2006, p. 646).

It appears that the antisocial behaviors displayed by children are behaviors learned at home. However, with intervention, parents can be taught parenting skills that will result in better behaved children. Studies also show that show that interventions are best before a child is born but are effective after birth. Pinquart, Martin, Teubert, and Daniela (2010) found that interventions designed at preventing negative parenting
behaviors should start preferably before problems emerge; interventions should start as soon as possible, even before birth if possible.

**Summary**

The research on which parenting style is best for African Americans differs so there is a serious gap in this research area. However, this study can inform the field of which is effective and add to the slight body of literature on African Americans and parenting styles. Furthermore, the literature acknowledges that necessity for parenting programs as well the importance of offering quality programs that meet the needs of the parents as a strategy to improve the parenting skills of parents. So if students and their parents are identified early then interventions can be put into place as soon as possible with the expectation that serious gaps in children’s cognitive development can be deterred or changed. Students who exhibit severe inappropriate behavior need the collaboration of the school, home and the community to commit to bring about the change that is needed for exploration of life and learning to take place. Therefore, if there are parenting styles and practices that exhibit proven success stories based on the lived experiences of adults who came from similar neighborhoods and schools can be captured and shared, it will be of benefit to those who need or provide parenting education.
Chapter 3: Action-Oriented Research Methodology

Introduction

This research was an exploration of the lived experiences of graduates from an inner city school district to ascertain if any strategies and skills can be gleaned that could be of use to assist current parents of students who attend schools in inner city school districts. This chapter presents proposed methodologies and decisions about the interview sites and population, research design and rationale, research methods, a pilot study, reliability and validity procedures, and ethical considerations.

Inner city areas are plagued with several problems that can be linked to their educational system—high dropout rates, low graduation rates, high unemployment rate, high crime rate, adult illiteracy, generational poverty, high poverty rates, as well as an achievement gap among races (Census, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2010). However, despite this data, there are graduates of the inner city school districts who have achieved much success in life. There are examples of alumni of inner city school districts who overcame obstacles and achieved success in their chosen occupations. So, what made the difference?

There is a significant body of research that has determined there is a direct correlation between parenting style and student achievement (Baumrind, 1971; Maccoby, 1992; Aunola, et al, 2000; Dehyadegary, 2012). Furthermore, child psychologists have determined that there is a connection between the early cognitive development of a child and their eventual development of higher order thinking capabilities which is a result of a child’s environmental circumstances that includes what he or she learns from others (Gredler, 2009). However, research shows there is an apparent discrepancy in knowledge about the perceived value of parenting style, parenting practices and family culture in
parenting on the cognitive development, student achievement and socio-economic status of African American adults who attended inner city schools. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore lived experiences of African American adults who attended inner city schools and their perceptions about the value of parenting style, parenting practices and family culture in parenting on their cognitive development, academic achievement level and socio-economic status.

Research Questions

The central research question that guided this research is: How do African American adults who attended a selected inner city school describe their perceptions about the value of parenting style, parenting practices and family cultural differences in parenting on their cognitive development, educational achievement levels and socio-economic status? The sub-questions were designed to elicit responses that provided rich descriptions:

1. How do African American adult alumni of a selected inner city school district describe experiences related to parenting styles and practices of their parents?

2. What perceived value, if any, do AA adult participants attribute parenting styles and practices of their parents on the development of their academic achievement level and socio-economic status?

3. How do alumni of selected inner city schools describe the role of the parenting style and practices of their parents on their academic achievement level and socio-economic status?
4. How do alumni of a selected inner city school describe the role of parenting style and practices on their cognitive development?

5. How do alumni of a selected inner city school describe the role of family culture on their academic achievement levels and life status?

Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind that the findings may, or may not, illustrate that participants perceive that the parenting style and practices of their parents contributed to their academic achievement and socio-economic status. Van Manen (1997) argues that the phenomenologist does not seek determinant or conclusive answers but rather strives to reflect both pre-reflective and reflectively on lived experiences.

The research method will be qualitative phenomenology using interviews to capture text to describe lived experiences in a deeper way from which themes will emerge as the descriptions evoke “vivid images and associations that prompt our thoughtful reflection” (Van Manen, 1997, p. 355). Additionally, phenomenology is selected as the interpretative framework because of the researcher’s ontological belief that individuals perceive and experience reality differently, the belief that reality is individually constructed and co-constructed between the participants, and finally, the belief that the methodological approach use of interviews is an inductive tool used to identify emergent themes (Creswell, 2013).

**Research Design and Rationale**

During the last 20 years, it appears that phenomenology as a research approach has become more popular and more acceptable in social science research. Cohen and Omery (1994) state that it is a means of considering experience naively which permits for the phenomena to become apparent on its own, free from preconceptions. This is the
stance which the researcher will adopt for the purposes of this study and will maintain throughout the data collection, analysis and final reporting stages. The researcher is interested in the voices of the participants and therefore has selected phenomenology as the approach for this study to explore the lived experiences of participants in their own words, which will be vital to identify the nature of the role of parenting and culture that may have played a role in the participants’ achievement and current socioeconomic status. The researcher believes that it is important to get the stories from people who have achieved success above the median income level for the city of study because the researcher feels that there is a gap between what research says should lead to career and college readiness and the measures for success for current students. This approach presents the opportunity for interpretation of several people’s perspectives and perceptions which may result in the emergence of common themes. The identification of these themes may result in the identification of the parenting style, styles or practices that addresses how the alumni developed the desire to achieve academically and with their education and income.

**Researcher’s Role**

The researcher started teaching in the inner city school district in January 2008 which is about seven years ago from this present time of this project. It was also the researcher’s first experience teaching in a K-12 setting. The researcher taught at colleges previously for seven years on the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland, which consists of mostly rural communities.

The researcher was very involved in education while her children were students in the schools on the Eastern Shore. She served as PTA president of two different schools,
on the county PTA council as well as a term as a board member of the Maryland State Council of PTAs. She also involved with several groups who had an interest in education and were advocates for a fair and just education for all K-12 students. In addition, the researcher served on board of education committees like the Minority Achievement and Textbook Selection Committees. During these experiences, the researcher developed a rapport with board members so that when a critical vote was taken on whether to demolish completely or rebuild a state of the art building while keeping critical parts of the former all Black high school, her testimony was credited as the reason for their vote.

However, she was totally unprepared for the culture of inner city schools as an educator and member of the community. Actually, she was appalled as she determined that the culture of the street was also the culture of the classroom. She was even more shocked when as a new teacher she was being blamed by the administrators for the behavior of her students which was highly disruptive until she realized that socialization starts at home with family. The realization of the separation of her role as teacher and appointed parent allowed the researcher to let go of her feelings of classroom management failure to an understanding that she cannot escape her daily responsibilities related to the delivery of instructional content teaching and the necessity for modeling and expecting appropriate social behavior for her students.

However, the researcher wanted to explore how and why some students are able to overcome the environmental pitfalls of low income, mostly segregated, drug-ridden communities and achieve success while so many fall prey to the obstacles and become another statistic of dependency on the government in various platforms, i.e., social services, or the penal system. More specifically, the researcher wanted to explore the
role of parenting style and practices and culture in the success of students because of what research says about the role of parenting as well as her own personal experiences in being parented and being a parent. The cliché of parents being the first teacher is reinforced in research and thus cannot be ignored as adaptive solutions are sought to alleviate the negative outcomes in inner city areas.

The researcher will have to refrain from passing judgment and remain completely receptive to the stories being shared. It is essential to the research that her own preconceived notions are pushed aside of what parenting should consist of based on her life. The researcher acknowledges that it will be difficult to refrain from comparing and contrasting her own experiences with that of the participants but it must be done especially as the data is being analyzed. The researcher must bracket, or set aside her own experiences as she learns from others who experienced inner city childhood and inner city public schools. Quite frankly, the researcher wants to be of greater service to the students she teaches by seeking to learn more about their environments and family cultures. The rural-raised educator wants to learn more about these specific influences on inner city education.

Additionally, the researcher has over 20 years of experience in interviewing as a reporter, columnist and publisher. This experience will be invaluable in establishing a rapport with participants as well as knowing what questions to ask to delve deeper into participant’s reflections and memories of their own lives.

**Rationale for Research Approach**

The intent of this research is to hear the voices of graduates of an inner city school district about their perception of the role of interactions and relationships with their
EXPLORING THE ROLE OF PARENTING ON LIFE STATUS

parents has had on their current life status. Therefore, the research looked into the essence of the shared experience of former student of inner city schools and the role of parenting and culture on their current status. Phenomenology refers to the description of one or more individual’s consciousness and experience of a phenomenon” and whose purpose is to obtain a view into “research participants’ life-worlds and to understand their personal meanings constructed from their lived experiences” (Johnson & Christensen, p. 395).

This approach is the best way to obtain the desired data because it allows for participants to describe what and how they experienced parenting while attending an inner city schools. Creswell (2013, p. 81) explains that ‘The type of problem best suited for this form of research is one in which it is important to understand several individuals’ common or shared experiences…in order to develop practices or policies, or to develop a deeper understanding about the features of the phenomenon” In a recent report the inner city school district shared that in spite of gains in graduation rates, its graduates are still not college ready, so if any insight can be gleaned from the sharing of the lived experiences of others who come from the same communities and schools that are accomplished, could be of significant value to present day families and the community (BCPSS, 2013).

Phenomenology concerns itself with the hermeneutics, or interpretation of the data collected. A major concern with the interpretation is the ability of the researcher to bracket or set aside personal experiences as much as possible so that it does not influence the actual analysis of the data (Creswell, 2013). The ultimate state would consist of the researcher being totally absorbed into the lived experiences of the participants free from any pre-conceived notions or thoughts of the researcher. Furthermore, even though the
EXPLORING THE ROLE OF PARENTING ON LIFE STATUS

researcher acknowledges preconceptions, it is also possible that the researcher further identifies preconceptions during or after the data is collected and analyzed. Smith (2007, p. 6) presents that “Therefore, in practice, one may only begin to see some of one’s fore-understandings as one endeavors to make sense of what this person is saying,” which suggests a state of constant reexamination of reflections even as the data is being collected. The researcher used notes and ongoing mental reflections to capture the researcher’s experiences as soon as possible after an interview.

Another concern is the degree of the analysis itself meaning at what point does the researcher become satisfied with the data interpretation as the researcher goes through the cyclical or non-linear process of identifying key words or statements, to identifying major themes and finally to making hermeneutic statements. Thus, at some point, the researcher must decide that the interpretation is sufficient. Smith (2007, p. 5) agrees and states “Thus, the skill is in deciding when to come out of the circle and commit oneself to speaking or writing, to deciding that one has an interpretation that is good enough.”

In conclusion, this approach was selected because it is based on the lived experiences of the participants in order to dig deeper into the phenomenon of parenting style and practices on the success of alumni of an inner city school district. Furthermore, Reid et al. (2005) offers that participants are experts of their own life stories and can provide the researcher with detailed data on what they were thinking and feeling. The use of semi-structured interviews provides a methodology for capturing participants’ stories. Merriam (2012, pg. 90) offers that the use of interviews allows for the flexibility in responding to the “situation at hand, to the emerging world view of the respondent, or to new ideas on the topic.” Although each participant was asked the same questions, the
follow up questions differed dependent on the responses provided. Furthermore, after reviewing transcripts and recordings of the interviews, as well as conducting ongoing research about methodology and data collection, the researcher used notes and reflections to develop questions to ask participants in follow up interview sessions.

Site and Population

Population description

The target population was graduates of an inner city school district who are accomplished in their field and whose income exceeds the median income for their state. Participants were recruited using a variety of methods that included social media, alumni associations, personal knowledge as well as personal contacts. Once a list was generated, the occupations of the graduates was verified using various sources that included public information, personal accounts and direct contact. The intent for the final list of three to six participants was to have representatives from both genders, various occupations and various age levels. However, the participants selected were generally from the same age bracket. The ethnicity of all participants is African American. The selection strategy was a combination of criterion and convenience sampling (Miles & Huberman, 2009, p. 28). As a result, three participants were selected and after these interviews, the researcher felt that enough data was captured.

Site description and site access

The interview site did vary based on where the participant agreed to meet for the interviews. The preferred site was in the home or living quarters of each participant where the environment is more natural for the participant. Additionally, by conducting the interviews at the participants’ homes, they had ready access to other data and artifacts.
that could have been used to document their lived experiences. Other sites used were meeting rooms at their place of employment or office.

**Research Methods**

**List of Methods**

The researcher used a myriad of methods to collect data that include interviews, available artifacts, and researcher’s notes to improve triangulation efforts. Interviews are a much used tool in qualitative research because they allow for the interviewee to ask open-ended questions and do further probing to go deeper into the inner minds of participants (Johnson and Christensen, 2008; Merriam, 2009). Interviews are useful for this research because of the interest in “past events that are impossible to replicate” (Merriam, 2009, pg. 88). The semi-structured interview is an approach which provides for both planned questions to help guide the interview to make sure that the data collected will be of use and for the flexibility to alter the questions, add more questions and change the order of the question as long as the same overall topics are addressed with each participant (Johnson and Christensen, 2008). The researcher was tasked with keeping the interview focused and purposeful.

The researcher also documented her reflections and reactions during and after each interview as a way to record nuances that may not be apparent in the audio transcriptions. Additionally, taking notes during the interview can record reactions, make notes of something important being said or even be used to pace the interview (Merriam, 2009).

**Instrumentation**
This research project will use a qualitative methodology—specifically it will be a phenomenological study. Moustakas used Kockelman’s definition of phenomenology stating that it is “knowledge as it appears to consciousness, the science of describing what one perceives, senses, and knows in one’s immediate awareness and experience” (Kockelman as cited in Moustakas, 1994, p. 26) This project interviewed participants using purposive sampling who did provide data on their recollections of their perceptions of the parenting styles and practices of their parents as they experienced it as a role in their socialization. The interview instrument consisted of thirteen planned questions. The expectation was that each interview should, and did last about an hour or longer. The questions are aligned to the research questions; however, additional questions were asked that may or may not be to clarify any of the questions that are planned, but were asked because the researcher deemed them important to the data collection effort and new information or themes may emerge (see Table 1).

Once collected, the data was analyzed using the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method of analysis of phenomenological data as recommended by Moustakas (1994). A recommendation for data collection for a phenomenological approach study is to ask the participants questions that provide responses to two central questions (Creswell, 2013, p. 81): “What have you experienced in terms of the phenomenon? What contexts or situations have typically influenced or affected your experiences of the phenomenon?” Although other questions may be asked and other data may be collected, the response to questions that address these two questions insures some degree of commonality in the responses which will augment the process of identifying key words and eventual data analysis as themes emerge. Therefore, the interview questions have been phrased to meet
the uniqueness of this study. The semi-structured format will also allow for the use of open-ended questions that will attempt to gather more clarifying rich, descriptive data through probing.

The data was also compared against parenting styles that use Baumrind’s (1971) classifications to ascertain and to qualify the type of behaviors associated with a respective parenting style.

The following matrix exhibits the relationship between the research questions and the interview questions as a tool to make sure the interview questions are designed to get responses to the research questions. Table 1 depicts these relationships.
### Table 1 - Research and Interview Questions Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Research Question: How did/do African American adults who attended selected inner city schools describe their perceived value of parenting style, parenting practices and family cultural differences in parenting on their cognitive development, educational achievement levels and life status?</td>
<td>Sub-question 1: How did/do African American adult alumni of an inner city school district describe experiences related to parenting styles and practices of their parents?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. First, let’s talk about your childhood. What was it like?</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. In what ways did your parents support you as a student through the years?</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Describe a time when your parents disciplined you?</td>
<td>X</td>
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Central Research Question: How...
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<td><strong>Research Questions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-question 1:</strong> How did/do African American adult alumni of an inner city school district describe experiences related to parenting styles and practices of their parents?</td>
<td><strong>Sub-question 2:</strong> What perceived value, if any, did/do AA adult participants attribute parenting styles and practices of their parents on the development of their academic achievement level and life status?</td>
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<td><strong>Sub-question 3:</strong> How do alumni of inner city schools describe the role of parenting style and practices on their cognitive development?</td>
<td><strong>Sub-question 4:</strong> How do alumni of inner city schools describe the role of family and culture on their academic achievement levels and life status?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. How important was education in your family and how did you know this?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Describe any time you were referred to the office, had detention or some other type of disciplinary action in school because of your behavior?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Describe any type of award, honor or recognition you X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview Questions</td>
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<td>received in school.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Describe what it meant to be an African American as a student.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Please describe and recall any words of wisdom/advice from your parents.</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. What was your experience like entering college, entering the workforce?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. What were/are the most important</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>factors influencing your motivation to graduate from high school, college, career choice or to start a business?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Discuss or describe any differences or similarities between the socioeconomic status of your parents and your own?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I will now describe different</td>
<td>X</td>
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Table 1 continued

Research Questions/Interview Questions Matrix
Based on data reported by a state commission on higher education (MHEC, 2010), too many graduates of the inner city school district need remedial course work entering college so there is an apparent discrepancy in what is deemed academic achievement for graduates of the school system and the reality of their lack of career and college readiness. Also, research has shown that there is a correlation between academic achievement and parenting style as well as the long term impact of parenting on the
cognitive development of a child. This approach was selected because the lived experiences of inner city school graduates describing what their perceptions are of parenting styles that led to their respective academic achievement and life status may provide insight into the career and college ready discrepancy. The participants will be describing their own realities, in their own words.

**Data Collection Methods**

Data collection and analysis did occur in three major stages. The first stage consisted of conducting a literature review of a topic of interest to the researcher, The next step after the proposal was approved and IRB approval given, participants were sought and interviewed and the final stages consisted of an analysis of the data and any recommendations for further research.

The data was analyzed using a modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method of analysis of phenomenological data as recommended by Moustakas (1994). First the description of their experiences were collected using interviews and then the verbatim recordings were used to identify the themes. Then according to Moustakas (1994) the following steps (with some variation) were completed:

1. Consider each statement with respect to significance for description of the experience.
2. Record all relevant statements.
3. List each nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping statement. These are the invariant horizons or meaning units of the experience.
4. Relate and cluster the invariant meaning units into themes.
5. Synthesize the invariant meaning units and themes into a *description of the textures of the experience*. Include verbatim examples.
The data was compared against Baumrind’s (1971) classifications to ascertain and to qualify the type of behaviors associated with a respective parenting style. The analysis proceeded from identifying descriptive codes, to interpreting the codes and finally to the establishment of pattern codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 51). There was a possibility that the participants described parenting styles and practices that diverge rather than converge. The researcher used bracketing as a way to prevent the researcher’s personal experiences from biasing the data coding and analysis.

The responses were studied to see if the perceptions align with the conceptual theories—the traditional parenting style that has been found to lead to student achievement and desired socialization, the parenting style and practices that lay the foundation for the development of higher order thinking skills and finally, the role of ethnicity and culture on parenting style and practice.

Coding of the data went through several, reflective stages that were non-linear. Saldana (2013, p. 3) describes a code as a “word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data.” The researcher established codes after the first interview as the first coding stage. Next, the researcher redefined the codes by grouping them into themes that captured the data’s “primary content and essence” (Saldana, 2013, p. 3). During this stage, the researcher analyzed the data to determine and confirm if the themes that emerged were in congruence with the research questions. Finally, the researcher searched for patterns. In the process, the patterns emerged that had something in common that may have also been a difference. Saldana (2013) asserts that a pattern can be characterized by similarity, difference, frequency, sequence, correspondence as in relation to other events or activities, or causation as one aspect tends to cause another. Furthermore, Merriam purports that the categories or themes that are constructed
during data analysis should meet several criteria: responsive to the purpose of the research. In effect, categories are the answers to [the] research questions. Exhaustive, that is, you should be able to place all data that you decided were important or relevant to the study in a category or subcategory. Mutually exclusive, so that an outsider should be able to read the categories and gain some sense of their nature... Conceptually congruent (2009, p. 186).

The study employed one central question and four sub-questions that were designed to begin the conversation with participants and to dive as deeply as possible into their experiences in order to get from them their view. The actual interview questions were aligned to these questions.

Interviews (at least two per participant) were conducted over a three month period and at least 120 minutes were spent with each of the three participants. John Creswell (2013) states that in phenomenological research, the study needs only to involve a small number of participants to allow the researcher to understand the lived experiences of the participants. Two of the participants permitted both audio and video recordings. The researcher also kept notes and used participants to confirm the accuracy of the quotes and analysis as listed with each theme. All three participants were African American graduates of the school district under study and whose career income exceeded the median income for their state. Interviews took place at participants’ homes and their workplaces as their respective preference in a private setting.
**Stage One: Description of the Phenomenon of Interest by the Researcher**

This involved exploration of the literature to examine previous research and teachings about the problem and to define and describe this phenomenon in the light of that literature. This occurred over a period of one year. The literature review also provided the framework for the research questions.

**Stage 2: Collection of Participants Descriptions of the Phenomenon**

The use of open-ended clarifying questions to facilitate the interview and to ascertain the meaning and dimensions of each participant’s experience with the phenomenon, which sought to draw out the personal story and meaning of each participant’s lived experience with the phenomenon of how each experienced parenting style during their formative years. The steps for data collection began with a field test of the interview questions to test for the trustworthiness of the questions in obtaining qualitative data that will provide the descriptions needed for data analysis with two volunteers. One volunteer for the field test was an African American divorced single parent who was raised in a low income housing project in an inner city by a single parent, who graduated from college and was a working professional. Another volunteer for the field test was a college-educated professional who also was raised for a few years by a single parent but attended school in a suburban school district. During the interview questions were rephrased, revised as well as created in order to explore farther into the lived experiences of the volunteers. The participants were also asked to reflect on the questions and the experience itself. This pilot was conducted as part of a course. Please see Table 2 for the timeline for data collection.

**Stage Three: Reading and Analysis of All the Participant Descriptions of the Phenomenon**

Data analysis involved a deep and repeated reading of all data (transcripts and field notes) and use of analysis procedures as described below and in Table 1 Interview/Question
Analysis and Table 2 Data Collection and Analysis. This step also involved reporting findings using thick, rich descriptions as well as the identification of emergent themes and the interpretation of any findings whether supportive or in contrast to the literature.

**Stage 4: Conclusions and Recommendations**

The final stage presents any information that adds to the body of research on the topic being studied. It involves a synthesis of all the steps based on the findings.

The data collection continued in the following steps:

1. Order and test a voice to text electronic transcription software called Dragon Speaking. It was tested to determine its ability to transcribe accurately from a digital audio recorder that will be used record interviews and reflective notes of the researcher and found lacking. So, transcription services were used.

2. Obtained IRB approval to proceed with the research.

3. Conducted a pilot study.

4. Revision of test instruments and data collection tools was not required.

5. Identified and selected potential participants using criterion sampling, made initial contact, built rapport as much as possible before the interview by keeping lines of communication open using tools like email, letters of introduction that explain the purpose of the research and to ensure confidentiality of their participation.

6. Conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with three participants.

Real names will not be used in any notes or actual reporting of the data. Rather participants have been assigned a number.
7. Transcribed interviews and researcher’s reflections which also contain observation notes about the participants (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2012).


9. Obtained feedback from participants on accuracy of quotes, analysis and actual quotes. Made any adjustments deemed necessary.

10. Report findings and make recommendations for further research.

11. Store all data securely until the research process is completed and then all participants’ data will be eliminated to protect and respect the confidentiality of participants.

This phenomenological approach project used semi-structured interviews to gather data because interviews are effective. The interviews were audio recorded. Although the possibility existed for the examination of artifacts this was not a significant source of data. The participants were selected using criterion and convenience sampling strategies. They were contacted using a variety of tools that included a letter (including email) of invitation, a posting on social media and a telephone call. It was of paramount importance to establish a rapport with participants so that they were comfortable in sharing their lived experiences, some of which may evoke memories that were very emotional for them.
# Data Analysis Procedures

*Table 2 - Data Collection and Analysis Plan*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Data Collection Methods</th>
<th>Data Analysis Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Research Question: How did/do African American adults who attended selected inner city schools describe their perceived value of parenting style, parenting practices and family cultural differences in parenting on their cognitive development, educational achievement levels and life status?</td>
<td>Qualitative (descriptive)</td>
<td>Semi-structured Interviews (Personal or Telephone)</td>
<td>Audio recording analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This will apply to all questions.</td>
<td>Open-ended questions - will provide detailed information in respondents’ own words.</td>
<td>13 Open-ended questions</td>
<td>Qualitative Software (Nvivo))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perceived influences determined by open-ended interviews</td>
<td>Artifacts: Audio Recordings - Documents will be interview transcripts</td>
<td>Coding and thematic analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Text data Baumrind’s (1971) classifications style.</td>
<td>• Pattern Coding &amp; thematic analysis for interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Similar and different themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Research Question: How did/do African American adults who attended selected inner city schools describe their perceived value of parenting style, parenting practices and family cultural differences in parenting on their cognitive development, educational achievement levels and life status?</td>
<td>Researcher’s Journal</td>
<td>Notes taken during and after interviews</td>
<td>Audio recording analysis will be synced to reflections and notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This will apply to all questions.</td>
<td>Reflections on nuances that occur during interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td>Coding and thematic analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Pattern Coding &amp; thematic analysis for interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>• Similar and different themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Research Question: How did/do African American adults who attended selected inner city schools describe their perceived value of parenting style, parenting practices and family cultural differences in parenting on their cognitive development, educational achievement levels and life status?</td>
<td>Artifacts</td>
<td>If available, will be used in conjunction with interview</td>
<td>Coding and thematic analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data will be analyzed using a process advocated by Moustakas (1994). First the description of their experiences will be collected using interviews and then the verbatim recordings will be used to identify the themes. Then according to Moustakas (1994) the following steps (with some variation) should be completed:

1. Consider each statement with respect to significance for description of the experience.
2. Record all relevant statements.
3. List each nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping statement. These are the invariant horizons or meaning units of the experience.
4. Relate and cluster the invariant meaning units into themes.
5. Synthesize the invariant meaning units and themes into a description of the textures of the experience. Include verbatim examples.

The data was compared against parenting style instruments that use Baumrind’s (1971) classifications to ascertain and to qualify the type of behaviors associated with a respective parenting style. The analysis proceeded from identifying descriptive codes, to interpreting the codes and finally to the establishment of pattern codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 51). It is important that key words and themes were identified if they exist. There was a possibility that the participants describe parenting styles and practices
that diverge rather than converge. If deemed necessary, qualitative software would have been used to assist in the coding process. The researcher used bracketing as a way to prevent the researcher’s personal experiences from biasing the data coding and analysis.

The responses were studied to see if the perceptions aligned with the conceptual theories—the traditional parenting style that has been found to lead to student achievement and desired socialization, the parenting style and practices that lay the foundation for the development of higher order thinking skills and finally, the role of ethnicity and culture on parenting style and practice.

**Stages of Data Collection**

The time table for the study is below and was subjected to change based on factors such as the decisions of the proposal committee, the Institutional Review Board and scheduling changes. Although schedules were set, the interviews were subjected to the availability of the research participants as well as getting the required permissions to proceed.

*Table 3 - Research Timeline*

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposal Hearing</td>
<td>Contact by telephone and by mail (Pending IRB approval).</td>
<td>Interview participants (completed)</td>
<td>Analyze data</td>
<td>Edit first three chapters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct Pilot Study</td>
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</table>
Pilot Study - Instrumentation

Pilot Methods

The questionnaire was administered to two individuals who are alumni of inner city school districts and whose current socioeconomic status is above the median income level for the inner city area. The interview questions reflected instrumentation designed to determine parenting styles as identified by Diana Baumrind (1971) as a basis for assessing reliability and validity or the trustworthiness of responses. The pilot instrument is included in the appendix.

Pilot Study Plan

The purpose of the pilot study was to evaluate the functionality of the interview questions to see if the responses would address the research questions so that the rich descriptions needed for data analysis would be provided. The participants were contacted using email and were asked to submit their responses to the interview questionnaire electronically as well. The participants were asked to provide abbreviated responses to the questions and then to respond to an open-ended question about the phrasing of the
questions and their ability to obtain their perceptions about parenting style and practice and their role in achievement and life status

**Pilot Data Analysis**

The responses to the questions were analyzed for themes that concur with descriptions of the different parenting styles. The responses were studied to see if the perceptions align with the conceptual theories. The responses were also analyzed to determine if there was adequate language in the responses provided to get the sought after thick and rich descriptions. The open ended responses were analyzed as a source for reflection on the design of the interview questions. The questions were not changed as a result of this pilot study because of the responses.

**Trustworthiness Assurance Strategies**

The generally accepted criteria for evaluating validity, reliability, generalizability, and objectivity in quantitative research are not applicable to phenomenological research (Merriam, 2009). Instead, the criteria adopted in this research were credibility, soundness, and ethical conduct. Validation for a qualitative study differs from a quantitative study because the data collected are words rather than numbers. Therefore, the methods of validation will also differ (Creswell, 2013).

**Credibility**

The project used a combination of the strategies that consists of negative case analysis, clarifying researcher bias, member checking and writing rich, thick descriptions to establish trustworthiness of the information and research procedures. (Creswell, 2013). Negative case analysis involves reporting data that does not fit within an identified theme. Clarifying researcher bias informs the reader about the researcher’s role, experiences and perceptions that may affect the data analysis and subsequent findings,
recommendations and conclusions. The use of member checking involves inviting the participants to provide their feedback on the accuracy of the interpretations of the findings to see if the findings are true with them (Merriam, 2009). Next, the use of rich, thick descriptions “allows readers to make decision regarding transferability” (Creswell, 2013, p. 252). Additionally, the use of observation was used as a part of the researcher’s notes because the researcher observes firsthand and used this knowledge and expertise in analyzing and interpreting the nuances of the interview (Merriam, 2009). All strategies helped to establish validity by using a mixture of evaluative tools that promote authenticity and trustworthiness of the data and the interpretation of the data. The use of a mixture of methods is a type of triangulation because different methods of evaluating the credibility of the evidence are being used.

**Soundness**

While it is difficult to predict the outcomes of a qualitative study if it is repeated, use of the above strategies will assist in establishing both reliability and validity since “Reliability is problematic in the social sciences simply because human behavior is never static,” (Merriam, 2009, p. 220). External validity is about determining if the findings of a study are transferable to other people and situations. The use of rich, thick language becomes critically important as a strategy for transferability. The descriptions are rich and transparent so that the reader can apply or compare the findings to other situations, which is critical for the usefulness of the shared experiences.

**Ethical Considerations**

The Belmont Report (1979) shares ethical concerns that merit special consideration for this research because it addresses three facets that are of importance—
EXPLORING THE ROLE OF PARENTING ON LIFE STATUS

respect for persons, beneficence and justice. The researcher agrees with and shares the same beliefs as the Belmont Report.

It was critical to respect the people who are a part of the research. In some cases, the participants involved may originally be from lower socioeconomic groups and at some point in time may have felt marginalized and disenfranchised. Based on current parenting research, some may come from generations of persons who feel the same. Thus, it was important to make sure everything was made clear in a way that was not demeaning, that everything was as transparent as possible in order to gain and maintain some degree of trust with the participants as well as assure that they are making informed decisions. Building trust and mutual respect is important to establish a rapport that creates an environment where participants could recall and share their experiences openly and honestly. Signed consent was sought and obtained from all participants who were interviewed before the interview takes place.

The intent of the research is to be of benefit to the participants involved as well as others who may need the information about what were appropriate socialization strategies for others. However, it may have been difficult for some participants to acknowledge that the parenting skills of their parents may have in any or some way contributed negatively to their social development even though they overcame such obstacles. Participants were informed of the potential risks involved psychologically and emotionally. However, it was made clear that a benefit, based on current research, is that by sharing their lived experiences, they can improve the parenting skills of others which will be of benefit to families and the community. If parenting is improved, there will be a snowball effect. The academic achievement of students will improve along with their socialization so that
better decisions will be made. Therefore, if students make better choices, overall the impact should be positive on graduation rates, employment rates, poverty rates and basically most things directly linked to the positive outcomes and expectations of education.

All of the participants are African American. Social justice issues are of grave concern to most African Americans. Education is considered by some to be a social justice issue given the grave high numbers of high school dropout rates of African Americans along with relative low criterion test scores. Therefore, based on current research, the benefits far outweigh the risks for participants. So, this study encompasses the utilitarianism perspective that Johnson and Christenson present as one of three approaches to consider in ethics (2008). The privacy of the participants will continue to be honored unless this right is waived by a participant. No identifying data will be shared that will identify any individual. IRB approval was sought since adult participants were involved.
Chapter 4: Findings, Analysis, Interpretations and Synthesis

Introduction

This chapter details the findings, results, and interpretations of the experiences and perceptions from the participants that relate to parenting style, parenting practices, community and family influences on their success as adult graduates from an inner city school district. The researcher used a phenomenological research design to analyze the experiences of the participants. The data was generated by the use of in depth interviews to understand the phenomenon of parental influences on the participants. The data includes verbatim descriptions on how participants perceive traditionally defined parenting styles, parenting practices, and the role of family and community culture that played a role in their academic achievement and life status. Rich, thick descriptions are provided “as a strategy to enable transferability, it refers to a description of the setting and participants of the study, as well as detailed description of the findings,” (Merriam, 2009, p. 227).

The chapter is organized into three main sections; first is an overview of the chapter, next is the alignment of rich detailed descriptions of the findings of the study to the prevalent and major common themes that emerged from the data. Accompanying each theme are direct quotes that are significant statements from participants’ interviews which are aligned to the interview questions. This alignment which includes sample statements from each participant is then followed by a structural describing of the setting for each participant. Next, following this analysis will be an interpretation of the data that includes combined descriptions of when, where and how the participants’ lived experiences were similar or different. Finally, by using a multi-analytical blended
approach, a synthesis of the data will be presented that will include some descriptive statistics of key words and concepts that are of relative importance, some key codes, editing for the second round of coding and finally, aspects of the immersion approach that includes researcher interpretations, insight and intuitions (Bloomberg & Volpe, pg. 138, 2005). The synthesis will detail the essence of the importance of the responses to the interview questions that correspond to the research questions by listing the commonalities of the participants’ recalled lived experiences as well as any significant differences that emerged.

The major themes that emerged parallel the interview questions. The impact of gender roles emerged as a significant component in conjunction with the results of the combined impact of parenting, family, and community culture on achievement.

**Overview**

This research has been an exploration of the lived experiences of former urban school district students and which parenting tactics were employed by their parent(s) to ascertain if any strategies and skills emerged that could be of use to assist current and future parents of students in the school district. This chapter includes verbatim descriptions of how participants perceive traditionally defined parenting styles, parenting practices, cognitive development, and the role of culture and race in the use of a parenting style(s) that played a role in their academic achievement and life status.

Studies show that parenting style is positively correlated with desired student achievement and behavior in the classroom and that there is a significant body of research that has determined there is a direct correlation between parenting style and student achievement (Dehyadegary, 2012; Aunola, Stattin,& Nurmi, 2000; Maccoby, 1992;
Baumrind, 1971). Moreover, child psychologists have determined that there is a connection between the early cognitive development of a child and their eventual development of higher order thinking capabilities which is a result of a child’s environmental circumstances that includes what he or she learns from others (Moll, 2014; Gredler b, 2009; Mayer, 2008; Vygotsky, 2007). Therefore, if there are parenting styles and practices that exhibit proven success stories based on the lived experiences of adults who came from inner city neighborhoods and schools can be captured and shared, it will be of benefit to those who need or provide parenting education.

The use of three participants provided sufficient descriptions that allowed the researcher to not only create a detailed description of the phenomenon using their words but also allowed the researcher to determine areas of commonality, similarities and divergence. The shared areas of their lived experiences in response to the research questions assist in identifying the specificity of parenting styles and practices that can be of benefit to others.

Findings

This phenomenological study collected data on the recalled lived experiences of participants’ about their perceived impact of their interactions with their parents that led to their success. During the interviews, the researcher choose to use a more collaborative interview approach as a way to maintain rapport and authenticity to obtain responses that are detailed and highly descriptive (Creswell, 2013, p. 173). Furthermore, Creswell explains that “in phenomenological interviews, asking appropriate questions and relying on participants to discuss the meaning of their experiences require patience and skill on the part of the researcher” (2013, p. 173).
The major findings that emerged support the importance of their interactions with parents. Thus, the three major emergent themes are parenting style, parenting practices and family and community influences. Other themes that emerged are the influences of words of advice, childhood influences and life lessons. There was also a significant difference in the influences of gender roles and expectations of the parents or guardians that emerged. The results are presented in three parts; first are the individual descriptions which is followed by emergent themes, and concludes with the researcher’s analysis. The data analysis in the first level contains both textural and structural descriptions. Because of the nature of the interviews and the themes, the structural descriptions are embodied within the verbatim statements in response to questions. A textural description presents a clear image of the phenomenon and verbatim statements are provided as evidence in the charts (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas (1994, p. 19) offers that “the individual structural description provides a vivid account of the underlying dynamics of the experience, the themes and qualities that account for ‘how’ feelings and thoughts connected”. Poetry is also used that the researcher feels captures the essence of selected themes. Although usually the use of poetry is included as an artifact from the participants because it assists in telling their stories, the researcher selected poems she feels depicts aspects of the participants’ life experiences (Moustakas, 1994, p. 23). Textural descriptions describe what the phenomena is while structural descriptions describe how the phenomena was experienced in respective settings and context. The section begins with narratives that describe the participants and poems that depict the nature of their respective relationship with one or both parents are also included after each participant’s description.
The next section is comprised of composite textural and structural descriptions that describe the group experience and is organized by the themes. Experiences are compared and contrasted. The section also opens with a poem that captures a shared perception.

The final section represents the essence or the “culminating aspect” of the study as it incorporates both the textural and structural descriptions (Creswell, 2013, p. 194). This section also includes how the researcher interacted with the data and is also introduced with a poem.

**Section One: Individual Descriptions**

**Descriptions of the Participants**

The descriptions of the participants are presented in narrative form as a way to better understand the interconnectedness of themes that impacted each participant. The charts in the section after the narratives contain evidential data that consists of sample rich, thick descriptions. Additionally, after each narrative is a poem. Each poem is a collective symbol of the participant’s description of the perceived impact of the mother based on responses, and with Participant 3010, because of the strong relationship he had with his father, a poem about a father is also included.

**Description of Participant 1010**

Participant 1010 describes herself as a “divorced, female, African-American, mother, grandmother, entrepreneur, all-around good person.” She was raised as an only child by her grandparents from the age of two until middle school and then she went to live with her mother full time. She never understood why she had to leave her grandmother’s home to live with her mother who did not display any motherly affection
toward her. She had a very positive relationship with her grandfather who passed away unexpectantly to her when she was seven-years-old. She later learned that he had cancer but no one told her of his imminent death. Her grandmother used corporal punishment frequently and beat her until the age of seven or eight. She never understood the reasons for most of the beatings and recalled vividly how a weekly routine was to go to the local park so that she could select her own switch that was used to beat her. She surmised that the beatings were a way to exercise dominance over her as a child. She always knew who her mother was and thought she knew who her biological father was as well because he was her mother’s ex-husband, and thus, her dad. It was only as an adult, a few years ago that she learned the truth. It was a challenge during the interviews to evoke the lived experiences free from her current perspectives with her new knowledge especially because of the emotional toll it continues to have on her. Her mother’s ex-husband became her ex-dad because she basically never saw him again and felt abandoned by him as a child. As an adult, in recent years, she discovered two families of siblings: her biological siblings of which some acknowledge the relationship, and her step-siblings who do not acknowledge her even now as an adult. She was emotionally close to her mother’s sister who took her under her wing and showed her the love and affection she never got from her mother.

While growing up, church was an important part of both her grandmother and mother’s lives and as a result she went to church several times during the week and on Sunday. Church and books were her sanctuaries as a child. Her grandfather was a blue collar steel worker, her grandmother did domestic work, her mother was an office manager and her father she only knew as a childhood friend while growing up, was a
teacher and entrepreneur. Both her parents and godmother were involved in politics and civil rights activities. Thus, she was exposed to community activism by the adults closest to her.

Although her grandmother’s parenting style was authoritative, her mother’s style was dismissive in that she did not take an interest in her at all. Her mother was emotionally detached but provided the physical necessities of life devoid of expressed love. After she went to live with her mother, the man who she recently found out was her biological father, began to spend time with her as a friend of the family. She got a lot of support from her teachers and other educators about the value of education and later, as a teen, from the man who was her actual father but posing as a family friend. It was the family friend that encouraged her to attend college that fueled her determination to get away from the home of her mother and her neighborhood. She did attend college but dropped out because of her first pregnancy which ended in an abortion. She did get pregnant again shortly thereafter, gave birth and married the father of her son as a way to get out of her mother’s house. She was also diagnosed with cancer at the age of eighteen and of course, is a cancer survivor today.

She later attended school to become an x-ray technician which she did for years, then transitioned into a career as a travel agent traveling the world and residing in another country, and eventually engaging in marketing as well as community activism much like her parents. Today, she is an entrepreneur and is sought out by others to get involved in their political endeavors. Her mother has Alzheimer’s Disease and the participant cannot get questions answered about the reasons for the secrecy of her conception and why her mother treated her as she did. Both of her fathers are deceased.
Below is a poem that captures how Participant 1010 recalled her experiences with her mother. The researcher selected this poem because it contains descriptions about a mother daughter relationship that aligns with this participant. The poem speaks of alienation throughout as the author shares all the things she has experienced that her mother knows nothing about. Her statements range from “You don't know about the ish that i been through” to “I always felt i got left over ish” to “No it's not all your fault we're not like mom an daughter,” to “Taught to live on my terms, do things my way” that depict a broken relationship with her mother that resulted in the participant feeling abandoned and coping by being resilient and independent.

You Don't Know

By Kimberly Moore

You don't know about the ish that i been through
You don't know why its like this with me and you
you only see the ish you wanna see
But you dont know the half of whats in me
I'm much more than what meets ya eye
I lay awake some nights tryin not to cry
Wishin we were close like you and your second child
Maybe i should have rebelled and been a lil wild
Perhaps i should a pissed you off every chance i got

Make you angry, get you pissed off and pippin hot
Cause it did wonders fa y'all relationship
I always felt i got left over ish
You told me i was a surprise
Rarely could i ever read love in your eyes
And when i did i knew it wasn't there to stay
Feelings for me change from day to day
Bet you didn't know i tried to take my own life
Bet you didn't know i was once gone be a womans wife
And i know you dont know about the time i was raped
Or about the time i was forced to make a video tape
You couldn't know your baby girl should be a mother
Didn't know i was till i saw blood on the covers
And there is still a list of ish you could never see
Cause i keep all of this ish down deep inside of me
No it's not all your fault we're not like mom an daughter
When i saw how things worked i could have tried harder
But yet and still this is the woman you raised
Taught to live on my terms, do things my way
I really cant help how i am you see
The best i can do is simply be me
But you dont know the ish that i been through
Only concerned about whats up with you
But if you took the time to look under, not just above
Look deep inside, my heart is full of love
And if you used more than just your eyes to see
Maybe you could see the wonder known as Kimberly

**Description of Participant 2010**

Participant 2010 is a retired school principal who was born and raised in the inner city, attended schools in the district that is of interest to the researcher and graduated from the premier all-girls high school. She describes herself as “very independent, self-motivated, and a very active and involved person.” She attended and graduated from a historically black college. She was the second of five children in her two-parent home. She and her older sister were very close then and remain so today. Schools were integrated during her middle school years. There was a strong sense of community wherein neighbors communicated positively with each other about community norms and mores to insure continuity of the same, and neighbors were of varying socio-economic status. The participant had a teacher as a next door neighbor as well as several relatives who were teachers including her own mother although she did not teach in the resident city because the pay for teachers was so low. So, she was exposed to several educators as a part of her childhood experiences.

Her father was a strong disciplinarian who used corporal punishment as his major tool in shaping her cognitive development. Her mother, on the other hand, used words as discipline and told stories that had examples of consequences for poor decision-making as the major tool for instilling values. Both parents were supportive and clearly demonstrated the importance of education by attending PTA meetings, holding their children accountable for their own academic achievement by setting expectations of
success and discussing grades even into college. Her older sister was a strong role model for her and was also protective of her against others. They collaborated to hide some shortcomings of expectations from their parents. She cited her family as having the biggest influence on her life. Below is a poem that captures how Participant 2010 described the relationship she had with her mother. This poem describes a relationship with a mother that shows a deep and reverent appreciation for the mother who provided encouragement, support, guidance, and love. The lines “Thank you for being the example mother for me when it’s my turn too. Thank you for trusting me and loving me in all my faults.” capture the described bond.

For You Mother

Written by: rolanda smith

Taking this time to think rhetorically on all the things you’ve done for me. Not going to make this a long-winded story, but appreciation is what is due on this day. I won’t take more than two minutes of your time, so as the preacher says... Start my clock.

Thank you for encouraging me when no one else could even believe. Thank you for being there for me when everyone else would simply leave. Thank you for putting up with me when you really didn’t have to. These are just a few of the reasons why I say thank you.

Thank you for your advice on things that I should do. Thank you for being the example mother for me when it’s my turn too. Thank you for trusting me and loving me in all my faults. Thank you for doing what it took no matter the cost.

Thank you for taking the time to care about the things I do. Thank you for just being there at the times I need you. Thank you for the sacrifices you’ve made for me. You know... not a lot of mothers would do these things.

Thank you for letting me go and learn things for myself. Thank you for not denying me at times when I need help. Thank you for encouraging me to do the best I can do.
I just pray that one day I can be a mother just like you.

Description of Participant 3010

Participant 3010 described himself as an “African-American male” with a “Master’s degree in music with some course study beyond that.” Participant 3010 was raised in a two parent home with four siblings; he was the oldest. In addition to corporal punishment, his father also used isolation and fun deprivation as a technique to achieve desired socialization. He had an excellent relationship with his father who was a strict disciplinarian who was bigger than life to him. His father had a stronger influence on him as a child. His spoke often about his father when responding to questions and it was clear that his father had the more outwardly significant impact on him as a child. His father took a very strong interest in him and supported him by not only attending PTA meetings but also by attending his musical performances, and buying him musical instruments when needed. Although his father was such a prominent figure in his life, he valued the role that his mother took on as the homemaker and support for his dad. He is very proud of the fact that his maternal grandmother attended boarding school and was a trained musician. He feels that maybe his propensity for music came from his grandmother.

The participant admits that he was a bully when in junior high school until he was involved in a potentially life-changing event. His musical talents were recognized early in life and gave him his identity. Although his family did not attend church, his involvement in Boy Scouts provided him with the spirituality he needed to balance out his life. His father introduced scouts to him and his brother (the second born) through a work connection.

His father worked at a steel mill but also gambled to make his ends meet. However, he encouraged his sons to get an education and to have a hustle in life other
than gambling. Participant 3010 did not know the full extent of his father or mother’s education but he did know that they did not complete high school. His father had the attitude that he always wanted the best that life offered and this included his children getting as much education as possible even if he did completely understand what that meant. This attitude of having the best also extended into where they shopped which was outside the typical designated Black shopping district and how they dressed which even today is more dressy than casual.

Participant 3010 did cite the stability of the neighborhood as a positive factor in his upbringing. He also was the beneficiary of support from his teachers, especially his band teachers and his club scout experiences.

The first poem below is symbolic of how Participant 3010 described the relationship with his mother wherein the second poem describes his relationship with his father. A poem about his father is included because he talked about his father a great deal. The participant felt that his mother was supportive of his love for music which equates to reading the participant’s rhymes similar to the poem’s author having his mother read his written words. The participant felt that there was something added to the relationship because he was his mother’s first born hence the “little feet along the floor” represents this relationship. The title of the second poem summarizes how the participant felt and continues to feel about his father who was ever-present with an almost bigger-than-life personality during the participant’s school years. The father was a strong role model for the family, who loved the wife and mother of his children dearly.

To My Mother
by Robert Louis Stevenson
You too, my mother, read my rhymes
For love of unforgotten times,
And you may chance to hear once more
The little feet along the floor.

Epitaph on my Ever Honoured Father
by Robert Burns

O YE whose cheek the tear of pity stains,
Draw near with pious rev’rence, and attend!
Here lie the loving husband’s dear remains,
The tender father, and the gen’rous friend;
The pitying heart that felt for human woe,
The dauntless heart that fear’d no human pride;
The friend of man-to vice alone a foe;
For “ev’n his failings lean’d to virtue’s side.”

Descriptions with verbatim quotes

The participants are described in the charts that follow by sharing each of their verbatim responses written in italics to questions separated by the themes that emerged. The themes that emerged are correlated to the research sub-questions and the corresponding interview questions that all participants were asked. All interview questions and follow up questions were designed to get responses that provided the thick and rich descriptions that are critical for determining the transferability of the findings, analysis and interpretations. Each theme that emerged is in a table that includes three relevant interview questions used to get responses that provide the thick, rich descriptions. The semi-structured interview allows for an interactive approach so that Interview Question 1 is always used in some format in follow-up questions to dive deeper to ascertain data. Thus, it is included with each theme that emerged. Each theme is explained which is then followed by a chart displaying relevant interview questions and sample verbatim responses.
Theme One: Parenting Style

Baumrind (1971) is a leading expert in the field of parenting style and purports that parenting style is based on the degree of responsiveness and demandingness between parent and child. The four parenting styles are authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and neglectful. Based on the research findings of Diane Baumrind, the most accepted outcome is that the best parenting style is authoritative for optimal student socialization and achievement. However, in her early research she excluded African American families. Furthermore, there is a lack of research on which parenting style is best for African Americans. The sub-theme of relationships with parents emerged which mirrors the impact of the parenting style of the parent or guardian which differed by gender.

Thus, this table follows the parenting style table.

Table 4 - Parenting Style Theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question 1. First, let’s talk about your childhood. What was it like?</th>
<th>Interview Question 3. Describe a time when your parents disciplined you?</th>
<th>Interview Question 12. I will now describe different parenting styles and ask that you select the one that best describes how you were parented.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participant 1010 Sample Responses</strong></td>
<td>• And my grandmother used weeping willow branches literally every day just because…. from Druid Hill Park right there at the Chinese pavilion…. because that’s where I would have to go and cut my own switches… until my grandfather passed, it was every Saturday…</td>
<td>• I was raised by my grandmother. And I was a latchkey kid.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptions of Parenting Style</th>
<th></th>
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<tr>
<th>PARENTING STYLE THEME</th>
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<td>Interview Question 1. First, let’s talk about your childhood. What was it like?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 1010 Sample Responses</td>
<td>And my grandmother used weeping willow branches literally every day just because…. from Druid Hill Park right there at the Chinese pavilion…. because that’s where I would have to go and cut my own switches… until my grandfather passed, it was every Saturday…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### PARENTING STYLE THEME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question</th>
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<th>Interview Question</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>12. I will now describe different parenting styles and ask that you select the one that best describes how you were parented.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Descriptions of Parenting Style

- Well, now that I look at it, I think it was abuse. But then I just didn’t know. I just knew it was occurring.
- Probably until I was around eight, nine.... There wasn’t very much discipline after that.
- Yeah. I think I’ve been grown since I was seven [the year her grandfather died]
- Just we had the best times together. You know, if I didn’t know anybody ever loved me, he did. [her grandfather]
- Because I didn’t have a lot of parenting. I was the last of three kids; so, I was on my own most of the time. But I made sure my son wasn’t.

#### Participant 2010 Sample Responses

- Well, for my mom, her discipline was always a word. And the way she would deal with us, she could make you cry just by what she said and how she said it in a loving tone, and the way she could make you feel about what you did and showing you how you did something wrong.
- Because my father spanked and he spanked with a strap, not with his hand and tapping your legs. He spanked with a strap. When you did something wrong, you got his consequence. And his consequence was not I’m going to have a long conversation with you because you knew better than to do that in the first place. My mother was a conversation piece all on her own, but my dad was not sitting down to hear your explanation and why you did what he said not to do.

#### Participant 3010 Sample Responses

- Punishment, isolation. Yeah, usually that’s what it was. Every once in a blue moon --...It would get physical.
- But that’s what he knew how to do. Yeah, she did more like, “You need to do so and so.” She was more like that.
**Theme Two: Parenting Practices**

Parenting practices are the behaviors of the parents that participants shared in response to questions designed to acquire descriptions about specific, significant parent’s actions. The American Psychology Association advocates that a major goal of parenting practices is “preparing children for life as productive adults and transmitting cultural values,” (http://www.apa.org/topics/parenting). In addition to the main theme of parenting practices, the sub-themes of the relationship with parents which is described by gender emerged, along with the sub-themes of the value of education, own life lessons and words of advice that mirror the research questions. At the same time, parenting styles also can be linked to these same themes. They co-mingle in that at times parenting practices were indicative cyclical outcomes by the full comprehension of the demandingness aspect of parenting styles. The Value of Education was conveyed and reinforced by parenting practices. The theme of Own Life Lessons is an indicator of age appropriate cognitive development. Bae (1999) postulated that “the emotions of fear, hope, optimism, approval, esteem, utility and reverence, and enjoyment can positively affect a person's willingness and ability to learn as well.” So, if a student
connects positive life experiences to learning, then the student will likely be more motivated to learn. Bae (1999) cited Piaget and other psychologists like Carl Rogers, Arthur Combs, and Abraham Maslow as proponents of the value and significance of self-motivation, or intrinsic motivation as the highest, and most desirable form of motivation that can come from an individual”, but he did not leave out the value of extrinsic motivators either. The participant’s Own Life Lesson theme is a manifestation of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to achieve.

Table 5- Parenting Practices Theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARENTING PRACTICES THEME</th>
<th>Interview Question 1. First, let’s talk about your childhood. What was it like?</th>
<th>Interview Question 2. In what ways did your parents support you as a student through the years?</th>
<th>Interview Question 4. How important was education in your family and how did you know this?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1010 Sample Responses</td>
<td>• No, I just remember we talked about [a college] a lot because he had gotten me all the brochures and everything. [her biological father] • [Laughter] He and I used to hang out all the time. [Laughter]. Who teaches a seven-year old how to drive. [Laughter] [her grandfather] • She’s the one who, at 10 years old, had me get on the street car, and come meet her downtown so she could take me to Woolworths and have a hot dog. She’s the one who introduced me to designer clothes. There was a store downtown, called Stewarts that had a formal dining room. She introduced me to formal dining. She introduced me to just about everything. [her mother’s sister]</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2010 Sample Responses</td>
<td>• They did go to PTA meetings when they were home or when they were both able to go. And</td>
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</table>
## Parenting Practices Theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. First, let’s talk about your childhood. What was it like?</td>
<td>2. In what ways did your parents support you as a student through the years?</td>
<td>4. How important was education in your family and how did you know this?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Descriptions of Parenting Practices

- Many times it was just one parent and sometimes both parents came to PTA meetings, so it was where the expectation was set.
  - The expectation was that you’d do well. It wasn’t an expectation that, “Well, the best I could do was a D.” No. If you could not do better than that, then you couldn’t watch television and you couldn’t go out. So the standard was you can do better because that’s the only job that you have. So did you study? Did you do what you were supposed to do?
  - Now you know, and my dad, the best that you could be was that he’s seeing you did all the work and the teacher couldn’t show him a dirty…paper that I had turned in because there was no reason for that. So when he said the best that you can be, the best is not this and you turned it in because you pull it out of a book bag or you spilled something all over it.

### Participant 3010 Sample Responses

- I mean, he went to PTA meetings.
- And he brought me all the way out here to play my solo. And he sat out in the hall and I played …played two little pieces. I played Country Garden. I remember the songs. I remember it like it was yesterday…He was the only person that came. He was the only person that came with me.
- She made sure that we had good direction. Yeah, she took care of us I guess in the way a mother does. We, the boys, we weren’t charged with doing a lot of … chores
- And I knew when I started doing my work, it was always a little better, a little deeper, a little richer than the kids who were using other books. “Where’d you find that?” “In my encyclopedia.” “What kind of encyclopedia you have?”
Sub-theme: Value of Education

The Value of Education is also acquired through a combination of parenting practices, parenting styles and the influence of others. Gredler (2009) in her interpretation of Vygotsky’s works asserts that cognitive development flows from mastering language, writing, counting and other symbols used to master cognitive tasks and that children practice behavior that is modeled before them. Therefore, if parents or guardians show how important learning is by what they do or say, then children will practice the same. Acquiring education at a high level became a goal early with participants.

Table 6- Value of Education Theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question 1. First, let’s talk about your childhood. What was it like?</th>
<th>Interview Question 4. How important was education in your family and how did you know this?</th>
<th>Interview Question 10. What were/are the most important factors influencing your motivation to graduate from high school, college, career choice or to start a business?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1010 Sample Responses</td>
<td>• It wasn’t really….I got myself into college. It was like, “Whatever.” And I knew I needed to get away. Get me as far away as possible.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2010 Sample Responses</td>
<td>• But I had to perform in school and I had to show that I’d done everything I was supposed to do. And it couldn’t be that I missed homework and that’s why my grade went down. • Primarily my family. If you became a teacher, it was a big deal in our community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3010 Sample Responses</td>
<td>• Yeah, he took me to the cub scouts. And my father was really about going to school. That</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**VALUE OF EDUCATION THEME**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question 1. First, let’s talk about your childhood. What was it like?</th>
<th>Interview Question 4. How important was education in your family and how did you know this?</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Descriptions of Value of Education**

- He was also the kind of person that if a teacher said that I did something, he would not necessarily think that I didn’t do it. He would say, “Why would the teacher say that if you didn’t do it? Why would they make that up? What would they gain from that? No, they wrote it on here, they sent a note home, you did something.”
- Yeah, he just said it. Well, he didn’t finish high school. I don’t even know if he went to high school. But no one in his family finished, no one in his immediate family... One of his siblings did,...No, his parents didn’t. And it was just an important thing to him because he just felt like he wanted us to do that. So finishing high school was the most important thing. Going to college, he didn’t know anything about that. So when that first came up, he said, “Well, it’s school. Why not? You can go. It’s no big deal. You’re going to school and you’re going to get some more education, so it can’t be a bad thing.” He had that kind of common sense.

**Sub-theme: Own Life Lessons**

This theme emerged as a materialization of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to achieve, usually starting during elementary school years. It is a display of the development of higher order thinking skills and problem solving underpinned by parenting styles and parenting practices.
Table 7- Own Life Lessons Theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OWN LIFE LESSONS THEME</th>
<th>Interview Question 1. First, let’s talk about your childhood. What was it like?</th>
<th>Interview Question 6. Describe any type of award, honor or recognition you received in school.</th>
<th>Interview Question 5. Describe any time you were referred to the office, had detention or some other type of disciplinary action in school because of your behavior?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview Question</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. First, let’s talk about your childhood. What was it like?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Descriptions of Own Life Lessons</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1010 Sample Responses</td>
<td>• Well, for sixth grade I was a valedictorian if you can have a sixth grade valedictorian. And junior high, no, I don’t think so.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2010 Sample Responses</td>
<td>• I gave the graduation speech. So I was honor roll all through [elementary school]-- • I also was the best basketball player they had and I got all those awards too. • I was safety patrol, I was all these little things.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3010 Sample Responses</td>
<td>• And I liked going to boy scouts. So then for a while, for many years, I went by myself. • I mean, the one thing I didn’t want to do is I never wanted to disappoint my parents via behavior. • It’s just a matter of having a certain amount of respect. And once I kind of figured it out -- and of course follow directions • . And I was a popular guy. I was like the guy that played trumpet and everybody knew. And I had just won an award. I wrote a piece of music and I won an award. It was all in the newspapers. I won this money and I wrote this piece of music, you know.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Sub-theme: Words of Advice

The rational for this question was to determine if there were words that became a synonym with the inner voice that is a part of process for decision making that also coincided with relevant adult expectations, if any (Vygotsky, as in Gredler, 2009).

Table 8- Words of Advice Theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORDS OF ADVICE THEME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview Question 1. First, let’s talk about your childhood. What was it like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptions of Words of Advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1010 Sample Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2010 Sample Responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3010 Sample Responses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theme 3: Family and Cultural Influences

This theme provides descriptive data about overall family and community influences that also impact socialization and achievement. This theme also is a materialization of age appropriate cognitive development.

*Table 9 - Family and Cultural Influences Theme*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question 1. First, let’s talk about your childhood. What was it like?</th>
<th>Interview Question 10. What were/are the most important factors influencing your motivation to graduate from high school, college, career choice or to start a business?</th>
<th>Interview Question 3. Describe a time when your parents disciplined you?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • My grandmother had a third grade education.  
• And growing up an only child was not easy... It gets lonely. But what it did was it forced me to read. And reading gave me a whole other world.  
• My mother was the treasurer for the... Party at one point. | | |
| Participant 1010 Sample Responses | | |
| • My house was the hub for the community. All the kids came to my mom’s house because she was just that kind of mother. So we had a really, really strong dad, however, who was a steel worker.  
• Both parents, brothers and sisters, friends in the community. And the community was like a family. I mean, I know you’re doing this for |
### FAMILY AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES THEME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question 1. First, let’s talk about your childhood. What was it like?</th>
<th>Interview Question 10. What were/are the most important factors influencing your motivation to graduate from high school, college, career choice or to start a business?</th>
<th>Interview Question 3. Describe a time when your parents disciplined you?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Descriptions of Family and Cultural Influences

- ...but there was an expectation of theirs that if you didn’t have to work, you had a place to live and to come home and stay and you had love, you should be able to perform well in school.
- Strong values. They had strong values.
- And you know, he wanted what was -- he did what was right.
- My mom went to [an all-Black college] ...Yeah. And my dad went to mortuary school...they ran away and got married, came to [the district under study], and her career as a teacher ended. She went to University Hospital to work because originally she was staying home. You know, with my dad she didn’t have to worry. And then when he didn’t buy something she wanted, she would work.
- So my freshman year, my sister had been there a while and she knew everybody and she was partying. And I was trying to keep up with her. I wasn’t like her. Like she could not study and do really well, stay on the dean’s list. I needed to study. And so college was a little bit different.

#### Participant 3010 Sample Responses

- But even shopping, we did not shop [Black shopping district]. In fact, I didn’t even know they sold clothes on.... We always shopped downtown. We always shopped in the major department stores. So that’s all I ever knew.
- I had some friends that went to church and we would go to church. I would go with them once in a while, I’d go to church with them or something, but it wasn’t a part of our life.
### FAMILY AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES THEME

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Interview Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. First, let’s talk about your childhood. What was it like?</td>
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<td>3. Describe a time when your parents disciplined you?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Descriptions of Family and Cultural Influences

- And that’s the love she had for him. She was crazy about him, and he was crazy about her. He was crazy about her.
- He got shirts made, pants made. Because my uncle was a tailor..., so they knew about getting clothes made. That’s the kind of guy he was.
- When I lived on... Street, everybody owned their home.

### Sub-Theme: Childhood Influences

This theme centers on the impact of others during the earlier years of the participants. It emerged because it became apparent that there were others beside their parents that had influence on the people they were then and now. The participants had vivid recollections of people and events that also played a role in who they became as it impacted their decision making.
### Table 10 - Childhood Influences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question</th>
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<th>Interview Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. First, let’s talk about your childhood. What was it like?</td>
<td>10. What were/are the most important factors influencing your motivation to graduate from high school, college, career choice or to start a business?</td>
<td>9. What was your experience like entering college, entering the workforce?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Descriptions of Childhood Influences

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Participant 1010</th>
<th>Sample Response(s)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Through the rec center, through school. Elementary school was a wonderful experience. I had great teachers, great principals. ...So it was a really good experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I spent most of my free time in the rec center after school, in the library, the Brownies, the girl scouts. I was extremely active.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant 2010</th>
<th>Sample Response(s)</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Well, you know, my elementary school was predominately African-American. ...So we found -- most of us met with success.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• They cared. And you know, like I said, I lived next door to my teacher in fifth grade, so she might come down to the house and tell my mother something about me. They had expectations for you to be great. And you knew that they were disappointed when you didn’t do something that you could do well.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• But I went up to [school name] and one of my teachers said to me, my home economics teacher, she said, “You’re so tall. We’re going to put you in the fashion show.”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant 3010</th>
<th>Sample Response(s)</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I became very attentive to my education and I became very attentive to the music, so it kind of didn’t leave a lot of room for hanging out with a lot of other people. I gained a whole new set of people that I hung out with, that I did stuff with, and they weren’t family members.</td>
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</table>
## CHILDHOOD INFLUENCES THEME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question 1. First, let’s talk about your childhood. What was it like?</th>
<th>Interview Question 10. What were/are the most important factors influencing your motivation to graduate from high school, college, career choice or to start a business?</th>
<th>Interview Question 9. What was your experience like entering college, entering the workforce?</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Descriptions of Childhood Influences</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Well, it was just because all my friends were at school. And it kind of went along with the excellence that I was working towards with what I was doing musically. And so the people that mentored me musically ...Oh gosh, first off my elementary teacher...My junior high school teacher...</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• And then I did cub scouts and I did the boy scouts and I did explorers. I did senior patrol leader... I did everything but become an eagle scout. I went to camp. We went on camping trips on the weekend. I went to camp during the summer. So it was the kind of thing that was really, really different, and I enjoyed it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Band director at school. I was a kid that had a lot of promise, and they found out things and encouraged me to sign up for it. I’d take it home, tell my dad.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sub-Theme: Role of Race

There is a lack of empirical research about the best parenting style for African Americans. This theme provides description on whether or not race played a role in their socialization and achievement as a student. The current student population in the district is predominantly African American. All three participants began their lives in predominantly all Black communities and schools. All three attended recently integrated high schools which changed as an outcome of the Civil Rights Movement. This theme was originally perceived by the researcher to be a major code; however, although they all
experienced what they felt was racism as teenagers, it did not emerge as significant by the participants.

*Table 11- Role of Race Theme*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROLE OF RACE THEME</th>
<th>Interview Question 1. First, let’s talk about your childhood. What was it like?</th>
<th>Interview Question 7. Describe what it meant to be an African American as a student.</th>
<th>Interview Question 10. What were/are the most important factors influencing your motivation to graduate from high school, college, career choice or to start a business?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Descriptions of Role of Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1010 Sample Responses</td>
<td>• Because up until then, I had had all African-American teachers....It’s funny because there was no difference between us in junior high school. I didn’t notice a difference until I went to high school. And at that time, ------ was 73% Jewish when I went...</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Participant 2010 Sample Responses | • We had clubs, but you know, we were the largest African-American class at that time to ever enter ------[school name for an integrated high school]  
• I came home and told my sister I took physics. She said, “Nobody takes physics in the 12th grade! You’re going to fail it. You don’t even like science.” I passed it, passed it with like 85 or something. I said, “I’m not taking that German class because that lady is a racist.” And I didn’t say racist. I said, “She don’t like blacks. She don’t like black people.” I might have said colored, but I think I said black. I think we were black then. |
| Participant 3010 Sample Responses | • They were all black.  
• [University] was an agricultural school. So anyway, I go to the room and when I come back, the kid’s gone and there’s a black kid in there. So I said to my dad, “I wonder what
### ROLE OF RACE THEME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Question</th>
<th>Interview Question</th>
<th>Interview Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. First, let’s talk about your childhood. What was it like?</td>
<td>7. Describe what it meant to be an African American as a student.</td>
<td>10. What were/are the most important factors influencing your motivation to graduate from high school, college, career choice or to start a business?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Descriptions of Role of Race

- "happened to the guy.” He said, “You know what happened.” I said, “No, I don’t.” He said, “Your skin color isn’t right. He wasn’t going to stay in a room with a black kid.”
- That’s the first time that I can remember having a conversation about race. And I kind of shrugged it off.
- And as a kid, I can’t ever remember being refused to go anywhere. I mean, when I went downtown and I went to the shoe store [inaudible], I went to stores and my mother took me to stores. And we tried on clothes, we bought clothes there, and I never -- I didn’t know anything about sitting in the back of the bus. I don’t know anything about any of that stuff. And it could have been happening when I was young and I was just oblivious to it, as most of my life I was oblivious because I just didn’t pay any attention."
Section Two Analysis: Composite Descriptions

Incident

by Countee Cullen

Once riding in old Baltimore,
Heart-filled, head-filled with glee;
I saw a Baltimorean
Keep looking straight at me.

Now I was eight and very small,
And he was no whit bigger,
And so I smiled, but he poked out
His tongue, and called me, "Nigger."

I saw the whole of Baltimore
From May until December;
Of all the things that happened there
That's all that I remember.

The composite textural and composite structural descriptions detail the collective
group experience with each of the themes. The themes and patterns that emerged
exhibited differences along gender lines with all three participants. Therefore, the
combination of the textural and structural descriptions is listed with examples that are
extrapolated from the interview data with gender delineations. There are many areas of
commonality; however, there are differences as well with the common areas which is
expected given the conceptual framework based on the premise that there is not one
reality, but rather, everyone experiences life differently and uniquely even if the overall
outcome is similar.
Parenting Styles

According to the Free Dictionary, “parenting style is a psychological construct representing standard strategies that parents use in their child rearing. Parenting style is affected by both the parents' and children's temperaments, and is largely based on the influence of one’s own parents and culture,” (http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary). The participants described the parenting styles of their parents that was a blended, gender-based, tapestry of authoritative and authoritarian strategies. Participant 1010 described her experiences with her father and grandfather as pleasant; her father would visit and have talks with her. Her grandfather taught her “how to drive.” Conversely, her grandmother would beat her “every Saturday” with a switch that she had the participant “choose from the ----tree” and beat her “just because.” She felt that her grandmother was abusive to her but provided her rationale for the harsh treatment by explaining that “I think it was a way of controlling, not being able to comprehend a situation or be able to take care of it any other way. That was her way. It wasn’t, “Go to your room,” none of that. It was a switch or nothing…They would call her slow now, I guess.” If the grandmother had a mental disability, this may explain why her grandfather taught the participant survival skills such as how to pay bills and to drive at such an early age. After she went to live with her mother, she was no longer receiving corporal punishment; however, she received no form of demandingness or expectations from her own mother. Her mother let her “be free to go”. Participant 1010 felt that the word “detached” best describes her mother’s parenting style which the researcher feels continues to be a very painful memory for the participant. She felt unloved and unwanted by her mother.
Although she resented the beatings from her grandmother, she accepted them as the best way her grandmother had of socializing her.

However, the other two participants’ fathers, rather than the females, established expectations in their households also by using corporal punishment. Participant 2010 said that “… if you were going to live in his house, he was going to run his house. Nobody was going to tell him what he could do and what he couldn’t do.” She also shared that “He spanked with a strap. When you did something wrong, you got his consequence.”

Participant 3010 shared that “And the huge punishment was once in a while we got our butt spanked. But mostly you lived in your bedroom for a week. You’d come home from school, study, go to your bedroom. And we didn’t have a TV or anything” He shared that only his father used physical punishment in addition to the fun deprivation punishment. About his mother he said “ If you asked my mother, my mother would tell you. She said I was almost a perfect child.” He did not share that his mother disciplined him in any way.

Although Participant 2010’s father used harsh parenting strategies for her socialization, she also, like Participant 1010, had a rationale for his behavior. “Oh, he only punished when we had done something,… and so -- I mean, we did stuff. And you know, I look back now and I remember thinking my dad was mean. And I realize there was something I did that I knew better than to do every time I got in trouble.” She supported his parenting strategy despite what he could be labeled in current times and used the success of herself and her siblings as evidence. “What you would say about him today, you probably would say he was abusive. But I’m going to tell you what he did. He raised five kids. Nobody’s in jail, everybody went to college, and nobody walked around
here harming the community in any way...It was never where he didn’t show us what was right.”

Participant 3010’s father occasionally also used harsh parenting strategies. However, as with the other participants, he said that he does not “have a problem with that, not one bit. And I think that it worked for me. It worked out. I’m okay.” Still, Participant 3010 said that “Yeah, I was never intimidated to the point that I didn’t feel like I could talk to my father about anything.” Participant 3010 said that he was involved in a knife incident that left him a changed person. “Anyway, so I was a little daring when I was in junior high school. I did stuff that I won’t talk about…I was a mean kid...Except one time somebody did something and I ended up with some type of knife or something. That was probably the stopping point because I got in a lot of trouble for that... Oh gosh, my father was upset.”

The parenting styles of all three participants differed along gender lines; however each participant had a parent or guardian that used corporal punishment as a socialization strategy which were the mother figures for Participant 1010, and the father for Participants 2010 and 3010. Conversely, each had a parent or guardian of the opposite gender respectively, which used more of an authoritative parenting style; for Participants 2010 and 3010, the mothers used a form of authoritative parenting style and for Participant 1010, the father figures provided some form of responsiveness. Participants 2010 and 3010 made it very clear that the respect for the demandingness of the father also extended to the mother. Participant 2010 said that her mother “…talked to you. She was able to -- she always had a story. She always had a story to tell you that would relate to why you did something wrong. Or she wanted to give you a way to -- a life lesson.”
Similarly, Participant 3010 shared that his mother would say “You can do that if you want, but I’m going to tell your father…And that was it. He was a disciplinarian.”

The balance of dual parenting styles within each home resulted in all participants not being behavior management problems in school which is an indicator of age-appropriate cognitive development. Participant 1010 said she worked in the school office of her elementary school because her teachers “…knew they needed to do something to motivate me and keep me still… I worked in the school office while I was in elementary school.” Participant 2010 shared that she was only sent to the office once “…because my skirt was over my knee. And I had on something that -- a crinoline, which is a little slip that makes your dress sit out. And the principal made me take it off in the office and called my mother. That was the only time….That, and at [high school] I got accused of not sleeping, but slouching in my seat during assembly. This band was playing and my girlfriend and I, we were doing this. And a lady came over, “One, two, three, out!” I was like, “What did we do?” I never told my mother that, though. I was only put on probation.”

The blending of parenting styles used in each home produced the desired socialization because the participants understood the connection between their own behavior and decisions and the subsequent consequences early in life. Their life lessons and achievements are evidence of their own awareness about the benefits of their decisions.

**Parenting Practices**

Parenting practices are defined as specific behaviors that parents use to socialize their children (Darling and Steinberg, 1993). Examples include helping with homework,
attending school functions, etc. Again, although there is some divergence among the parenting practices as described by the participants, the end result of achievement by the participants is shared. All three participants were involved in activities beyond the classroom and home as young children.

Participant 1010 basically worked her way through school starting with helping out in the school office during elementary school. She also worked summers for the scouts and Youth Corps and eventually became an assistant director at camp. “Middle school was about the same. I worked a lot. I worked before school and after school when I was in high school. I worked during the summers. I worked for… the neighborhood youth corps” she shared. Not only did she learn leadership skills from others, she also learned organizational and other leadership skills from family members who unbeknownst to her awareness of the impact even as an adult, modeled many skills. For example, Participant 1010 shared that “And I know I started paying bills when I was in elementary school…I learned to drive when I was seven. My grandfather taught me how to drive.” She shared that “I spent time during my school years with my godmother as well….. And all of the court meetings were held at her house, so I was always in the room, so I always knew what was going on. A little beyond my years, stuff I probably didn’t know about.” Her godmother was a seamstress and taught the same to Participant 1010 so that eventually “she got into design and all kinds of stuff from that.” Both her parents also influenced her as well. Although she described her mother as being “very cold”, her mother was also “very politically involved and she worked for 22 years …as the office manager, which is where I learned to file.” Her father (the family friend) taught her “how to make time payments. He was a teacher. He owned two bars. Very politically
motivated and involved. A little thuggish.” She also attended church on a regular basis with either her grandmother or her mother. Participant 1010 never shared that her family attended anything at school.

Participants 2010 and 3010 had parents who attended school functions like PTA meetings and performances. Both sets of parents sat down and discussed their grades with them. Participant 2010 said that although her parents did not do homework with her or her siblings, “They made sure homework was done. They made sure it was neat. And you had to make sure that your papers were done, whatever homework you had had to be done.” Her parents also “made sure that we had breakfast before we went to school and they made sure we had dinner when we got home.” Participant 2010 stated often that her parents set standards and had expectations for them citing that “The standard was that you were to go to school. That was your major responsibility. And you had to meet with success. You didn’t just take off; you didn’t cut school…You had to bring home a report card, and the report card had to show success.” Participant 3010 said that “My parents went to PTA meetings. They read report cards. We got discussions and punishments because of what our grades were…Well, we’d read it and he’d go over it and he’d ask -- like one of the discussions I’ll never forget, the teacher had wrote on the card…that I wasn’t attentive. And he said, “What does that mean? …What do you mean you’re not paying attention?” I said, “I pay attention to stuff in school.” He said, “No, why would they write it on there?” And he was very firm.”

Similarly to Participant 2010, Participant 3010’s parents had expectations for his school performance. He said that “Yeah, they would look at the grades. No, there wasn’t a lot of homework following, no…But my parents bought us a great -- one of the greatest
things that they bought us was they bought us a really good set of Britannica Encyclopedias and everything that you ever want to know in them…. Yeah. Leather-bound Britannica Encyclopedias.” Participant 2010 thought it significant to share that her father “played with his kids.” Similarly, Participant 3010 shared that he and his father patted each other on the back and had handshakes.

All three participants were involved in the scouts at some level which is an example of both parenting practices because parenting permission and support was required, and community culture as an example of community involvement through the provision of an on-going extracurricular activity. For Participant 3010, it was a critical turning point as he shared “But my father, the other factor that my father did, my father took… my brother and I to a cub scout meeting. Well, boy scouts and cub scouts changed my life… Well, it was organized, it was reverent, it was good, it was clean, I met good friends. There was great guidance.” He said that his father did not take or make them go to church because “he just wasn’t going to make us go because he was made to go when he was a kid and he didn’t want to always go.” His father’s mother was very involved in the church. However, it was his experience with music in elementary school that had the greatest impact on his adult life. His father supported him by purchasing him musical instruments as needed, and by attending his concerts. “My father bought me a trumpet there. It was a trumpet in a little grey and white case. It was great… And my father took me -- he came to see me and I played my first solo with band when I was in junior high school. The band played and I played a solo, trumpet solo.” He only mentioned that his father attended his performances during those school-age years. His father also paid for him to attend out-of-town music camps that his band directors recommended and his
father also provided for the necessary transportation. “But my father I think was the big deal for me in terms of supporting me in terms of what I wanted to do musically. He was a big deal. He was a stern, formidable guy,” he said…”And for him, it was like anything you were interested in that kept you out of trouble, kept you busy, was good.”

**Family, Community and Culture Influences**

The participants’ recalled lived experiences about the perceived impact of family and community culture also differed; however, with each participant, there was someone that encouraged education beyond high school, offered words of advice, and offered some understanding of the role of race although the negative impact of race was minimal, but the positive impact of race was substantial.

Participant 1010’s recalled experiences differed in that she credits educators almost as her only mentors: “It was basically, like I said, through school, my teachers, the principal and the vice principal at the school that were actually my motivators.” However, her father, in his role as family friend, also encouraged her to go to college; “He actually is the reason probably I went to college.” Although Participant 1010 was aware of racial differences, she did not feel a negative impact on her education until she went to college. Her mother was engaged in racial blockbusting and was the first Black resident in an Italian neighborhood. In school, she shared that at her high school “there was really no tension. It was an excellent learning experience. I know everything Jewish now.” Her elementary school teachers were all African American. Still, she spoke favorably of her integration experience: “I went to …. junior high, which was my first multiracial environment. And the teachers were great.” She did feel that her college experience was impacted by racial practices and shared that “It was interesting because
EXPLORING THE ROLE OF PARENTING ON LIFE STATUS

the University…. I was one of three African-American girls in an all-white dorm.” This isolation she felt played a significant role in her lack of success at college.

Participant 2010 chose to live in her childhood community which is still a Black community. “I’ve lived in this area my entire life. I grew up on the street one block over, and my mom found me this house on this street because I wanted to stay in this community.” She gave a lot of credit to her family for her motivation to do well because this was the expectation. There were also educators in her family—including her mother—and being a teacher was respected.

“My family. Yeah, my mother taught us the value of education. She had been an educator, but when she came [here], she went to work at …. Hospital because they made more money. And my dad, everybody, my sister. My aunt’s a teacher. She was a teacher in [the city under study]. My father’s sister was, his brother was, his brother in New Jersey was. So teaching was an honorable profession. It was valued in our community. Your teacher was an important, valuable part of your life. That was somebody you looked up to and you knew she was smart and she had all this going for her.”

Participant 2010, just like Participant 1010, gives credit to her teachers for having a role in her successes. “And we had African-American teachers who really wanted to teach us and wanted us to be successful.” Participant 2010 recognized the value of her upbringing in her community and stated that “the community was like a family. I mean…"
but this used to be a community where we lived in one house and next door to me was my teacher. “

Furthermore, Participant 2010 felt that her father was a good provider. “He taught us about men as young girls…about what kind of man you want. The difference was he was from an era where he felt like women should not be barefoot and pregnant, but the responsibility of a man was to take care of a woman, was to go to work…provide…bring home the food and to make sure you have a warm house.” Participant 2010 talked often about the efforts her mother took to instill values in them by telling stories. Additionally, her father played a role as well. “With my dad, my dad taught us a little bit more about work, work value, the value of unions, the value of family…to see him be a man who wanted to play with his kids.”

Participant 3010’s father was also the main provider for his family. In each family, the male parent or guardian worked at the same major manufacturing facility that was a major employer in the region during that time. Participant 3010’s father also was an entrepreneur in that he had a “hustle” or an additional way to make money. His father advised him that “Everyone needs a hustle. He said, I do it because I work a job, but it’s not enough, so I have to do something else, a hustle that gives me some extra funds so we can do some other things.” He took his father’s advice and applied it to his own life. “I think his card playing and poker playing got him through the rough patches, and I think my trumpet has gotten me through the rough patches.” The participant earned money because he played in bands while a student in high school and beyond. Although the participant grew up exposed to gambling because at times their home was used as a gambling parlor, his father had different goals for his children. His father “wouldn’t let us
bet on anything because he didn’t think it was something we ought to learn how to do.” His father showed Participant 3010 how to make, use and save money: “That’s how he paid for the house. He bet, he’d come home, have a lot of money. And he did something when I was a kid that I did as an adult…He saved savings bonds and he saved silver dollars. And between the savings bonds and all the money he won one time, he went down to the place and paid for the house.” Participant 3010 said his mother “…worked seasonal. Nothing steady, let me say that. There were times when she’d work at the coat factory. … But her job was to take care of us.” Participant 2010’s mother worked outside the home but she also took on the gender traditionally-accepted role of homemaker.

Participant 3010 was greatly influenced by both his parents, but he apparently spent a lot of time with his father who also supported him outwardly with his presence at performances and support of his interest in music: “I think that he saw that I was trying to do something that was a little different and he was supportive of it best he could. “ Although his father may not have finished high school, he “was a man that just really thought that education was important and that we needed to do well in school. And at minimum, we had to finish high school.” Participant 3010 also received a great deal of support from several band directors that groomed and supported this interest. The participant realized early in life his passion for music and it helped him to focus his life. As with the other two participants, he gives credit to a teacher or teachers for making a significant difference in his life.

**Themes of Commonalities**

All three participants discussed the perceived impact of the community, especially educators and other neighbors, which also had similarities and areas of differences. For
example, Participant 1010 shared that her assistant principal was her Sunday school teacher, Participant 2010 shared that her fifth grade teacher was her next door neighbor and Participant 3010 spoke of several home visits by band directors to meet with his parents about ways to advance his music interests. Participant 3010 also shared that his interest and achievements in music were supported by all of his teachers stating that “I spent most of my time in the band room. That was my sanctuary… The general music teacher … and I had an art class, they let me go to the band room… I mean, even …homeroom teachers were the same way.”

There were several additional areas of commonalities. For example, all three participants felt that their socioeconomic status is relatively similar to their parents even though they have made greater amounts of money. All three were high achievers at early ages garnering titles and honors such as class valedictorian, basketball awards, musical solos, and safety patrol. All three had vivid memories of significant events and recalled names and their respective role in their lives. All three had words of advice that they still apply in their adult lives. All three knew that education was important early in life. All three participants shared one of their most powerful memories that caused great pain that manifests even today. Participant 1010’s source of deep pain is a deep sense of abandonment caused by her mother who showed no maternal interest in her, her step father whom she thought was her biological father until recently who left and basically never returned after a divorce from her mother, and her grandfather from an early death because she had no idea that he was ill. Participant 2010’s source of deep pain is the fact that she was the first in her family to be an unwed mother. Participant 3010’s source of deep pain is the lack of outwardly affection that his mother displays towards him.
although he does not discount the significance of her behaviors as a mother. Participants 2010 and 3010 spoke often about the sibling closest to them in age during the interviews. Participant 2010 clearly looked up to her older sister as a role model and trusted her. Participant 3010 contrasted his perceptions about their parents with those of his brother who was the second oldest behind him. Participant 1010 was raised as an only child.

Below is a chart that shows a summary of the major themes that emerged that are also aligned to the research questions.

**Composite Descriptions**

*Table 12- Combined Descriptions with Themes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composite Themes</th>
<th>Participant 1020</th>
<th>Participant 2010</th>
<th>Participant 3010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parenting Style</strong></td>
<td>Participant 1020</td>
<td>Participant 2010</td>
<td>Participant 3010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Males</strong></td>
<td>Authoritative (high responsiveness)</td>
<td>Authoritarian (with corporal punishment-high demandingness)</td>
<td>Authoritarian (with corporal punishment-high demandingness) Authoritative (when older)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Females</strong></td>
<td>Authoritarian (with corporal punishment) Dismissive and detached (emotionally abusive-low responsiveness)</td>
<td>Authoritative</td>
<td>Authoritative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parenting Practices</strong></td>
<td>Participant 1020</td>
<td>Participant 2010</td>
<td>Participant 3010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 12 (Continued)</td>
<td>Taught Organizational Skills (business, community) Taught self-sufficiency (driving, financial literacy)</td>
<td>Showed parental support: Attended PTA meetings Discussed grades Expectation of excellence</td>
<td>Showed parental support: Purchased instruments Attended PTA meetings Attended performances Introduced to Scouts Took to music camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite Themes</td>
<td>Participant 1020</td>
<td>Participant 2010</td>
<td>Participant 3010</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Taught</td>
<td>Showed parental</td>
<td>Showed parental</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational</td>
<td>support:</td>
<td>support:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Skills (business,</td>
<td>Attended PTA</td>
<td>Attended PTA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>community) Godmother taught</td>
<td>meetings</td>
<td>meetings</td>
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<td></td>
<td>how to sew; hold</td>
<td>Used storytelling</td>
<td>Mother may have</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>meetings</td>
<td>to instill values</td>
<td>private talks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother taught how</td>
<td></td>
<td>with father in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to file; be an activist</td>
<td></td>
<td>his support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance of Education</th>
<th>Participant 1020</th>
<th>Participant 2010</th>
<th>Participant 3010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Talked about</td>
<td>It was an</td>
<td>Encouraged by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>college</td>
<td>expectation to</td>
<td>family and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>do well</td>
<td>community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Not important to</td>
<td>Extremely important</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>family</td>
<td>to family</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunday School</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>teacher, educators encouraged her</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influences - Role of Family</th>
<th>Participant 1020</th>
<th>Participant 2010</th>
<th>Participant 3010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>No siblings as a</td>
<td>Provided for family</td>
<td>Provided for family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>child</td>
<td>Provided latest technology</td>
<td>Protected the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother treated godchildren differently (more responsive and supportive)</td>
<td>Enforcement role was accepted and respected</td>
<td>Enforcement role was accepted and respected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Source of sense of abandonment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Her mother and grandmother were providers of shelter, food and a spiritual life through church attendance</td>
<td>Very supportive</td>
<td>Took them shopping, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Source of sense of abandonment</td>
<td>Defended her at two crucial times</td>
<td>Did not display affection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 12 (Continued) Influences - Community</th>
<th>Participant 1020</th>
<th>Participant 2010</th>
<th>Participant 3010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Brought joy and pain in her life</td>
<td>Male was the head of the household</td>
<td>Male was the head of the household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attended mortician school</td>
<td>Spent most of his time with males in</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>his father’s family</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Modeled how to be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>an entrepreneur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Received a lot of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>support from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>teachers and other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite Themes</td>
<td>Participant 1020</td>
<td>Participant 2010</td>
<td>Participant 3010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Throw-away-child Modeled how to be an entrepreneur Modeled survival skills Encouraged achievement (educators)</td>
<td>Her mother and several relatives were teachers A teacher had a major impact on her self-esteem and self-worth She was the first in her family to be an un-wed mother, but she had her mother’s support</td>
<td>His first music teacher was a female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Race</td>
<td>Knowledgeable about and connected to Jewish Religion/Culture Mother was a frontrunner in civil rights activity</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section Three: Synthesis of Textural and Structural Meanings (Essence of the Experience)**

The Negro Mother

by Langston Hughes

Children, I come back today
To tell you a story of the long dark way
That I had to climb, that I had to know
In order that the race might live and grow.
Look at my face -- dark as the night --
Yet shining like the sun with love's true light.
I am the dark girl who crossed the red sea
Carrying in my body the seed of the free.
I am the woman who worked in the field
Bringing the cotton and the corn to yield.
I am the one who labored as a slave,
Beaten and mistreated for the work that I gave --
Children sold away from me, I'm husband sold, too.
No safety, no love, no respect was I due.

Three hundred years in the deepest South:
But God put a song and a prayer in my mouth.
God put a dream like steel in my soul.
Now, through my children, I'm reaching the goal.

Now, through my children, young and free,
I realized the blessing deed to me.
I couldn't read then. I couldn't write.
I had nothing, back there in the night.
Sometimes, the valley was filled with tears,
But I kept trudging on through the lonely years.
Sometimes, the road was hot with the sun,
But I had to keep on till my work was done:
I had to keep on! No stopping for me --
I was the seed of the coming Free.
I nourished the dream that nothing could smother
Deep in my breast -- the Negro mother.
I had only hope then, but now through you,
Dark ones of today, my dreams must come true:
All you dark children in the world out there,
Remember my sweat, my pain, my despair.
Remember my years, heavy with sorrow --
And make of those years a torch for tomorrow.
Make of my pass a road to the light
Out of the darkness, the ignorance, the night.
Lift high my banner out of the dust.
Stand like free men supporting my trust.
Believe in the right, let none push you back.
Remember the whip and the slaver's track.
Remember how the strong in struggle and strife
Still bar you the way, and deny you life --
But march ever forward, breaking down bars.
Look ever upward at the sun and the stars.
Oh, my dark children, may my dreams and my prayers
Impel you forever up the great stairs --
For I will be with you till no white brother
Dares keep down the children of the Negro Mother.

This final section is an integration of the descriptions that provides a synthesis “of
the meanings and essences of the experience,” (Moustakas, 1994). This section will
describe the culmination of the perceived and described impact of the themes on the
achievement of the participants. The poem reflects the overall intended legacy of the participants’ families; the impetus for the strived for legacy came from parent or other authority figures, whether male or female. There was the expectation of being accomplished that was reinforced through parenting practices and culture, both family and community. Although to Participant 1010, it felt as if her blood family failed to be the parents she desired, her expectations for achievement were set through educators and by the modeling of community activism by her family.

Section One alludes to the interrelationship of parenting styles and practices because they were inseparable as they exhibited a dependent symbiotic connectedness. It is clear that the harsh parenting style served as a consequence of not meeting expectations, when set, wherein meeting expectations were defined as displayed achievement. Achievement was directly linked to education whether it was academic achievement, participation in extracurricular activities or a high level display of effort. Harsh parenting is also linked to goal setting and problem solving as an awareness of the impact of decisions that were outwardly outcomes showing taught family values and expectations. The participants were aware of the connection between their actions and their parents or other significant adults. Parenting practices of providing support and encouragement of both school and participation in extracurricular activities was also important as such participation developed leadership and organizational skills, as well as self-esteem and self-worth. Parenting practices also displayed a deep respect and trust for educators. The left side of cartoon (author unknown) below exhibits this relationship based on the participants’ descriptions.
There was an interlacing of all major themes that resulted in a consensus of expected achievement symbolizing the African adage that it takes a village to raise a child. The table below is a synthesis of what the perceived impact of parenting style, parenting practices and family culture had on the participants’ cognitive development. Vygotsky proposes that by nine-years-old, children should have the ability to control their behavior which is a requirement for the development of higher order thinking and problem-solving skills (Gredler, 2009). There are three overall themes emerged that represent the overall impact that the researcher feels contributed to the success of the participants. The researcher chose not to interject her own life experiences because most
of the strategies and cultural values shared by the participants were similar to her own experiences even though she was raised in a very rural setting.

**Synthesis of Impact**

The researcher feels that a major theme that contributed to the success is that of freedom in that all three participants were free to be children. The second overall theme that emerged is that all three participants were motivated to achieve. The third overall theme that emerged was the establishment and expectation of moral traits like decency and honesty.

*Table 13: Synthesis of Impact*
### Description Synthesis – Essence of the Phenomena

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Participant 1010</th>
<th>Participant 2010</th>
<th>Participant 3010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Freedom to be age-appropriate</strong></td>
<td><em>Basically just free to come and go. And that was it.</em></td>
<td><em>He said, “That’s the only job you have.”</em></td>
<td><em>This part of your life you ought to be a good student, work hard to be what you want to be, what you become. I got this. I got this. You got somewhere to sleep, you got somewhere to eat. The lights come on. You got clothes.” He said, “I got this. This is what I’m supposed to do.”</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivation to achieve</strong></td>
<td><em>I think I’ve been set since probably six or so, like, “I got to get out of here.”</em></td>
<td><em>But I had to perform in school and I had to show that I’d done everything I was supposed to do.</em>&lt;br&gt;  <em>If you became a teacher, it was a big deal in our community.</em></td>
<td><em>He was one of those kind of guys, like, “Well, what’s the best one?” And somebody said, “Well, these are the best.” Then he’d be like, “Well, I want those.” He was that kind of guy.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behavior &amp; Values</strong></td>
<td><em>I have always been around people who were politically active.</em>&lt;br&gt;  <em>The vice-principal of my school actually was one of my Sunday school teachers. And she made sure that I embraced my education.</em></td>
<td><em>It was never where he didn’t show us what was right.</em>&lt;br&gt;  <em>She had expectations of not just school, but life, choices that you make, friend-wise.</em></td>
<td><em>But basically honesty was the big deal. What he required you to do was to be honest.</em>&lt;br&gt;  <em>You know, if I failed at something, that’s one thing, but I didn’t want to do something that was wrong, behave improperly, and embarrass or disappoint my parents in that way.</em>&lt;br&gt;  <em>Because I began to take some responsibility for my actions. I started thinking, “Well, he’s only reacting like this because I did so and so, so I need to not act like that so he doesn’t respond to me like that.” And like I told you, I told my brother that and I said, “This is simple. This is not difficult.”</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of the Essence

The strategies used in the implementation of the themes resulted in the acquisition or development of apparent survival skills such as discipline, goal setting, an appreciation of life-long learning, respect for authority, respect for others, a strong work ethic, and other values such as honesty and trustworthiness. Thus, how the parents, community and other role models, usually educators, influenced the Participants into their adult years and into the next generation. Below is a model of the connectedness of the themes and the outcomes. This is followed by a discussion of the generational impact of the themes.
Included in the literature review is research advocating that parenting is generational, especially harsh parenting. Although generational parenting style was not a part of this research, it is apparent that how the Participants were parented did impact
how they chose to parent their own children. All three shared samples that was indicative of a tendency to use the authoritative parenting style. The male participant did share that he also used hardship parenting strategies as well, especially with his sons, mirroring the dual parenting style into the next generation. Participant 2010 also used a modified parenting style that leaned from authoritative toward permissive in parenting her child. Both female Participants (Participant 1010 who had a son and Participant 2010 who had a daughter) shared that they did not use corporal punishment as a parenting strategy. Therefore, although they justified its use with them, they chose not to carry forth this strategy into the next generation. All three Participants used similar parenting practices as well by supporting their own children and encouraging participation in extracurricular activities carrying forth into the next generation. All three felt it was important to allow children to be children extending generational parenting styles and practices. Also, the Participants refused to pass judgment on their parents even if they witnessed or knew of character flaws thereby guarding family secrets or shortcomings. One saw a parent cheating yet viewed this tactic as smart. Another participant shared that a sibling committed suicide yet a parent refused to acknowledge this reality. Another shared that a parent was an alcoholic and this was a leading cause for his death. Today, all three mothers are alive. All three fathers are deceased.

**Generational Impact of Influences**

As adults, all Participants have demonstrated a deep love for the community through their career choices that included ongoing opportunities for mentoring others, especially young people, and community activism. Two of the participants live in or near communities similar to that of their childhood.
All three have lingering questions or concerns that only their parents can address. For example, Participant 1010 wonders why her mother never wanted her to know about her biological father, but would rather have her think that she was abandoned by her father who she now knows was her step-father. Participant 1010 said that she wondered why after her parents divorced, her father (now step-father) divorced her as a daughter also. Furthermore, Participant 1010 wonders why as a child, she was not informed that her grandfather was ill so that his death was a surprise to her and because he showed her so much love in direct contrast to the harsh parenting strategies of the grandmother, she felt a deep sense of abandonment. As a consequence, she has a close relationship with her son and grandson, and is a hugger. Similarly, because his mother still today does not show any outwardly affection, Participant 3010 says he uses hugging to let his children know how much he cares for them both while they were children and even as adults. Participant 2010 continues to be grateful for her mother’s support when she became the first unwed mother to give birth in her family. She still carries the stigma of an unwed mother and wishes her own mother had better prepared her to judge men.

Thus, although there was some evidence of transference of generational parenting styles and practices, the Participants used some of what was modeled along with implementing their own strategies. Some of the strategies are in direct relation to shared shortcomings of their own experiences such as the refusal of the female participants to use physical punishment with their own children. Overall, there was still the interlacing of family, and community albeit with less community influence.
The researcher’s reflections

The researcher was also raised in a two-parent home, was child number five out of six, and was the only girl with five brothers. For most of her childhood, her parents owned their own business; however, her mother, who had attended Temple University, and modeled in Philadelphia for her godmother who was a seamstress, eventually took a job outside the home in a factory. Her father had traveled between Florida and New York City as a bellhop before settling back home in his childhood community.

The researcher also had a father that believed in corporal punishment although it was used infrequently with her because she was a girl. However, she recalls getting a couple of spankings when a very young girl and then coming to the understanding, much the same as participant 3010, that it was easy to avoid getting hit by simply following her parents’ rules and meeting their expectations. The researcher’s mother used words to socialize her much like Participant 2010’s mother.

Like the participants, educators were held in high esteem in her community. Her father taught her how to write her name before entering school which gave her the phonemic awareness that was critical in the researcher developing a love for learning from the beginning of her school years, and put her ahead academically. Her parents always kept reading materials in the home like newspapers, comic books, books and encyclopedias like Participant 3010’s parents had purchased for his family. Her father was an avid comic book reader. Her parents provided incentives for good report cards. Similarly, as with the Participants, the researcher’s parents did not help with homework but had the expectation that it would be completed. Her parents, like participant 3010, also invested in a musical instrument for her. Later, they provided her with what she
needed to participate in softball which was her first team sport outside of her community and with a racially integrated team. Her mother did attend some, not all, school programs if the researcher was a participant. Also, much like the participants, the researcher was an early achiever in her academics, in sports and in leadership roles. Schools were integrated when she entered fifth grade and she was the only Black student in the highest academic group in a system that used homogenous grouping. This grouping continued throughout the rest of her K-12 years of education in the main subject areas such as mathematics, science, social studies and language arts.

Like Participant 1010, the researcher spent a lot of time in church. The church was the center of the activity in the rural community. It was a family church that had been started by the researcher’s ancestors in the 1800’s. Like Participant 3010, her father did not promote nor attend church but he would take the family to cultural events like parades, outdoor movie theaters and circuses. The impact of the community was also influential and care was shown by many towards the researcher that included her Black teachers and principals, not so much her White educators. Unlike the Participants, the impact of racism was substantial with the researcher because of the depth of the awareness of the experiences. For example, the community was segregated for most of her childhood. Public places like restaurants, bathrooms, retail stores, movie theaters were segregated. Even after schools were integrated, school buses were not because of protests from White parents, and for the most part, neither were classrooms. There were incidents at school as well that involved name calling and a low tolerance for the behavior of Black males. Still, the researcher fared well academically and won a four year academic scholarship to attend college.
Thus, even though the researcher was raised in a rural community, there were more areas of commonality than differences with the research participants. One major area of difference is the degree of corporal punishment in that it was less with the researcher but the effect was the same in that the knowledge of the possibility was a deterrent to poor decision-making. The researcher parents’ parenting style was more authoritative in that her parents were both very responsive and very demanding. The same values emerged regardless. She felt free to be a child, she was motivated to achieve and she did not want to bring shame to her family because of her choices.

Generationally, the researcher also employed an authoritative parenting style, engaged and supported her children in even more extracurricular activities, and stressed the importance of education through incentives for good grades with expectations for academic achievement. A major difference, however, is that the researcher actually helped her children with their homework because at times they needed tutoring because their learning style was not addressed in the classroom. The behavior of students was not a significant problem experienced by the researcher or her children who also were placed in the highest academic group in school. The researcher feels that although her income is higher than her parents who raised her, the significance of the differences between her and her parents revolve around improved quality of life issues for which most United States citizens are beneficiaries. The researcher’s small town community was segregated with minimal cross over in businesses, a mobile library, the post office and the employment as a source of income was field work both for residents and migrant workers.
Thus, given the nature of the similarities, the implication for the common strategies may have merit. The similarities confirm the influence of parenting style, parenting practices and cultural influences on the success of both the participants and the researcher. Further, the synthesis shows which potential outcomes for parenting education programs should set in order to produce desired results regardless of socio-economic status.
Chapter 5 Summary, Implications and Outcomes

Moustakas (1993) recommends that the final chapter in a phenomenological study include a summary, the implications, and the outcomes (cited in Creswell, 2013). This chapter will be organized as follows: first, there will be a summary of the study followed by a discussion that delineates the differences between this study and the literature review. Next, a discussion about the limitations of the study will take place which will be followed by a discussion about implications of the study. The chapter will conclude with a discussion about the essence of the study and its significance to the researcher (Moustakas, cited in Creswell, 2013).

Summary

Inner city school districts are plagued with numerous problems in their educational system—high dropout rates, low graduation rates, high unemployment rate, high crime rate, adult illiteracy, generational poverty, high poverty rates, and an achievement gap among races (Census, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2010). However, despite such data, there are graduates of the inner city school districts who have achieved much success in life—current history contains several examples of alumni who overcame obstacles and achieved success in their chosen occupations. So, what made the difference? How are some graduates of inner city schools able to achieve economic status that exceeds the median income for their state and others are not?

There is a significant body of research that has determined there is a direct correlation between parenting style and student achievement (Dehyadegary, 2012; Aunola, Stattin, & Nurmi, 2000; Maccoby, 1992; Baumrind, 1971). Moreover, child
psychologists have determined that there is a connection between the early cognitive development of a child and their eventual development of higher order thinking capabilities which is a result of a child’s environmental circumstances that includes what he or she learns from others (Moll, 2014; Gredler b, 2009; Mayer, 2008; Vygotsky, 2007). Therefore, this project explored descriptions on how participants perceived traditionally defined parenting styles, cognitive development, and the role of culture and possibly race in the use of a parenting style that played a role in their cognitive development, academic achievement and socio-economic status. This research was an exploration of the lived experiences of former inner city school district students and their perceptions of which parenting style was employed by their parent(s) to ascertain if any strategies and skills will emerge that could be of use to assist current and future parents of students in an inner city school district.

The research will add to professional practice by providing some insight into perceived effective parenting style(s) and practices. If the identifying and use of effective parenting style proves to be a significant methodology for improved student behavior and achievement in the classroom, this will contribute greatly to improving the academic performance of students who will benefit from the most appropriate parenting and proven child development theories. The researcher was interested in how alumni would talk about their lived experiences as well as the contextual perceptions that accompany their recall of such lived experiences.

**How findings differ from the Literature Review**

There is a significant body of research that has determined there is a direct correlation between parenting style and student achievement (Dehyadegary, 2012;
Aunola, Stattin, & Nurmi, 2000; Maccoby, 1992; Baumrind, 1971). The literature review examined the research that had been conducted about the parenting styles that lead to academic success in inner city school district with students being career and college ready. The literature review looked into three streams of research:

1. The impact of parenting styles on a student’s achievement,
2. Theories of cognitive development and,
3. The cultural and ethnic differences in parenting styles, which result in optimal student achievement and behaviors.

There are several differences found in this research in comparison to the literature review that includes the most effective parenting style for student achievement, parenting practices and in cognitive development influences.

Parenting Style

From the literature review, in their study Heidgerken, et al (2004, p. 692) agreed with O’Connor about internalization of parent behaviors and concluded that”” children bring to social situations a database of past experiences (variously referred to as scripts, working models, mental structures, and schemata) that serve as guides or templates in the child’s processing of social cues at various points along a sequence of processing steps,”. Furthermore, research data indicated that harsh parenting produces negative results such as anti-social deviant behavior (Baltimore City Health Department Report, 2009; Amato & Fowler, 2002; Shute, 2008). Other research found that aggressive parenting is intergenerational especially with boys as whose parents model behavior from their own parents with their own children (Simons, Whitbeck, Conger & Chyi-In, 1991). So, parents use parenting techniques that were used on them. Children can be expected to
behave in school according to learned social cues. Furthermore, Diane Baumrind, considered to be a leader in defining parenting styles, advocates that the best parenting style that results in student achievement is authoritative (1971). Other research has purported that African American families tend to use the authoritarian parenting style as a survival strategy against dangerous environmental factors that mainstream America has associated with African American communities. Some researchers noted that there is a difference in effective parenting for males and purported a shift toward authoritarian rather than authoritative (Aunola, Stattin, & Nurmi, April 2000). Even Baumrind (1971), proposed a new category for males.

This research differed in that it found that a blended approach worked best for the participants. Each experienced a parent or guardian that used corporal punishment as a socialization tactic and another parent or guardian who was more responsive. Although harsh punishment was employed, neither participant indulged in extreme anti-social behavior to the extent that they had interactions with any agencies like social services or law enforcement which is contradictory to the position of Simons, et al., (1991). Instead, the participants explained and justified the use of physical punishment as the expressed expectation when they were disobedient. Intergenerational, only the male participant indicated that he also used corporal punishment with his sons who are all college graduates. Both female participants used more of an authoritative approach with a leaning toward indulgence. Thus, while how they were parented has an impact that is intergenerational, it debunks the research in that the participants and their children are all educated beyond high school and two participants did not use any physical, harsh discipline with their own children.
According to an ERIC Digest of parenting styles (1999), the following can occur as a result of the different parenting styles:

- Children and adolescents whose parents are authoritative rate themselves and are rated by objective measures as more socially and instrumentally competent than those whose parents are nonauthoritative (Baumrind, 1991; Weiss & Schwarz, 1996; Miller et al., 1993).

- Children and adolescents whose parents are uninvolved perform most poorly in all domains.

- Children and adolescents from authoritarian families (high in demandingness, but low in responsiveness) tend to perform moderately well in school and be uninvolved in problem behavior, but they have poorer social skills, lower self-esteem, and higher levels of depression.

This research does not support the conclusions in ERIC. One participant had an uninvolved or detached parent as a teenager and she did not lack social skills or display visible lower self-esteem as evidenced by her ability to obtain positions of authority as a child and as a teen as well as her sharing that she was the leader even with her childhood friends. All three had a parent or grandparent who used corporal punishment for socialization and two had parents that had a high degree of demandingness, yet, all participants did well in school, did not exhibit problem behavior and are high level professionals in their respective careers. Thus, it seems that the blended approach with both high levels of demandingness and responsiveness resulted in a merged authoritative
and authoritative style that produced properly socialized children who are also African American. However, it is difficult to determine the maturity level of the parents of the participants, so research that controls for an upper age limit for parents and also for the age of participants based on what their respective ages were when they became parents is recommended.

**Parenting practices**

Wu and Sen’s (2006) research consisted of a longitudinal study using a mixed methods exploratory approach of the relationship between parenting practices and the academic achievement of African American students. The researchers found that socio-economic status is the strongest predictor of academic achievement. However, independent variables like parental expectations, parental involvement, parental belief and discipline styles impacted the dependent variable of academic achievement. The study also found that the parenting style is more authoritative in the younger years and becomes more authoritarian by the third grade which tends to have a negative impact on achievement. This research concurs with Wu and Sen’s research for two of the three participants in that high expectations were set for academic achievement and behavior and parents were involved in their education by assuring that homework was completed, by attending PTA meetings and other school events (2006). The third participant, however, relied mostly on educators because support was lacking at home. So, it appears that it did not matter where the standards were set, only that the expectations were set by a trusted source. This calls attention to the strategic role of educators and possibly other role models like a mentor whose impact can be significant beyond academics. Although this study found no mention of a change in parenting style between the younger years and
later school years, the participants only mentioned harsh punishment occurring during their early years; however Participant 2010 did share that her father would use corporal punishment if necessary well into her middle school years. However, the researcher feels that the harsh parenting stopped because there was not a purpose for it any longer as its effectiveness in the younger years is evidenced by the appropriate cognitive development of the participants. This finding is in contrast to Wu and Seng’s (2006) finding that as the child gets older, the parenting style switched from authoritative to authoritarian. This research purports that as the child ages, the parenting style became more authoritative.

**Cognitive development**

The most significant aspect of cognitive development that this research uncovered was about the participants using their inner voice to monitor their behavior because they did not want to dishonor their family in any way. The concept of inner voice – a voice that guides the thinking of an individual - as the vehicle for problem solving and the development of higher order thinking skills, is from the research of Vygotsky (Gredler, 2009). The trait of honesty was mentioned as an important value to their family. Also, the use if combined parenting styles was novel versus just one being most effective for student achievement. There was a direct relationship also between corporal punishment and decision making in that the participants knew what the outcome would be for poor decisions. This was in direct contrast to the research that advocates that harsh parenting was a factor in the maladaptive behavior of children and youth (Roche, Ensminger, & Cherlin, 2007; Attaway & Bry, 2004). Rather, the participants made more acceptable choices that were more aligned to parent expectations. The participants internalized the norms and rules of both home and school as a part of their culture which is in alignment
with what Bruner (2008) described. All three participants were involved in extracurricular activities for years and excelled in their respective endeavors thereby exhibiting some control over their environment that Bruner (1975) advocates is critical to overcoming low socio-economic barriers.

**Cultural influences**

Cultural influences are embedded within parenting styles and parenting practices (O’Connor, 2002). Additionally, all three participants felt that their current socio-economic status closely mirrors that of their parents even though they have earned more money. They compared their childhood status using comparisons about having all their needs meet. Although Wu and Seng (2006) proposed that socioeconomic status was the most important determinant of a child’s academic achievement, they also recognized that other factors were also significant like parental expectations and support which all three participants experienced in some manner.

**Limitations revisited**

The most notable limitation is the small number of participants which creates the situation wherein the findings may not be transferable to other school districts and families. Another potential weakness is the impact that the passage of time may or will have on the participants’ recall ability as well as any changes over time of their perceptions of their lived experiences. However, all participants recalled people’s names, places and situations in great detail. Their recalls were vivid. Another limitation is the change in cultural values over time as it relates to corporal punishment. All three stated that while they knew that how they subjected to physical beatings may be viewed as abusive by some today, it was an effective strategy for them in their socialization.
Implications

The most significant contribution this research makes is that a blended parenting style is best for African Americans. The data shows that transparent boundaries were established for expected boundaries that used corporal punishment as a deterrent to unwanted behaviors. Thus, parenting education should include ways for parents to set boundaries for socially acceptable behavior and to be firm in monitoring and enforcing set behaviors while also being responsive to their children. While this description is close to the definition of authoritative parenting, there is an additional acceptance of some degree of high demandingness that exists with authoritarian parenting that is required that will need to be defined and established within cultural norms and mores. In today’s context, the legal and social influences about parenting styles and parenting practices must be considered and addressed. Figure 5 shows examples of blended style parenting and the placement of the participants’ parents and guardians relative to the degree of discipline and communication styles that parents have with children. This suggests that parents should parent based on the individual child and the situation in that parenting involves degrees of elasticity. Also, the research showed some difference along gender lines with parenting styles that warrants further attention. Although some studies did make note of differencing effective parenting styles
Figure 5 - Parenting Style Situational Model

- Extremely Low or Demandingness
  - Grandmother relationship with her
  - #1010’s described relationship with her mother

- Ultra High Responsiveness
  - Relationship with her Grandfather
  - Described blended style
  - #2010 and #2010 described blended style

- Extremely Low or Lack of Affection
  - Respondent

- Nonexistent

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF PARENTING ON LIFE STATUS
based on gender that contradicts her broad generalization that authoritative parenting styles is the best for academic achievement, more research is needed in this area along gender and cultural dimensions (Aunola, Stattin, & Nurmi, April 2000; Baumrind, 1971).

The data also showed the significance of getting support and guidance from role models in the school and community especially if such support is lacking at home. Thus, those who work with children in any capacity should also get professional development in effective mentoring.

Future research needs to include participants from a more varied age levels. Future research also needs to include an examination of other environmental concerns that may impact cognitive development despite effective parenting like lead poisoning. Future research could examine the benefits and impact of blended parenting styles that move along a continuum or within quadrants of responsiveness and demandingness that are situational or culturally relevant rather that squarely on the cusps of only one of four possible quadrants. Future research could examine that parenting styles are not mutually exclusive and the possibility that more categories of parenting styles are needed that are more representative of current culture and mores. Baumrind (1971) also recommended possible additional categories of parenting.

Essence of the study

The purpose of this study was to interview adult graduates of an inner city school district to determine if their perceptions of parenting style, parenting practices and family had an impact on their achievement. The data clearly shows that all three participants perceived that all three components played an important role although at times, differently, but with the same result. The blended parenting styles led to an expectation of
achievement that was coupled with parenting practices (could come from other
significant role models like educators, family members, Sunday School teachers, civic
groups like the scouts) that demonstrated support for the participants while in K-12
education, college and beyond. This researcher wanted to explore the impact of
influences that resulted in students being successful in their adult lives with the desire to
glean information that can be transferred to be used in parenting education. The
researcher was surprised with the different paths to success of one participant but whose
path upon closer examination contained the same elements as the other participants. All
three became visibly emotional about a life-changing experience or event(s). All there
had very vivid recall about their lived experiences. All three perceived that their socio-
economic status is equivalent to their parents. All three were taught the value of
education by their parents (or educators) by what they said and what they did although
one participant did not know that her father was her father as he encouraged her to attend
college. Although race and racism were recognized and perceived to be experienced by
all three, they did not share indications of a negative impact on their achievement overall.
However, two spent careers in predominantly African American work environments.

Overall, their experiences closely mirror that of the researcher although she was
raised in a very rural setting. The influence and impact of race and racism were felt more
by the researcher because schools were integrated while she was in elementary school.
The researcher has published a book of quotes by her mother because her words were that
influential to the researcher’s cognitive development.
List of References


http://www.yourdictionary.com


http://www.amazon.com/Mindful-Inquiry-Research-Valerie-Malhotra/dp/0761904093


Appendix A: Crime Statistics and People Facts

Quick facts - FBI Offenses Known to Law Enforcement by City

City and State People Quick Facts from Census
Appendix B Interview Instrument
**INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT**

Introduction

Thank you so much for agreeing to this interview. As a reminder, please know that you can stop the interview at any time. We have your written consent to also audiotape our time together which will assist me in analyzing our interview later. We have also discussed privacy matters and that unless your written consent is given, you will never be identified in my published work. Do you have any questions before we begin? Okay, let’s get started. [Turn audio/video recording device on]

Hello, my name is Jacqueline Jones and I am interviewing participant ___ who is a (career ) ______’

I would like to ask a few demographic or clarifying questions. How do you describe yourself? [Responses to these questions will be measured against the following categories.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>18-28</th>
<th>29-39</th>
<th>40-50</th>
<th>51-61</th>
<th>62-72</th>
<th>73 plus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly Income Range (§)</td>
<td>30,000 – 39,000</td>
<td>40,000 – 49,000</td>
<td>50,000–59,000</td>
<td>60,000 – 69,000</td>
<td>70,000–79,000</td>
<td>80,000 plus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest education level</td>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>Trade School</td>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>Doctorate and higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ Highest education level</td>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>Trade School</td>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>Doctorate and higher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. First, let’s talk about your childhood. What was it like?
2. In what ways did your parents support you as a student through the years?

3. Describe a time when your parents disciplined you?

4. How important was education in your family and how did you know this?

5. Describe any time you were referred to the office, had detention or some other type of disciplinary action in school because of your behavior?

6. Describe any type of award, honor or recognition you received in school.

7. Describe what it meant to be an African American as a student.

8. Please describe and recall any words of wisdom/advice from your parents.

9. What was your experience like entering college, entering the workforce?

10. What were/are the most important factors influencing your motivation to graduate from high school, college, career choice or to start a business?

11. Discuss/describe any differences or similarities between the socioeconomic status of your parents and your own?

12. I will now describe different parenting styles and ask that you select the one that best describes how you were parented (this question was re-phrased to each participants without providing the category names).

Thank you for your time. I may contact you later to share what I have written to get your feedback on the accuracy of what I have written or to ask a question for clarification. I sincerely appreciate your willingness to help the children and families of our district.