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An Examination of Academic Resilience Among High-Achieving Hispanic-American Male Inner City Adolescents

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Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine

Department of Psychology

AN EXAMINATION OF ACADEMIC RESILIENCE AMONG HIGH-ACHIEVING
HISPANIC-AMERICAN MALE INNER CITY ADOLESCENTS

By Aida A. Ismael-Lennon

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of

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PHILADELPHIA COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Dissertation Approval

This is to certify that the thesis presented to us by Aida IJmagel-Lennon
on the 24th day of JUNE, 2010, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Psychology, has been examined and is
acceptable in both scholarship and literary quality.

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Abstract

Identifying risk and protective factors has been at the cornerstone in resilience research in education. Although this focus has contributed to our understanding of the personal traits inherent in academically resilient students, it fails to expound relationships existing outside of the individual. This study aims to uncover the interrelationship between individual characteristics and the environments that help create academic resilience. Twelve Hispanic-American male inner-city at-risk students, considered resilient, were interviewed about perceived factors leading to their academic success. A qualitative analysis was used to analyze the data, using Strauss & Corbin's (1998) Grounded Theory Approach. The themes that emerged were categorized under school and community characteristics, home environment and individual traits. The ideal home environment consisted of the presence of at least one caring parent who placed an emphasis on education. The school characteristics included personnel who served as mentors and placed high expectations on the students; this was combined with a strong emphasis on sports and participation in extra-curricular activities. The individual characteristics included determination, leadership, dependability, generosity and sense of humor. Despite the fact that the community was underprivileged, there were organizations that provided extra-curricular activities and volunteering opportunities in which the students might participate. The conclusion seemed to be that it is the interaction between home, school and environment that helps to unfold academic resilience. Implications for schools suggest that interventions for teaching academic resilience should include a systemic approach, whereby aspects of the home, community and school are taken into consideration. Future recommendations are made, suggesting that the focus should be on the interaction between and among these settings, rather than on examination of individual characteristics and risk and protective factors in isolation.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Some children living in our cities face seemingly insurmountable odds, yet they seem able to overcome such factors such as poverty, poor schools, peer pressure, and personal trauma; furthermore, they thrive and go on to lead productive lives. These resilient individuals graduate from college, establish careers, and escape the crushing poverty of the inner cities. The debate over whether or not the resilience that these individuals demonstrate comes from the environment, genetics, learned skills or a combination of these factors remains inconclusive; however, most would agree that a combination of genetic and personal variables, along with the “right” set of circumstances in the surrounding environment are contributory (Arrington & Wilson, 2000; Borman & Rachuba, 2000; Brooks, 2006; Garcia Coll, et al., 1996; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Morales, 2000). A closer look at resilient individuals may help to explicate factors associated with their success and be instructive for systemic change in societal institutions, including schools (Doll & Lyon, 1998). Information obtained through individual case stories is subject to threats concerning the validity of these stories; these threats are sometimes associated with qualitative research (Campbell & Stanley, 1966; Masten, 2001); however, a theory that proposes specific interactions between the environment and individual characteristics may serve as a template for systemic change. Perhaps studying factors within naturally occurring contexts would help provide a clearer understanding of how individuals succeed, despite being surrounded by less than optimal conditions.

Research suggests that temperament and personality traits serve to distinguish between resilient and non-resilient individuals. In particular, a term described in the literature as “hardiness” appears to be a safeguard against effects of traumatic experiences (Kobasa, Maddi & Kahn, 1982). Individuals who have the personality trait of “hardiness” (a) believe that they can learn from both good and bad experiences, (b) attribute meaning to their experiences and (c) have an internal locus of control (Kobasa, Maddi & Kahn, 1982). However, categorizing these constructs as personality traits precludes their acquisition. An alternate view to the “trait” construct is to consider hardiness as a “skill.” In this way, a skill-based model could potentially lead to the development of an intervention program for children to encourage the development of “hardiness.”

Statement of the Problem

Studies of individuals subjected to extraordinary stress, at first, centered on the variable onset of psychopathology in the aftermath of traumatic events. This literature studied the individual’s resilience after crisis and his or her capacity to return to a state of homeostasis (Bonanno, 2004; Doll & Lyon, 1998; Masten, 2001). However, a trend has emerged over the course of the past several years, particularly as researchers have studied resilience in educational settings. Numerous studies (e.g., Wasonga, et al., 2003; Reis, 2005) have focused on protective factors that promote resilience in order to gain a better understanding of the mechanisms associated with the response to stress. These studies attempt to go beyond reporting protective and risk factors that are involved in the special set of stressful or traumatic circumstances for a particular individual, but rather attempt to isolate systemic factors that promote resilience. Pianta & Walsh (1998) and Doll & Lyon (1998), among others, suggested a closer look at the

environment in which resilient individuals develop, in order to examine factors that would aid in the development of prevention programs.

Drawing from the work of Rutter (1985) and the seminal work of Cowen and his colleagues (1996), researchers, particularly Doll & Lyon (1998), examined the three stages of the study of risk; these include: (a) negative life experiences resulting in mental health problems, (b) single risk factors producing negative factors, such as coercive family processes producing conduct disorders in children, and (c) the emergence of interest in resilience as an outgrowth of risk and protective factors. Doll and Lyon (1998) called for an examination of the risk and protective factors as a basis for developing school-based programs that foster resilience. Doll and Lyon (1998) discussed the implications of service delivery of resilience-promoting programs in the schools and warn against the development of programs that may yield only short term results. They noted that children that are considered high-risk may benefit from resilience-building programs that incorporate various resources, such as programs developed for children with a conduct disorder that include parent training, thus incorporating the systemic finding in which support of mentors and significant others is an important component of resilience.

A. The Study of Resilience as an Interactive Process

Criticisms have been made about the approach used for investigating the construct of resilience. Much of the available literature's focus has been in the study of protective and risk factors in isolation, without consideration of the process involved in or examination of how the factors combine to create resilience in an individual. Some of these researchers (Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000; Cowen, et al., 1997; Luthar, 1999) propose an approach that considers the *interaction* between the protective factors and the contextual framework in which they occur. Taking into account the developmental aspects associated with the concept of resilience, Morales

(2000) examined “the resilience cycle” among high achieving Dominican American students and considered the interrelationship between the protective factors, thus departing from the common approach of identifying protective factors in isolation. The concept of a “resilience cycle” refers to the cyclical nature of resilience acquisition. For the students in this study, insight was the guiding mechanism that allowed these students to acknowledge risk factors, understand the necessity of gaining protective factors from multiple resources, continue to refine protective factors, and maintain a focus on the evolving image of academic resilience. This study emphasizes the interactive features of the resilience cycle.

Purpose of the Study

This study will examine the manner in which individual characteristics for adolescent Hispanic male students interact with the environmental variables in an urban school setting. Other than reporting shared personal characteristics among minority adolescents that succeed, and the key features of the schools the students attend (Arellano, & Padilla, 1996; Floyd, 1996; Garnezy, 1991; Gordon, 1996; Newman, Lohman, et al., 2000; Newman, Myers, et al., 2000; O'Connor, 1997; Rutter, 1987; Smokowski, Reynolds, & Bezrucko, 1999; Werner, 1993; Werner & Smith, 1982, 1992) (cited in Gordon Rouse, Bamaca-Gomez, and Newman & Newman, 2001), little has been done to provide a clear understanding of the underlying interactions between student and setting that contribute to successful programs that promote resilience. The information that might be derived could then be used to design effective programs that foster resilience.

In the current study, the goal is to gather information through the use of qualitative in-depth interviews from high achieving, male Hispanic students from urban neighborhoods about those factors that led them to succeed in school. High performing students will be identified by

the scores obtained on standardized exams, report cards, class rank, school counselor input and conduct reports. The students selected will be considered “at-risk”, based on several criteria. For the purposes of this study the term “at-risk” is defined as low SES status, residing in the inner-city and having two or more of the following risk factors: single-parent/ foster family household, substance abuse history (personal or family), criminal or family court involvement, placement in special education, high mobility (four or more schools K – 8), and physical and/or sexual abuse. A content analysis will be employed, in which the responses provided by the interviewees are analyzed to identify themes that emerge.

This study seeks to gain an insider’s perspective by obtaining information directly from the resilient students. The use of this approach (person-focused) is based on the premise that rich and descriptive accounts may increase the chances of capturing important information, (i.e., phenomenological in nature), that may not otherwise be obtained from a purely quantitative approach.

A qualitative method of analysis was chosen for this study because the topic of resilience lends itself to a type of investigative approach that is more phenomenological in nature. Due to the nature of this study no hypotheses were drawn *per se*; rather, the focus will be more exploratory in nature. The aim is to come to understand how students labeled as academically resilient and at-risk are able to thrive in their environments. Through rich descriptive interviews, the primary investigator hopes to unravel the intricacies at play in shaping these at-risk students into successful students. Of particular interest in this study is to develop an understanding of the interplay between the individual characteristics and school culture that leads to academic success. The literature suggest that mentors can play an important role, and there has been a strong interest in the role that social institutions such as schools can play in fostering resilience. However, the characteristics of such institutions remain undefined. This study will use a

qualitative analysis to investigate how resilient individuals perceive the influence of an institution that intends to encourage resilience, and will hopefully be able to delineate the components of the institutional structure that were particularly helpful, e.g., the relative salience of parents, faculty, ancillary personnel, peers, the honor code, high expectations, extracurricular activities, and disciplinary policies in interaction with personal characteristics, such as learned optimism, self-regulation, cognitive development, self concept, school engagement, motivation, personal values, and the ability to attribute meaning to life events. This study intends to explicate the relationship between personal characteristics and home/school factors in the resilience cycle of inner-city Hispanic youth. Thus the research question is: What are the personal attributes and home/school factors that are expressed in academically successful inner-city youth?

Theoretical Foundations and Related Research

The construct of resilience refers to a “dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation with the context of significant adversity” (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000, p.543). Interest in resilient or stress-resistant children has been traced to the study of children of schizophrenic parents, children who defied expectations and seem well-adjusted despite being raised by less than competent parents (Masten, Best, & Garnezy, 1990). Werner’s longitudinal study of children in Hawaii presaged an expansion of the study of resilience to include a variety of other obstacles, including socioeconomic disadvantage, maltreatment, community violence, catastrophic life events, and chronic illness (Luthar, et al., 2000). Although early studies focused primarily on the children themselves and their personal characteristics, later studies examined aspects of the social support systems and recognized resilience, not as a static characteristic, but as a changing, developmental progression, “such that new vulnerabilities and/or strengths often emerge with changing life circumstances”(Luthar, et al., 2000, p.544).

Luthar and her colleagues (Luthar & Zigler, 1991; Luthar, et al., 2000; Luthar, 2006; Luthar & Brown, 2007) provided several major reviews of the study of resilience, a complex construct that is variously defined. The early review noted several methodological issues associated with the measurement of stress that a person experienced in relation to the assessment of adjustment. Noting categories of stress that included (a.) major life stresses, (b.) small events or hassles, (c.) specific life stresses, such as institutionalization, and (d.) socioeconomic status as a measure of stress, both correlations and confounds were found between measurement of stresses that an individual experiences and the adjustment reported, bringing into question issues of cause and effect. Of particular interest to the present study is the issue of low socioeconomic status (SES) as an indicator of life stress. First, SES status provides little indication of what parental interactions –the key to competence in children - are actually like; i.e., low SES does not equate to poor parenting practices. Second, many children are able to adjust to low SES status with little difficulty, and contrasts are apparent in adjustment only at extremely disparate SES levels (Luthar & Zigler, 1991). Luthar and her colleagues conclude that using multiple indices of stresses that children face would reflect the well-established finding that multiple sources of stress are synergistic and increase the scientific rigor of the study of resilience (Luthar, 2006).

Later reviews (Luthar, et al., 2000; Luthar, 2006; Luthar & Brown, 2007) of resilience- the construct- cited several concerns, and challenges to scientific study that continue to exist. These included a lack of precision in operationalizing the positive adjustment of individuals at risk, in both the nature of their responses and, as noted in the earlier review of the categories of stress, in the nature of the risks. Additionally, Luthar and her colleagues suggest more specifically elaborated labels for protective and vulnerability factors, such as “vulnerable and reactive” to distinguish possible interactions because vulnerability may increase with heightened levels of stress. Further, resilience researchers identify resilience as a dynamic process, rather

than as a personality trait. Although ego-resiliency of the object relations school of personality study reflects general resourcefulness and sturdiness of character, resilience is specifically distinguished from ego-resiliency in two ways; resilience is a dynamic developmental process, not a trait, and resilience presupposes exposure to substantial adversity (Luthar, et al., 2000). Resilience, then, is a dynamic, 2-pronged construct, referring to the coexistence of threat to a child's adjustment and clear evidence of this same child's positive adaptation across one or more domains of functioning (Luthar, et al., 2000).

Luthar and Brown (2007) recently offered a broad outline of a research agenda for developing effective interventions to build on genetic, biological, and environmental interactions. First, although cautions are offered relative to viewing resilience as an innate characteristic, insights in biological processes, - particularly with regard to (a.) brain plasticity, (b.) the role of frontal areas of the brain which regulate executive function, emotional regulation, and attention, as well as flexibility and coping skills, and (c.) the debilitating effect that chronic stress can have by over-activating the hypothalamic pituitary adrenal (HPA) axis, producing increases in the stress hormone, cortisol, and decreases in coping skills, may be important components of prevention and intervention. Individual differences in neural circuitry likely interact with environmental circumstances in varied ways. For example, Davidson (2000) found a greater blink magnitude in individuals with higher right-side prefrontal activity, consistent with a hypothesis that individuals vary in their regulation of negative affect, specifically the intensity of negative affect after it has been activated. At the micro-level, research on the way that individual differences in neural circuitry interact with environmental circumstances, may inform resilience in a way similar to the understanding that a sense of humor, a capacity for self-regulation and higher intelligence operate on a macro-level. Although noting that neuroscience and biology are likely to offer specific insights into resilience researchers, Luthar and Brown

(2007) suggest the most direct pathway to improving outcomes for children is the reduction of abuse and neglect in close relationships, and caution against overemphasizing the biology of resilience. Resilience is, of course, conceptualized as a dynamic process, reflecting the interaction of person and environmental factors.

Of specific interest to the present study, Luthar and her colleagues (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Luthar & Brown, 2007) call for the use of qualitative studies to inform theoretical constructs, rather than relying solely on quantitative methods and tests of presupposed hypotheses. Recent narrative-based findings (Hauser, Allen, & Golden, 2006) suggest resilient teens' investments in relationships, in self-reflection and in a sense of personal efficacy are key components to overcoming long-term psychiatric hospitalization and substance abuse. Qualitative studies uncover effects missed by the constraints of quantitative research and promote a greater depth of understanding of the construct.

Finally, as will be noted later, Luthar and her colleagues (e.g., Luthar & Brown, 2007) have suggested a delineation of the construct through subtypes of study, such as emotional resilience, academic resilience, or social resilience. Along these lines, and of specific interest for this study, Martin & Marsh (2006) analyzed the responses of 406 Australian high school students using path and cluster analysis. A 5-C paradigm for academic resilience involves proposed confidence (self-efficacy), coordination (planning), control, composure (low anxiety), and commitment (persistence). Implications for interventions are offered.

As noted previously, the interest in the study of resilience also arose, in part, out of the Positive Psychology movement (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, Seligman, 1998). The predominant emphasis in psychology has consistently been on pathology, and the deficit model for explaining outcomes and behavior; however, influential contributors, such as Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), Cowen (1991) & Rutter (1985) shifted the focus to positive attributes

associated with resilience. These studies noted that even in conditions of severe hardship, some people seem to prevail over stress factors that overwhelm others. Seligman and his colleagues drew from the work on learned helplessness to develop the theory of “learned optimism” as part of the positive psychology movement. Learned optimism can be defined as being able to act on positive expectations about the future, as opposed to being unable to act on the basis of negative expectations about the future (Seligman, 1998). Further, positive psychology attempts to move away from a “blame the victim” approach to one that seeks to build systems that nurture resilience as it occurs naturally within individuals. Rather than documenting the high “drop out” rates of inner city youth, positive psychology would suggest following inner city youth who successfully graduate from college and move onto successful careers. Thus, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) described the three pillars of positive psychology as developing positive emotions, building positive traits, such as, resilience and perseverance, and fostering positive institutions, such as, creating a school environment that encourages growth and development.

Along these lines, school based approaches began to look more closely at competence and resilience (Cowen & Work, 1988). Cowen and his colleagues developed the Primary Mental Health Project that identifies children at a moderate level of distress and offers modest support from paraprofessionals trained in play therapy. This seminal work found that this preventative approach encouraged growth and development in young children and engendered coping behaviors over time (Cowen, Hightower, Pedro-Carroll, Work, & Wyman, 1996). Coping behaviors included an increased likelihood that subsequently stressed individuals would engage in support-seeking behaviors if they experienced a helping relationship early in their social development. Thus, Cowen and his colleagues established the importance of early systemic social support in the later emergence of resilient behaviors. In related research, and in an attempt to demonstrate that optimism is not entirely hereditary, Schulman, Keith, and Seligman (1993)

noted that monozygotic twins' heritability indexes account for only 50 percent of the variance. They argue that children learn to respond to different situations through modeling the significant adults in their lives. Moreover, monozygotic twins vary in the way in which they employ modeling strategies.

Masten (2001), who studied resilience from a developmental perspective, describes resilience as a phenomenon more common than originally conceptualized. She argues against early conceptions of resilience as an extraordinary phenomenon that dominated the literature for over three decades. In Masten's view, resilience is a phenomenon that arises out of a person's natural tendencies to adapt to the environment. Masten & Coatsworth (1998) indicate that the definition of success might vary by culture or community context. Typically successful mainstream adaptations, such as self control and compliance, rule-governed conduct, academic achievement, and the formation of a cohesive sense of self may not be enough to survive and succeed in dangerous inner-city neighborhoods (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). As noted by Ogbu (1986) & Steele, C. (1997), and cited by Graham, Taylor & Hudley (1998) and Taylor & Graham (2007), minority males may disidentify with mainstream values and opportunities, choosing instead to ignore typical pathways to academic achievement, and, instead, pursue achievement through gangs and other countercultural and illicit activities. This study will not attempt to examine "successful" alternative pathways, such as gang membership, but rather will examine inner-city Hispanic-American minorities who are successful in school.

Compliance and pro-social behavior are essential to the development of self-regulation, which provides a foundation for school learning (Masten, 1998). Parents are thought to encourage self-regulation through routines and through consistent, warm care-giving, as opposed to aversive coercive interactions that may result in oppositional behaviors and dysregulation (Patterson, 1986). As children progress and prepare to attend school, getting along with others is

a key component of their success (Coie & Dodge, 1998, Dodge, 1986), especially because group instruction remains the primary method of teaching. Indeed, Mendez, Fantuzzo, & Cicchetti (2002) suggest that resilient African-American children from an economically disadvantaged background were characterized by highly adaptable temperament, ability to approach new situations, and an above average vocabulary development; these characteristics led to social competence with peers. The literature on resilience in economically disadvantaged minority students suggests that such children draw on personal characteristics, including self-regulation, persistence and intelligence, and gain support from family and school (Mendez, Fantuzzo, & Cicchetti, 2002).

Masten (2001) and Masten & Coatsworth, (1998) imply that all human beings have the capacity to develop resilience, regardless of circumstances. The four key factors identified regarding resilience from a developmental perspective were (a) relationship with caring adults, (b) self-regulation of emotion and behavior, (c) brain development and cognition, and (d) desire for the child to thrive in her/his environment (Masten, 2001).

Resilience has been studied within the context of each of these factors, and in each instance adaptation seems to play a crucial role (Garmezy & Masten, 1991; Rutter, 1990). The influence of caring adults was demonstrated in studies of mentors who added significant value in the lives of resilient children (Kenny, Gallagher, Alvarez-Salvat, & Silsby, 2002).

Wang (1995) examined the construct of academic resilience among inner-city youth, with an emphasis on the use of an ecological perspective that incorporates the family, schools, and community in helping foster academic resilience. Wang described the role of the family in fostering resilience as pivotal, stating that children who grow in an environment that is supportive, caring and that provides guidance by limit setting, helps to promote and foster resilience. Findings suggest that school-based interventions should attempt to ameliorate the

impact of special education on students with special needs. Children in special education classes (a) are often held to lower expectations and may miss out on the benefit of being exposed to higher order reasoning in the regular education setting. (b) are identified children who tend to be segregated from typically developing children leading to lower expectations (c) have, in turn, lowered expectations leading to lower self-concepts, an external locus of control, and a lack of confidence in their own competencies (d) are identified children who may be subjected to pejorative labels from their peers, confirming self-deprecating beliefs (Wang, 1995). Finally, Wang also noted that the teacher-child helping relationship was a key component of academic resilience; i.e., the quality of the relationship with the teacher is related to the amount of output a child is willing to put forth. A caring relationship with a teacher enhances academic resilience (Wang, 1995).

Developmental Trajectory for Adolescents

Adolescence is described in the literature as a period of training for the functions of adulthood. These functions include increased independence, achievement and education, capacity to develop romantic relationships, setting up goals for work roles and the like. In order to allow adolescents the capacity to work toward these goals, a certain amount of freedom is also granted; however, with increased freedom comes a certain degree of risk. Therefore, adolescents can potentially make decisions such as experimenting with illicit drugs, which could have a significant impact on their future (Crockett & Crouter, 1995).

In an effort to provide a conceptualization of the developmental trajectory of adolescence Kagan, Kearsley and Zelazo (1978), rendered the term “turning point” to indicate how each point in time in which a naturally occurring event takes place in an adolescent’s life can have lasting effects in their future outcomes. The impact of the choices made by each individual, along with

the consequences derived from those choices is what in essence defines adolescents' developmental trajectory. Turning points have a cumulative effect so that the more choices an individual makes in one direction the less likely that the outcomes will result in a completely opposite direction. To illustrate this point, it would be unlikely, although possible, for someone who was expelled from school for inappropriate behavior to become a productive member of society. During adolescence, turning points can be even more significant because of the increased freedom and flexibility that adolescents are afforded in order to make choices which can affect their future; thus the trajectory of adolescence can have a profound impact on the subsequent outcome of individuals (Crockett and Crouter, 1995).

Adolescence is marked by a myriad of changes that appear to occur simultaneously, such as identity formation, sexual identification, social role definitions and the like; although many adolescents are able to bypass the turmoil of this period, others may struggle (Eccles et al., 1993). In a classic article, Eccles et al., (1993), through what was termed, *stage-environment fit* model, sought to understand the reasons why some adolescents succeed during this period, yet others face negative outcomes. This model purports that it is the adolescent's environment (home/school) which fails to provide adequate supports that are commensurate with adolescents' needs. The transition from elementary to junior high school presents with particular challenges such as motivation, continued interest in school and school related activities, and self reliance. These challenges are exacerbated when coupled with transition from a small school (elementary) to a larger school setting (junior high school). Typically, larger school settings are inherently different in the way in which they are structured. Some of the pitfalls of larger schools include poor teacher-student relations and decreased student participation, both of which contribute to poor motivation outcomes; this is particularly true for at-risk students. Changes are also evident as they pertain to the dynamics of family members' relations; in particular as adolescents attempt

to exert their own freedom and power in their striving towards independence (Eccles et al., 1993).

Contemporaneous with Eccles and her colleagues, Jessor (1993) described the failure of psychology up to that point to study the context of poverty and the impact of race and ethnicity on adolescent development. Institutions such as church, schools and community neighborhoods, were similarly ignored. Jessor proposed a psychosocial framework for study that included the interrelated constructs of protective and risk factors in the domains of biology/genetics, social environment, perceived environment, personality and behavior. Jessor noted that focusing on risk alone fails to account for the high proportion of well-adjusted minority adolescents who go on to be responsible and successful. He offered guidelines for capturing the rich texture of adolescent development, including the following: (a) a longitudinal focus, (b) a grasp of the content and dynamics of social context, (c) individual differences, and (d) the knowledge that is sought has to encompass subjective experience and personal meanings ... (Jessor, 1993, p. 121).

Luthar & Brown (2007) suggest that resilience researchers have made limited progress in focusing on the social context. Citing research on negative stereotypes, the authors point out that early-maturing minority adolescents fit the profile as being threats to adults, leading to the possibility of prejudice and negative teacher expectations, “profoundly affecting students’ outcomes over time” (Luthar & Brown, 2007, p. 941). Edl, Jones & Estell (2008) found that teachers initially view Latino students who have limited English proficiency as having less interpersonal competence; however, the teachers apparently tended to modify this perception over time, viewing Latino students as being more similar to majority students. Nonetheless, the study suggests attention to teachers’ perceptions of student differences as a possible barrier to educational achievement for Latino students.

Epidemiological studies have found that Hispanic students drop out of school at a rate two to three times greater than their majority counterparts (Martinez, DeGarmo, & Eddy, 2004) and, at 26%, they have the highest school drop-out rate (Sanchez, Colon, & Esparza, 2005). In a survey of 430 Hispanic students, 50% of the respondents reported experiencing discrimination, including not feeling comfortable around school personnel; these same sentiments were also reported in a separate survey of their parents (Martinez, DeGarmo, & Eddy, 2004). More specifically, structural barriers to Hispanic students in schools were attributed social estrangement, a lack of *confianza* (trust), thus inhibiting help-seeking behaviors and fostering attention-seeking behaviors, perhaps reinforcing stereotypes. As noted previously, (Graham, Taylor & Hudley (1998), Taylor & Graham(2007), minority adolescent males, in particular, may disidentify with majority values, and even for the most highly motivated, be negatively affected by *stereotype threat*, i.e., the negative impact of a stereotype on the performance of the targeted individual (Steele, 1997). Shame, confusion, and powerlessness may be masked by youthful bravado and resistance to school authorities (Martinez, DeGarmo, & Eddy, 2004).

Alternately, Sanchez, Colon & Esparza (2005) suggest a sense of school belonging promotes academic adjustment in Hispanic students. In a sampling of 143 Latino, 12th grade students in a Midwestern public high school, a sense of belonging among male participants was significantly related to absenteeism and expectancy for success. Overall, although female Hispanic students were more successful than male Hispanic students, a sense of belonging was found to play an important role in psychological processes such as intrinsic motivation and positive expectations for success, as well as motivation to attend school.

Masten (2008) suggests that schools have an important role in promoting protective processes and limiting risk factors and suggests that school counselors should move beyond deficit-based models, come to understand both positive and negative cascade-effect in

development, and promote programs that build a positive climate and motivate staff. Edl, Jones, & Estell (2008) suggest that school psychologists have an important role in identifying and correcting teachers' misperceptions about English Language Learners.

Protective/Risk Factors

The protective factors that have been identified consistently throughout the literature on resilience are (a) capacity for self-control, (b) optimism and (c) the ability to attribute meaning to life's events (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Bonanno, 2004). Bonanno et al. (2007) described other factors, in addition to the ones mentioned above, that also serve as protective or risk factors, including demographics, social and material resources and additional life stressors. These factors were examined as predictors of resilience subsequent to a crisis or traumatic event. The results indicated that resilient individuals showed lower levels of depression and substance abuse, had fewer life stressors, less income loss, more social support, fewer chronic diseases, and fewer past traumatic events.

Reis, Colbert, & Herbert (2005) identified the protective/risk factors associated with academic achievement and resilience as follows: "belief in self, determination, motivation, constructive use of time, and the ability to work hard in honors classes, extracurricular activities and, sports" (p.15). This study also supported the involvement of at least one significant adult as a source of support to aid in acquiring resilience. Students' participation in meaningful activities helped them develop skills, which in turn, helped foster resilience. Reis and his colleagues' study add credence to the notion that resilience emerges out of a combination of characteristics of the individual and the interplay with the environment.

Gordon-Rouse, Bamaca-Gomez, Newman & Newman, (2001) examined self-perception in academically resilient, minority, low SES students, and identified nine protective factors.

These variables were obtained using content analysis, a qualitative research method that involves looking at themes that occur in the interviews conducted with the students. The categories identified in this study were reconstructed, based on the work derived from Garmezy (1991), who had identified three broad protective factors - personal characteristics, family related factors and external support systems. The protective factors that were identified by the students are summarized within the following nine categories, as follows:

(1) individual aspirations, which included such constructs as motivation to succeed; (2) personal factors, such as level of perseverance; (3) academic behaviors, such as doing one's homework and attending classes; (4) family support, but the responses provided by the students did not support this factor in this study; (5) academic environmental factors were identified as being able to maintain one's GPA; (6) other support factors, such as teachers; (7) positive social behaviors, and the students in the study identified surrounding oneself with positive individuals; (8) negative social behaviors, such as abstaining from getting into romantic relationships with the opposite sex; and (9) spirituality, which included keeping one's faith in God (Gordon-Rouse, Bamaca-Gomez, Newman & Newman, 2001 p. 13).

Exercising consistency when disciplining African-American adolescents was considered a protective factor in children at-risk (Gordon Rouse, Bamaca-Gomez, Newman & Newman, 2001); in fact, discipline style was found to be critical for African-American children, in particular. This is due to the fact that as the number of risks increase, the numbers of protective factors that are needed to maintain resilience also increase (Gutman, Arnold, and Eccles, 2002).

Resilience in Ethnic Minority Adolescents

As noted previously, individual characteristics may explain an important part of the variance in the development of resilience as do environmental factors. The importance of having an internal locus of control was found to be important for African-American students' academic resilience, in particular. In a study that examined the factors that account for academic resilience among minority students from low SES backgrounds versus low SES majority students, Borman & Rachuba (2001) identified the fact that higher internal locus of control was found among the majority students than among the African-American students. In addition, the African-American students were more likely to attend schools that lacked the characteristics that foster resilience. An examination of foster youth and academic resilience found that although the educational and foster care systems were considered assets to these individuals, having access to these systems was not, in and of itself, sufficient to generate resiliency (Hines, Merdinger & Wyatt, 2005). Personal characteristics, including resistance to peer pressure, positive framing, and an internal locus of control of the foster youth were intricately involved and necessary to participate in the assistance available in social institutions. Student expectations that allowed them to "see" these institutions as positive resources and utilize them toward their advantage were a crucial component in resilient outcomes. Findings suggest that efforts to empower children/adolescents to make full use of the resources available to them should continue throughout the developmental trajectory, because resilience is not bound by the limits of developmental stages.

Academic engagement has been identified as characteristic of academically resilient students regardless of whether or not they have been identified at-risk (Finn & Rock, 1997; Shin, Daly & Vera, 2007). Finn and Rock (1997) compared groups of African-American and Hispanic students based on psychological characteristics and school engagement. They found that students who were academically resilient exhibited high levels of self-esteem and internal locus of control (person variables), combined with high levels of academic engagement. The construct of academic engagement was defined as, “coming to class and school on time, being prepared for and participating in class work, expending the effort needed to complete assignments in school and as homework, and avoiding being disruptive in class” (Finn & Rock, 1997, p. 231). The person variables include a combination of psychological constructs, including motivation, perseverance, inhibition and impulse control, planning and organizing. These findings presage one of the hypotheses for this study, suggesting that executive function capacities, e.g., planning and organizing, appear to be important aspects in building academic resilience. As will be noted further, this study will attempt to expand the literature by examining teachers’ influence in the development of executive function skills.

Self-report measures that examine the effects of school engagement may provide a more reliable method for examining this construct. Shin, Daly and Vera (2007) employed the use of the School Sentiment Index (SSI, Frith & Narikawa, cited in Shin, Daly, & Vera, 2007), which uses a Likert-type scale to measure a self-reported level of school engagement. Of particular interest was the influence of the perceived normative expectations among inner city minority adolescents on school engagement. Although the findings did not support the premise that peer support may have an impact on school engagement, other investigators (Crosnoe, Cavanagh, and Elder, 2003; Azmitia & Cooper, 2001) have found a correlation between the level of support provided by peers and the motivation to engage in academic activities. Their findings also

provided ample support for the role that positive ethnic identity and positive peer norms play in school engagement (Shin, Daly & Vera, 2007).

By contrast, Taylor and Graham (2007), following Graham, Taylor & Hudley, 1998), found that underachievement is valued, particularly among boys of African-American and Hispanic backgrounds. African-American and Hispanic male adolescents who did poorly academically and had conduct problems in urban schools were found to be the most popular students among their peers of both sexes. These studies suggested that such factors as an intentional lack of identification with majority values, stereotype threat, increasing use of harsh discipline practices associated with Zero tolerance, and involuntary minority status led to a failure to view schooling as an important stepping stone and a source of support.

Montgomery, Miville, Jeffries and Baysden (2000) identified self-talk as a valuable characteristic of resilient Native American college students in a study that examined the common factors contributing to these students' academic success in college. The students identified and described the concept of self-talk as the inner voice that helped to remind them of who they were. This "inner voice" helped to maintain the values taught by their tribe members and this, in turn, helped to maintain high academic achievement (Montgomery, Miville, Winterowd, Jeffries, & Baysden, 2000). In the current study, capacities for self-talk might also imply that the individual also has good self-monitoring skills. Usually these skills are not fully developed until the later years in a person's life. Teaching children self-monitoring strategies might prove useful in helping to foster resilient characteristics.

A. Resilience in At-risk Youth

As pointed out previously, resilience is hypothesized to be a common phenomenon that occurs naturally and in the advent of a traumatic event; in such a case, most people would be

able to return to a state of homeostasis. However, when the adversity and trauma is experienced on a day-by-day basis, including viewing violence on the streets, growing up in poverty, being exposed to child abuse, living in drug infested neighborhoods, attending poor quality schools, among other hardships, homeostasis might well be compromised. Nevertheless, there are countless stories of individuals who, despite living in suboptimal conditions, have overcome these circumstances and achieved what would seem to be the impossible. Some of these individuals have done more than merely survive; they thrive in the face of adversity. In Masten's (2001) view, resilient individuals do not possess magical powers that allow them to overcome their circumstances in the face of adversity; rather, it is the combination of personal variables allowing the utilization of available resources, including caring adults in their lives, that results in intellectual competence. Relationships with caring adults seem to be a determining component of developing resilience. Of course, this is likely true of both children who are at-risk as well as those who are not. However, this critical component seems particularly important for children at-risk. Masten's view is rooted in adaptation processes and human development. From an evolutionary perspective, parents form the basis for the child's protective system. Based on Masten's work as well as others, it appears that intellectual competence may have a myriad of benefits that contribute to a resilient outcome. Masten also suggest that children who do not have strong relationship bonds do not use their cognitive skills to succeed academically; instead, they may use their cognitive skills in an antisocial manner. There is the interplay of environmental factors, such as, type of school, levels of concern of teachers, availability of a mentor or role model, peer influences, parent values; all of these, combined with intelligence level might contribute to the pathways the child will choose.

B. Academic Resilience in Hispanic Adolescents at-risk

Hispanic-descendent children would be considered at-risk based on the relative short migration status, which places them at an economic disadvantage. According to Prelow and Loukas (2003), Hispanic adolescents are more likely than Caucasians to be adversely affected by the effects of poverty. The poverty rate for Hispanic children was described in the literature as being three times as high as that of Caucasians (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2002). Prelow and Loukas, (2003) sought to determine how the presence of multiple risk and protective factors related with underprivileged Hispanic adolescents' academic achievements and externalizing behaviors. The results suggest that there is an inverse correlation between number of risk factors and academic achievement; that is, as the number of risk factors increase, the achievement scores decrease, as well as the possibility of engaging in externalizing behaviors. In the same vein, protective factors such as parental support ameliorated the negative effects of risk factors. Parental involvement is highly supported in the literature as an effective means of mediating risk and protective factors. The role of parents was also examined by Keegan Eamon (2005), in a study that examined various parenting variables and their effects on the academic achievement of Hispanic adolescents. The findings suggest that children of parents who provide a less conflictual home environment, and who stimulate their children intellectually and demonstrate an interest in their children's school experiences fare better academically. In the case of adolescents that come from single parent households, the dynamics of how the parents' roles affect the academic achievements of their children might be entirely different. Battle (2002), in a longitudinal study, followed a group of 12th graders from the time when they were in 8th grade and found that during the middle school years, the differences between how students performed academically if they were from a one parent household or were from two parent

households was inconsequential; however, by 12th grade students who came from single parent households lagged behind significantly, relative to their two-parent household counterparts.

Multicultural Issues Surrounding Resilience

Two paradigms have been offered to guide the study of multicultural diversity in relation to resilience. Spencer and Dupree (1996) described an identity-focused cultural, ecological (ICE) model that takes into account variations within groups from different backgrounds in the way in which they experience risk factors. Another model that was proposed by Garcia Coll and her associates is the integrative conceptual model, which takes into account the effects that racism, discrimination, oppression and segregation have on the development of children of diverse ethnic backgrounds (Garcia Coll, 1996).

A. Cultural Factors for Hispanic Adolescents

The effect of culture on the academic achievement of resilient Hispanic high school students was examined by Esparza and Sanchez (2008); in particular the study examined the effects of “attitudinal familism” on academic achievement. Attitudinal familism refers to the levels of involvement with family matters and the willingness to place value on the interests of the family on the part of the adolescent. A correlation was found between students’ levels of motivation toward school work and truancy and attitudinal familism. Another interesting finding was that mothers’ low education levels had an impact on the relationship between familism and academic output.

B. Religiosity Factors

Jaynes (2003) examined the effects of religiosity on the academic achievement of adolescents emerging from broken homes. Single-parent households represent a risk factor for the academic output of children and this might be expected to have a negative impact on academic achievement. Being religious was found to have a positive effect on adolescents' school output, thereby offsetting the negative effects produced by being the product of a broken family.

C. Ethnicity Factors

In a study that examined ethnic identity and its impact on the academic achievements of Hispanic adolescents, Zarate, Bhimji and Reese (2005), examined the different terminology which Hispanic adolescents use to label themselves. The findings suggest that one label cannot capture the myriad of different meanings identified by Hispanic-descent adolescents. These findings have implications for adolescents who identify themselves as both Chicano and American because it is unclear the extent to which adolescents identify with one culture versus the other.

D. Parents and Role Models

The role that significant adults play in the development of resilience has been repeatedly identified in the literature (Reis, Colbert & Hebert, 2005; Wang, 1995; Westfall & Pisapia, 1994; McMillan & Reed, 1993; Gordon-Rouse, Bamaca-Gomez, Newman & Newman, 2001). When asked directly through qualitative interview studies, students consistently identified having at least one adult person that provided support for them (Dass-Brailsford, 2005).

Reynolds (1998) examined factors that contribute to resilience among African-American urban youth and found that parental expectations influenced resilience development in children. In another study that investigated the interaction between parental attachment, academic

achievement and psychological distress among inner-city high school students, Kenny, Gallagher, Alvarez-Salvat & Silsby (2002) found that the nature of the relationship with the parent, (the father in particular), contributed significantly in helping to stave off psychological ailments and maintain a healthy mental state for adolescents. These findings are of particular importance, given the fact that in inner-city areas one parent households tend to be more prevalent, usually with the mother as the primary caretaker (Belgrave & Allison, 2006). This may represent yet another risk factor that children face in inner-city neighborhoods.

Of particular interest to the current study, the role played by parents and significant others on adolescents' academic achievements in Hispanic immigrant families was explored by Sands and Plunkett (2005), by means of a self-report measure, "the Significant Other Academic Support Scale." Findings indicated a relationship between parental care and academic achievement; involvement from mothers and fathers contributed significantly and differentially to academic output, as opposed to support from others, such as, teachers and friends.

Building Resilience: Introduction

Armed with information about protective factors that have contributed to enhancing resilience, researchers have begun to examine potential interventions. Alvord and Grados (2005) described a model for clinicians to apply in group settings. Their model included the following interventions to be taught to children: teaching problem-solving skills; encouraging children to express their feelings; helping children and families to identify strengths and positive family experiences; guiding parents and teachers in fostering self-esteem in children through meaningful responsibilities whereby children could gain a sense of accomplishment and mastery; teaching children optimistic thinking and perspective taking; teaching cognitive strategies such

as thought stopping and changing channels; teaching relaxation and self-control techniques, and teaching parents that the critical factors in fostering resilience in children, are: warmth, limit setting, and consistency (Alvord & Grados, 2005, p. 241).

Other forms of interventions include parents directly teaching their children how to become more resilient. Seligman (2007) proposed a program geared for parents to help their children acquire the skills that prevent them from becoming depressed but that aid them in fostering resilience, instead. His program is based on a cognitive-behavioral approach and borrows from intervention techniques described in the cognitive behavioral literature to treat depressed children. Parents are taught to use research-validated interventions to help their children develop the coping skills associated with resilience. The intent is to enhance the impact of parental support.

Other researchers have begun to look at techniques that can be adapted in educational settings. Based partly based on research that supports the role of mentors to foster resilience in children, a program named Resilience Education uses a paradigm whereby the teacher becomes a mentor referred to as, “Resilience Educator”. The model was developed by Brown, Benard, and D’Emedio-Caston (2001) and is grounded in part on the following tenets: identification of children’s strengths and interests, development of intrinsic motivation, and meaningful and caring relationships with mentors. The underlying principle for this program is based on placing an emphasis on the positive aspects of the child, as opposed to focusing on the factors associated with risk.

Bryan (2005) identifies school counselors as the primary links and facilitators for students, families and schools. Based on this critical role, Bryan calls on counselors to adopt a systems approach; this is to be accomplished by bringing administrative support within their schools to foster partnerships between the school, the families and the community. Having

schools, families and community resources connected would appear to help foster resilience by facilitating access to mentors, providing education and parent training and allowing the students to feel that they “have a voice.” Wasonga, Christman, and Kilmer (2003) examined the effects of gender, ethnicity and age on protective factors that are predictive of resilience and academic achievement and found that variables that are not part of the traditional focus in the curriculum are just as important as is teaching academics, in terms of its contribution in fostering resilience. The skills that were identified in the study as leading to resilience were: “stress resistance, hardiness, social competence, autonomy, problem-solving capabilities and a keen sense of future” (Wasonga, Christman, & Kilmer, p.71). Educators, administrators and other support staff are urged to work towards increasing communication between school, families and community.

Some argue that the job of enhancing resilience in children lies within the schools (Brooks, 2006; Morrison & Redding Allen, 2007). Teachers are in a powerful position and can take advantage of the opportunities they have in their daily encounters with children to help enhance resilience. Unless schools adopt initiatives to help foster academic resilience in all children, this task becomes monumentally difficult for teachers to undertake, especially with the stringent requirements of the No Child Left Behind law, increasing the pressure to make adequate yearly progress (AYP), perhaps to the detriment of socio-emotional goals (Morrison & Redding Allen, 2007). Support for the role that self-awareness plays in the resiliency trajectory has been documented in the literature (Morales, 2000).

Brooks (2006) also suggests enhancing resiliency through school policy, stating that school personnel are called to safeguard children from the risk factors that they are exposed to in their neighborhoods and even within their own families, as in the case of maltreated children and mandatory reporting requirements. Schools have an even greater responsibility to instill and foster a resilient environment for children because of the increasingly high demands that are

placed on children to perform well academically. Brooks (2006) suggests that schools can help foster resilience by (a) teaching children social skills, (b) providing a supportive environment, (c) instilling a desire to succeed academically, (d) providing an environment in which children are active participants in their learning, (e) providing extra support for teachers, (f) developing links and bridging the gaps between families, schools and communities.

Goldstein and Brooks (2007) provide educators with a tool to help them evaluate the problems that interfere with students' success, and develop interventions that would help remediate these problems. They also believe that schools should be the institution responsible for helping develop resilient children and that teaching children how to be resilient should be as much a part of the curriculum as teaching academics. Goldstein and Brooks (2007) suggest the goal of schooling should be helping children develop "a resilient mindset."

A new initiative (Association for curriculum development, 2007) has been spawned by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), proposing that schools consider teaching "the whole child". This premise is based in part on the adoption of a new approach in how the success of a child is measured. Success is not simply a measure of how well a child can compute mathematical operations or their levels of reading fluency. As the saying goes, "there is more than one yardstick upon which to measure success." Success is also defined by how well a child interacts with his or her peers, how well he or she can apply ethical principles and values, whether or not children can take others' perspectives, if children have learned personal responsibility, how well children can generalize what they learn in the classrooms into the outside world. These and other similar skills can be just as important as academics in determining the achievement and success of children. However in the current school system, the main focus is on academics. With the advent of the No Child Left Behind law in which the focus is on accountability, teachers and administrators may feel that their hands are

tied and their main focus becomes teaching to the test. With this approach there is little or no room for anything other than to teach academics. The interesting phenomenon is that by teaching the “whole child”, academics will be improved as a by-product. In other words, if a child comes to school ready, willing and able to learn, this will increase the chances that the child will actually learn his or her academics. The problem lies in the fact that everyone assumes that it is the parents’ responsibility to send their children to school ready, willing and able to learn; in fact, it is our responsibility as well to make this happen. In their definition of “a whole child” ASCD stated the following: “a whole child is: intellectually active; physically, verbally, socially, and academically competent; empathetic, kind, caring and fair; creative and curious; disciplined, self-directed, and goal oriented; free; a critical thinker; confident; cared for and valued.” (Association for Curriculum Development. (2007, p. 10).

A. Building Resilience in Schools

Schools are an integral part of the institutions that constitute the third pillar in the positive psychology movement. The third pillar refers to the role that institutions such as schools can play in fostering environments that lend themselves to the prospering of children. Research on the third pillar appears to be scant in the field of positive psychology. A systemic approach “School-wide Positive Behavior Support” (SWPBS) was identified by Sawka-Miller and Miller, (2007) as an adequate delivery system through which to build strength within schools. SWPBS arose out of applied behavioral analysis and is a variation of Positive Behavior In Schools (PBIS). SWPBS is both a systemic approach because it incorporates the cooperation and involvement of every member in the school and a systematic approach because it requires a planned and organized effort (e.g.; data collection) to be carried through.

B. History of St. Benedict's Preparatory School

The story of St. Benedict School, the place where the current study will occur, dates back to the 19th century when it was originally founded. During that century the school was small; however, by the turn of the 20th century (1915) the school's attendance began to increase exponentially. Along with the increase in attendance, the school's reputation for being a prep school which admitted students from a diverse social class and economic status also increased. For over 130 years the school has been a safe haven for students amidst an economically deprived city such as Newark. McCabe (2006) describes St. Benedict High School as "the miracle on High Street" in a dissertation that provided a look of the impact the school had on its many alumni, ascribing its success, in the words of the long-term headmaster, Father Edwin Leahy, to the following: "It's just been ordinary folks doing extraordinary things through God's grace" (McCabe, 2006, p. 353). Today the school houses 550 young men from grades 7 through 12; students come from the greater Newark area. There are some main distinctions between this program and the public school system. The program is based on an 11 months calendar rather than the traditional 10 month school year; in addition, during the school year students are involved in academics, activities and are strongly encouraged participate either in sports or other activities. The school offers a rigorous athletic program; in fact, it houses one of the most prestigious basketball teams around. There are no standard criteria for admission; rather, the decision about who is admitted is determined on a case by case basis. The school maintains that they admit those who will benefit from the program. Located in inner-city Newark, the school has long served students from low SES status families from ethnic backgrounds. Local public high schools have a high drop-out rate and special education placement rate, particularly among ethnic minority youth. Currently, at St. Benedict's high school, 95% of students are from ethnic minority backgrounds, and 90 to 95% are supported either by full or partial scholarships.

Although the school's athletic program's excellent reputation may attract many students, few are promised that they will even make the teams. In fact, most are told early on that they will not make one of the athletic teams, and are encouraged to participate in other activities. The curriculum is based, in part, on required courses in scripture, theology and morality. In addition, college prep courses are offered in combination with "real world" community service, internships and the opportunity to do independent study to those who qualify. All of the students participate in the "Honor Code" which aims at instilling a sense of community responsibility and service. The code can best be described by the school's motto "Whatever hurts my brother, hurts me"; each student is held responsible for maintaining the school's facilities and looking out for the other students. As one example, there are no locks on the lockers, based on the belief in basic trust and honesty in the students.

Integrative Formulation

Helping children develop resilience in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds is a partial focus of the resilience literature. Of particular interest is the finding that resilient individuals are able to identify and access resources such as helpful adults and frame the resources available in schools in a positive manner. Such children withstand peer pressure and focus on academic goals, deriving self-confidence from an internal locus of control. Resilient children also appear to have relatively high levels of self-regulation and an exceptional ability in controlling their impulses. Such information can also be used to design prevention programs in schools that would help identify children that may be at-risk for failing academically and encourage development of personal characteristics that lend to resilience.

The literature is replete with studies that describe protective factors for children's academic success; however, these factors are described in isolation without taking into

consideration the interrelationship with the environment and other factors. The current study will use a qualitative approach and will examine the process by which the protective factors are intertwined with other variables, such as personality type, parent style, environmental aspects, school, and other variables that may have had an interacting effect. Interactions between variables will be examined rather than solely providing descriptions of the variables. Adolescent males of Hispanic descent attending St. Benedict's High School will be the main focus in this study.

Chapter 2

Method

Data Sources and Collection

This study's intent was to delineate the construct of resilience from the perspective of resilient Hispanic-American male adolescents who have overcome obstacles in their lives to have successful high school careers. The method of study is qualitative in nature in order to explore, in a rich and detailed manner, the resilience as constructed by Hispanic-American male adolescents. Currently, there is little information about resilience among inner city minority youth, and little in the way of theory to guide the development of programs that will promote resilience in schools and community agencies. Quantitative research attempts to determine the effect of interventions through statistical analysis; this study attempts to develop theory that will guide programs that promote resilience specifically among Hispanic-American male adolescents, a necessary precursor to intervention studies that promote resilience in schools.

Grounded Theory, a type of qualitative analysis, does not predetermine the nature of the inquiry through the *a priori* generation and testing of hypotheses, but rather attempts to generate a great variety of descriptive data that is collated and categorized through *post hoc* analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Of particular interest in this study is the unique experience of Hispanic-American male youth. In qualitative studies, the researcher participates in the interaction with the subjects in a reflective and sensitive manner, both by asking for clarification and expansion similar to semi-structured interviews in clinical practice or the Piagetian *method clinique*, and by recording process notes immediately after the interview. Process notes serve as a

type of data, *per se*, providing the researchers' reflections immediately after the interview. In this instance, the researcher also shares linguistic and cultural commonalities with the subjects, which may add to the expression and understanding of the subjects' perspectives (Creswell, 2003). Of importance in qualitative studies is allowing the data to emerge, free from theoretical constraints that may bias subsequent recognition of emergent themes. Process notes do not necessarily focus on the content of the data, but rather on such things as pragmatics in linguistic constructions, emotional overtones, and respondent emphases, that may not be apparent in subsequent transcriptions; this aids in discerning the underlying context and interrelationships of ideas. In this way the researcher serves as a conduit for a more complete understanding of the respondents' sentiments and beliefs.

Participants

Participants were recruited from a well known urban prep school. Based on information obtained from school administrative records, the school consisted entirely of male students from grades 7 through 12. Sixty-eight percent are African-American, 23 percent are Hispanic, and 9 percent are Caucasian. Students at the high school came from differing social class status, ranging from *working class to poor socioeconomic status*, with 95% qualifying for partial or full tuition assistance. Demographic information, such as age, grade and gender, was obtained through school records and confirmed through the questions on the demographic portion of the interview questionnaire that was administered to the participants.

Participants were selected through a sample of convenience rather than a randomized sample. As the name indicates, a sample of convenience denotes a group of subjects chosen on the basis of ease of access, rather than on their representativeness. Theoretical sampling was employed rather than the more traditional forms of sampling. In this type of sampling subjects

continue to be interviewed until saturation is achieved. Saturation was completed when all of the concepts and constructs were fully developed and all of the categories were fully explored. The participants were selected, based on various exclusionary and inclusionary criteria. Inclusionary criteria consisted of the following: (a) of Hispanic descent, (b) in the junior and senior classes, (c) being listed on the honor role, (d) students in a class rank at or above the 80th percentile, (e) students with an average of 3.0 or above, (f) students identified as “resilient” based on scores from the previously administered Resiliency scale, (g) counselor nominated students. School counselors were queried, independently, to identify students who were qualified as “resilient”, based on their scores on the Resiliency scale, the School Sentiment Index, Rotter’s Locus of Control Scale, and Beck’s Youth Inventory’s self-concept measure.

Other inclusionary criteria included the fact that the participants be considered at-risk. This was determined by eliciting a group of risk factors from which the counselors could select. Students who were selected for inclusion had to meet the criteria selected to be considered “resilient”, which was defined on the basis of having overcome three or more of the following risk factors: (a) single-parent/guardian household, (b) family history of alcohol or substance abuse, (c) personal or family history of criminal/family court involvement, (d) high mobility marked by frequent address or school changes, (e) history of physical or sexual abuse, (f) poverty/SES status, and (g) overcoming initial academic failure. Exclusionary criteria encompassed (a) students who were of non-Hispanic descent, (b) students with averages of less than 3.0, (c) students who had not been listed on the honor role, (d) students who scored below the 80th percentile on school exams, and (e) students who were not selected in counselor nomination lists. Students who did not meet the criteria stipulated above were not considered for inclusion in this study. This is in part due to the nature of the present study, in which the aim is to explore only students that have been successful academically, and perform an in-depth

analysis of the circumstances surrounding their success. Also students who are of non-Hispanic descent were excluded because the aim was to investigate children reared in the Hispanic culture, and raised with the traditions that are unique to Hispanics. In addition, children who had not been exposed to at least three of the risk factors stipulated earlier were not considered for inclusion. In order to be considered “resilient” presupposes that certain obstacles had to be overcome. For this reason if there were no risk factors present then there is no hardship from which to bounce back, thus dismissing the term resilient. As stated previously, the respondents were selected using counselor nominated means.

Procedure

Informed consent was obtained from the interview candidates under the age of 18 by way of an assent form (refer to Appendix A). Consent forms were distributed to the parents of minors, explaining the purpose of the study (refer to Appendix B); the same consent forms used for the parents were distributed to participants ages 18 or older (refer to Appendix B). Participants were interviewed individually in a room in the school counseling center. Consent for using an audiotape recorder was obtained in written form; this was specifically stated within both the consent and assent forms. The audiotape utilized was a high-quality desktop model rated as sensitive to vocal reproduction.

Semi-structured interviews (refer to Appendix C) were conducted individually; the interview length ranged between 07.30 minutes to 53.52 minutes. The responsible investigator compiled process notes on the interviews, simultaneously with the participants’ responses during

the semi-structured interviews. The interviews contained a demographic section. Each interview was transcribed and coded by the responsible investigator and a research assistant.

Confidentiality was maintained by coding each transcription with an assigned, arbitrary identification number, separating personally identifying information. Participants were offered the chance to elect a pseudo name that was used on each interview form to protect their real names. If they declined to choose a pseudo name, one was assigned by the responsible investigator. The consent forms were kept in a separate, locked file in the counseling center. The interview forms, transcriptions and demographic questionnaires contained only pseudo names and an arbitrary identification number. Informed consents and assents were distributed and the participants were told they had the option of withdrawing from the study at any point in time during the course of the interview administration. At the conclusion of the administration of the interviews and questionnaires, all of the participants were debriefed. During the debriefing, the responsible investigator explained to each respondent that the aim of the study in which they had just participated was to elucidate the factors and circumstances that led Hispanic male high school students from inner-city neighborhoods to succeed in school. The questions during the interviews were open-ended, which are considered conducive for eliciting rich and descriptive information from the respondents.

For each participant a review of record was completed. This process consisted of the following steps: (a) selecting students nominated in the school's honor role, (b) review of each student's file verifying GPA, (c) identifying the selected students' scores on the Beck's self-concept index, school sentiment index, resilience scale and Rotter's locus of control.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collected in qualitative studies are reviewed through differing levels of analysis: line-by-line, paragraph level, and holistic analysis. In this study the first level of data collection consisted of transcriptions of the interviews and the process notes of the responsible investigator, made at the time of the interview. This was followed by qualitative analysis, which Strauss & Corbin (1998) describe as “mining the data” using various analytic tools, including open coding, axial coding, selective coding and coding for process. Open coding of the data entails making margin notes on an overview of the interview for comparison purposes, followed by a line-by-line analysis using “memos” that highlight recurring themes and constructs. Memos provide means for further scrutinizing the information obtained from the respondents. These memos serve as the basis for later recorded data and subsequent analyses. At the next level, axial coding, information obtained from the transcripts is organized into categories. The categories were generated, based on the concepts that emerged from the interviews. Each new concept was analyzed and scrutinized for its potential relevance to previous information. Selective coding involves the constructions of paradigms and models that may serve as a basis for theory building. Process coding was drawn from the contemporaneous notes of the responsible investigator, and the data generated by the interviews.

The research method for this study is qualitative in nature; some descriptive data was incorporated as a way of providing explanations for students’ scores from the resilience scale, school sentiment index, locus of control and self concept measures. As previously stated, these scores were obtained from the archives of the counseling center.

A. Research Validation Team

The responsible investigator assembled a group of individuals who formed the members of the research validation team. The research team consisted primarily of doctoral level students with a particular knowledge regarding qualitative analysis. In addition, at least one member of the team was also well versed in the area of multiculturalism, with a particular focus on the Hispanic population. The responsible investigator was responsible for leading the research team meetings and for arranging a meeting that served to discuss the analyses section of the study. During the meeting the research validation team gathered informally to review the findings of the study. The responsible investigator scheduled a follow up meeting with the primary investigator for review of content and process of the team meetings.

Measures

As part of the interview, participants were queried for demographic information, such as age, gender, ethnic/racial background and GPA to confirm the information obtained from the school records. The demographic portion of the interview questionnaire also included some questions about sports or about involvement in other extracurricular activities, and other questions aimed at providing information about the non-academic aspects of their lives at school.

The interview questions were open ended and were used as a means of obtaining information regarding the students' perceptions of their success in school. Overall, the interview questions were designed to obtain information about the circumstances that led the students to succeed academically. In addition, the purpose of the interview questionnaire was also to obtain

information about students' individual characteristics, as well as their school and community environments.

As stated previously, selection of participants was also limited to those students who had already taken part in completing the resiliency scale, Rotter's locus of control scale, school sentiment scale and the Beck self-concept index, previously administered by the guidance counseling office. A description of these measures follows: the resiliency scale was designed for children and adolescents; it is intended to measure the personal attributes of the individual that are considered critical for resiliency. The instrument measures constructs that include a sense of mastery, a sense of relatedness and emotional reactivity. The self-concept scale from the Beck Youth Inventories – II identifies cognitions related to an individual's self worth. The school sentiment index is a self-report measure that is used to assess students' perceptions of school and general attitude toward their teachers, as well as other aspects of school life. Rotter's locus of control scale was designed to measure the degree to which individuals derive their motivation, internally or externally.

Chapter 3

Results

Data Analyses and Interpretation

The method employed for data analysis was based on the grounded theory approach developed by Struass and Corbin (1998). The basic premise is that theory is not developed as an *a priori* concept, but rather that it evolves in conjunction with the research; that is, as data are gathered and analyzed for relevant themes, the theory arises out of the data. The analytic process in this approach involves asking questions and then contrasting the various response patterns, looking for comparable themes. Themes refer to categories that are developed by the investigator that arise directly from the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The categories or themes serve to explicate phenomena. This approach was chosen because it lends itself more closely to the nature of this study. The underlying assumptions were that the data would be composed of responses that were descriptively rich and phenomenological in nature; thus the grounded theory approach would be more suitable as an analytic tool. The assumption was that the theory would be derived from the data and that each response would contribute to answering the research question. Each participant was asked a total of twenty questions, seven of which were demographic; the remaining thirteen were descriptive in nature. The interviews proceeded until saturation was achieved. Theoretical saturation refers to asking questions until no new information is obtained that would otherwise add significantly to the themes that emerged from the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). During each interview the responsible investigator took notes, referred to as “process notes”.

Qualifications and Limitations

Initially there were nineteen participants, twelve of whom were included in the data analyses; seven were excluded, not having met the criteria for inclusion. Three of the seven participants were excluded due to a lack of significant life obstacles. The remaining four were excluded because their cumulative grade point average did not meet the cutoff set forth by the investigators. The reduction in the number of final participants did not compromise the validity of the results, since in qualitative studies theory is developed from data, and each of the resulting interviews produced a rich, descriptive account. Also, the number of participants that were excluded was not disproportional to the number of participants that were included.

Demographic Findings

A total of twelve young men, whose ethnic background was Hispanic, participated in the study. The respondents' ages ranged from 14.7 to 18.0 years of age; the average age was 17. One participant was a 9th grader (freshman); two of the participants were 10th graders (sophomores); four were 11th graders (juniors), and five were 12th graders (seniors) in high school. The students' grade point averages (GPA) ranged from 3.0 to 3.7. The corresponding mean and standard deviation were 3.25 and .246, respectively.

When the students were asked to identify the number of people that resided with them, four students reported that they lived with both parents and one other sibling. One student said he lived with both of his parents, two older siblings and his grandmother. Another student reported living with both parents and four other siblings. Two students said they lived with both parents and three other siblings. Two students reported living with one parent (mother) and one other

sibling. And last, two students reported living with both of their parents, siblings, grandparents, aunt and cousins for a total of eight people in the household.

The parents' education levels fell into several categories, (see Table 1, Appendix D) ranging from those who completed a GED to attending graduate school. All of the participants were or had been in the honor roll, ranging from a period of three quarters up to twelve quarters. When the participants were asked about household incomes, some of them could not report it because they were not sure; most of them did, however, report their parents' income. Several categories were identified (see Table 2, Appendix D), ranging from a \$10,000 annual income to \$130,000. One student reported earnings of 10,000; five reported earnings from between \$31,000 and \$50,000; a total of two reported income between \$91,000 and \$130,000; the remaining four students did not know the income level.

The pool of participants were given a set of scales (Resiliency scale (RS), School Sentiment Index (SSI), Rotter's Locus of Control Scale (RLC), and Beck's Youth Inventory's Self-Concept measure (BSC) for concurrent validity purposes; they had been identified as being potentially resilient by their school counselors.

On Beck's self-concept measure (BSC), half of the twelve participants scored within the average range ($t \geq 55$), and the other half scored above average ($t = 45-55$). On Rotter's locus of control scale (RLC) more than half, a total of nine students, obtained a low score (internal locus of control), and the remaining four participants received a high score (external locus of control). On the Resiliency scale (RS) most of the participants scored high on the scale (highly resilient), and a total of two obtained low scores (less resilient). Last, on the School Sentiment index (SSI), half of the participants scored within the low range (high regard for school), and the other half scored in the high range (low regard for school).

Participants with an external locus of control were found to have a more positive self concept. Participants with a positive self-concept were more likely to describe themselves as resilient.

Descriptive Findings

There were a total of twenty questions, seven of which were demographic in nature; the remaining twelve were descriptive, open ended questions. The questions were designed as open ended to obtain as much information as possible from the respondents. When necessary, the question was restated to improve understanding. The primary investigator and a research assistant conducted the interviews over a two month period. Interviews ranged in length from 07.30 minutes to 53.52 minutes, with the average interview being 30.16 minutes. Usually, the respondents were eager to tell their stories of success and obstacles. Both the primary investigator and the research assistant were clinicians with extensive training in interviewing methods; this helped to instill trustworthiness, which in turn, assisted in obtaining rich and elaborate responses.

Extra-curricular Activities

When the students were asked about participating in extra-curricular activities and whether or not this had any influence on them, they expressed the ideas that participation in extracurricular activities allowed them to build character, develop leadership skills and provided a sense of belonging. This latter feature allowed them to feel as if they were part of a group of people with a common goal and provided a means to develop socialization skills. Taking part in

these activities also taught the students about the dynamics of being a team player, which meant that instead of looking out for oneself, they learned how their behavior on the field can impact the whole team. This in turn aided in building responsibility and commitment because they did not want to let their team down. By being committed to the sport, they also became committed to school work.

As Dominic stated:

...since I joined track it's more like a commitment. Since I went to practice everyday, the teachers saw that I was committed to track and I was doing better in school in terms of grade wise, which helped me out a lot.

Thomas reported:

I wasn't very good at committing to things. If I do this something else comes up that interests me more, I would do that rather than that. ...and it really helped me; I knew what a team is ideally but I didn't experience it until I got to the wrestling team. If you are not there you let everyone else down.

Juan said:

Being part of this program outside of school it's like an ROTC military program. I am a leader in that program; it's helped me a lot because it makes me have to always set an example. I always do the right thing over there because I am the one that they are following.

Athletic Program

Because the school which the students attended has a strong athletic program, it was important to explore the impact it may have had on the students' academic successes; several

categories were identified. The respondents agreed that the school's athletic program helped them build character. The athletic component makes certain demands upon the students, which in the process, allows them to become more assertive and disciplined. Both the coaches, teachers and administrators contribute to making sure the students comply with attending practice and games. In the student's words:

This is a good place to build character and just improve oneself.

The respondents also stated that the athletic program helped them learn about commitment. The school has placed unequivocal importance to the athletic program. Often students go on to college by earning scholarships based on their athletic performance. In particular, basketball is their strongest sport. Hence a lot of effort goes into ensuring the reputation of the athletic program; coaches, teachers and administrators are dedicated to the continued success of the program. In the same vein, the students are required to invest a lot of time and effort because this helps maintain the program's reputation. During this process the students learn the sacrifices one makes when a person is committed to a goal. A student reports:

I was not committed before I started at this school. I would start a project and soon after drop it for something else that would catch my interest. The athletic program here helped me to learn what being in a team is all about; the experience solidified for me when I joined the wrestling team, because if you are not there you let everyone else down. I learned commitment through participation in the wrestling team.

Through the athletic program the students also learned about responsibility and teamwork. The school staff, in particular coaches, demand that the students must show up for practice, be adequately prepared for games and competitions and cover for other teammates

when necessary. Being part of a strong athletic program teaches them the dynamics of being in a team and to take responsibility for their performances. A student reported:

The athletic program helps me be part of a team and look for the greater good, instead of worrying about myself.

Religiosity/Spirituality Factors

Prayer and faith in God were identified as important factors that led to their academic success. Often respondents did not report that they were actively practicing any religion in particular, despite the fact that most of them were raised in families in which religion was highly valued. What they did report was that they believed in a Higher Being, something bigger than themselves, and that this belief provided hope and faith. Others reported that the school had helped them become more religious and they often used prayer to help them when in need. In Robert's own words:

I have to look up to God to help me down here in school. When I pray to God, sometimes it, what I ask for I get. For example, last quarter, I was messing up in Spanish -again I am Spanish-that's crazy. (laughs) I had a B minus and I prayed to God to help me out in Spanish, even though that's my native tongue. I asked Him to help me out and I got an A third quarter. So now I know He listened to me and I know that He responded so, cause I got an A and I know that he helped me out in studying and all other aspects.

In Albert's own words:

Being Puerto Rican we got the candles and we read the cards; with me it's always you pray before you to sleep; you wake up and you thank God for another day. My father is

disabled so every day we are thankful to God for keeping him alive because there was a time my father wanted to die; my mom told me to keep praying and I did not know how it really was, but as you grow older you realize how much it is to have somebody to pray for, so it's real important for me.

In Anthony's own words:

Since I started attending this school, I have more beliefs now; I pray for a lot more things. I have faith in God; if something is not going my way I just wait and see.

Thomas reported:

As I started to go to church a lot more, and praying and talking about God, I guess I got more serious with my work.

There was a strong sense of religious values instilled through family. Traditionally, Hispanic families are known for being religious; the respondents identified family religious values as being one of the factors that led to their success in school. Parents in Hispanic families encourage their children to pray and often they hold strong beliefs that through faith one can fulfill accomplishments, wants and desires. They instill in their children the fear of God and the importance of living in faith. In Carlos's own words:

Well my parents being from Hispanic descent, we are all really religious; my mom used to tell us every day that we have to pray, and my mom told us God is not going to do it for you but he gives you the strength to do it. So I always thought that I always had God

helping me succeed in school, but I always had to put in the effort myself, so I always see religion as a kind of moral support.

The Influence of Mentors

We asked the students if there were any mentors that influenced them. The major themes that emerged from this question were the role that school staff played in the participants' academic successes as well as the influence of family members. The respondents identified school staff, such as school counselors, coaches, teachers and administrators alike as being influential in their success in school. School counselors in particular were instrumental because they became 'father figures' for the young men whose fathers were missing from their lives. Administrators such as the head master were viewed as a life coach. Teachers' and coaches' contributions to the participants' academic success revolved around having high expectations for the students. Dominic's statement about the school's headmaster:

He kind of opened my eyes in telling me, like the teachers don't really want me here. I always thought I wasn't that bad (laughs); he kind of took me aside and told me, like I was really a bad student, like things I didn't notice like being disrespectful; then he would tell me about it, and then I would notice it. I mean pretty much like telling me, like showing me what I was doing wrong and like I was pretty much denying it.

Peter stated the following about the school counselor:

I talk to my guidance counselor about my problems and I get it off my chest. It helps to relieve my stress. It helps me concentrate on my school work.

Gerald stated the following about his coach:

During my freshman year my captain/coach helped me. I also built a good relationship with one of the teachers, who is also a house parent in the dorm.

Anthony reported the following about his teacher:

At the beginning of my senior year I wasn't doing too well in one of my classes and I went to my teacher (Mr. Carnahan). I wanted to drop the class; he told me to try harder because he struggled when he was a child with the same course and he just told me to stick there and work harder and I got a higher grade the second quarter.

Thomas stated the following:

The main person who I consider to be my mentor would be Abbot Melvin Balbano, the school's president and the head of the monastery, I actually consider him my spiritual director now. ..he helped fill my vocabulary..., we'll have very intellectual and spiritual conversations...I always saw myself as being sort of not an educator in the sense where I would teach you the information from the book...but more of an educator in life...so he kind of inspired me to be an educator in life.

Traditionally, Hispanics tend to hold strong ties within the family structure by keeping everyone both in the immediate and in the extended family together. Often times aunts, grandparents, cousins and other extended family members reside in the household and may serve as additional support to the children by assuming mentorship roles or simply by providing guidance. In addition, fathers are perceived as the strong and knowledgeable person and tend to

be more directive in their parenting styles. Fathers often take their sons to work or demonstrate manual labor by involving them in the process. Supportive families were described as a significant influence on the respondents' success in school. Santiago reported:

My father is my role model...he is a hard working guy...born and raised in Colombia...he did not have his father. He is a strong guy and I look up to him for that. He is the one that has been training me since I was three years old...soccer, and has been teaching me anything he has learned. He pushes me to the limit.

Life's Obstacles

When the students were asked to describe any significant obstacles affecting academic performance and their ability to succeed, the majority of the responses fell into three categories; *family discord, family disability (mental and physical) and lack of father figure*. There was evidence of significant marital discord and family turmoil. Parents' arguments and disagreements posed significant chaos for some of the students. Some of them witnessed abuse or were the victim of abuse and it aroused a sense of not wanting the same for themselves. Family disability had an effect at many levels, one of which was financial. For one of the students, the parents' inability to work led to the student resorting to stealing behaviors. The effect of these was present both personally and academically. The lack of a father figure was quite prevalent among these boys. For most, there was no father in the home, which meant no one to guide them and no one to look up to. This led to feelings of alienation and disorientation. Carlos reported:

When I was four or five years old ...my parents' relationship was really rocky, constant fighting...my mom and little sister would lock themselves up in the room; my dad would

go to his sister's house. I had no one to soothe me...so I really felt alone and discouraged and I didn't know what to do...I found comfort knowing when I grew up I want to succeed in life so I wouldn't have to go through this. I think the problems were due to money...if I study, when I grew up I wouldn't have to deal with this.

For the category, family disability, students identified family depression and physical disability as significant obstacles, which affected them both personally and academically. The impact of family disability was evident in the way the students described having to live with disabled parents; this affected them financially, emotionally and consequently, academically. One student whose parents were both deaf/mute described how his father became abusive toward him and his brother; his mother became an alcoholic as a result of financial constraints which resulted from their disabilities. Another student reported that his mother had a history of depression; as a result, his fear of having depression himself overwhelmed him, because he witnessed the detrimental effects it had on his mother. Family displacement was also identified as a major obstacle. One student stated that despite having to forego comfortable living arrangements and having to endure living under physically limiting conditions, he persevered in his studies and did not allow the inconveniences surrounding him to interfere with his desire to succeed academically. Anthony reported:

When I was eight years old my mom was pregnant with my little brother and we lived in a nice house. When my mom couldn't afford the rent we went to live with my grandmother where my mom, brother, sister and myself had to live in one room for eight years... I had to wait until everyone went to sleep to do my homework.

Cultural Factors

The impact of culture was examined because it can have significant effects for multi-ethnic background groups. Some of the participants had been born and raised in the United States, and others were immigrants, but had been residing in the US for many years. However, all of the participant's parents were immigrants, giving the students first generation status in the US. The question on culture was aimed at discovering the culture with which the students most closely identified. The students agreed that they had a tendency to identify with both cultures; that is, American culture and their ethnic culture, pulling aspects of each that would prove beneficial according to the situation. They expressed a strong preference to stay committed to their family roots and to remain loyal to cultural traditions and especially to family values. As one respondent commented,

Hispanics are more ethical and sharing than Americans who seem more selfish.

However, some conflict was evident as he stated that although he preferred the moral values of Hispanics, he still wanted to identify with the mainstream culture.

Single Gender School

The school which the participants attended is an all male school; therefore, the impact of attending a single gender school was examined. The respondents agreed almost unanimously that attending an all boys school helped to minimize distraction, which, in turn, helped them to stay focused on academics. They described the fact that not having to impress girls was helpful because they could act like themselves instead of pretending to be someone else, which would also take the focus away from school. As Robert stated:

... and my grades, I know they are impacted by that because it's less distractions and like I don't try to make myself look good for anybody. I just come in do my stuff and leave.

Juan stated:

...I believe I am more focused...if I went to co-ed school I would be worried about trying to impress the opposite sex or dressing more...I wouldn't be focused on my work... if I want to impress somebody I just tell them I have a 3.3 GPA.

The Impact of Machismo

Machismo has traditionally been a phenomenon present in families of Hispanic origin, particularly exhibited by males in the family. The common definition of machismo is the pattern of behaviors displayed by the alpha male, in which the male is in control and the women are accepting of the idea that the men are the heads of households, thereby taking a step back. Because all of our respondents were males from Hispanic families, we wanted to see what role, if any, machismo played in their lives and in particular in their success in school. For most students machismo represented toughness and being proud and cocky. They agreed for the most part that machismo did not play a role in their lives and that although they had encountered others who try to act tough and cocky, this did not affect them in any significant way or influenced their ability to succeed academically.

Personal Characteristics

The students were asked to describe themselves by providing their own perceptions of personal traits and characteristics. For this question there were several recurrent themes that were shared by all of the participants. The top categories that resulted were: *leadership, determination,*

dependability, being a fun person and generosity and kindness, and reserved. A leader was described as someone who continually pushes forward and becomes a role model for others to follow. Determinism refers to being goal oriented and remaining steadfast in one's endeavors. Persistence was another qualifier for being determined. They persevered in the chosen tasks and did not give up or change directions, but instead followed through on tasks and projects. Dependability was described as being someone that was reliable and someone on whom others could count. Many described being a fun person as someone who wants to make other people laugh and feel good and who does not take himself or herself too seriously. Being kind and generous referred to acting like a good person who can empathize with others. Being reserved refers to keeping to oneself mostly. As Gilbert stated:

I am really a shy person, really intimate. I am not a really social person. I like keeping to myself most of the time.

Gerald reported:

I'd say that at school I am pretty low key, pretty quiet. Depending on the situation I am most likely the person to be instead and running his mouth I would be observing instead.

Leadership characteristics were closely tied in with sport participation. Because almost all of the respondents were part of some sort of sports team, sports played a significant role in helping some of these leadership qualities unravel. Albert stated:

...through baseball I've been a captain leader...in many teams I've won awards for MVP being captain of the baseball team, and I am always trying to like help kids

on my team so like a leader would be one thing another one would be like the 'go to' guy like when you have a problem, like when Lamourt was there to talk to me and stuff, it just showed me that I am not the only one with problems and I want to help others too so when I go home when my baseball team is getting kicked, I am like you need someone to talk to I am right here for you, like the 'go to' guy.

Carlos reported:

A lot of people see me here as future CEO some place; everybody just as the years went by people saw I was doing good at school, something good, actually I get respect for that now, whereas before how people make fun of you; oh you are a bookworm or whatever but now I really get a lot of respect for that. A lot of people see me as a leader, as intelligent or an inspiration to them. A lot of my close friends are not have as much success as I have had in school; yeah my friends said that he would like to apply to the same schools to be there with me; he finds an inspiration.

Peter stated:

A leader, pushes forward, doesn't stop moving. Basically someone who has aspirations in life and can be a role model, someone who will become something big in the future and doesn't let things in the past get in the way. Juan said:

I am a leader in this school.

On determination Manny reported:

my ego basically, if I want something I am going to go and get it; my potential, those are my skills.

Dominic stated:

smart, determined...like a person who turns around like changes, like I don't know how to say it like a turnaround person.

On dependability Anthony responded:

I am a brother, a son trying to do good always trying to help my mom out, someone who is helpful at home trying to help my little brother and sister to get to where I am now.

Juan said:

I am someone who is relied on cause I do attendance; there's people who rely on me to do it right. I am what my mother really kind of relies on to watch my little sister. I am always there for friends; it's the way I came up.

On commitment Anthony said:

I am strong because if someone says I can't do something that makes me want to do it even more, trying to prove them wrong. I think I am not a quitter. If I commit to something I try to stay committed not try to run away from it or stop and try something else. I always try to finish something that I start.

For sense of humor, Anthony stated:

At school I am kind of the fun person who wants to make everyone's day better by putting a smile on your face. I wish I can make everyone's day better, make someone laugh. I am the class clown. As long as you make people laugh.

Albert reported:

...and fun. Never like being dull or dull moments.

About generosity and kindness, Thomas reported:

I have a very kind heart. I am a sucker for homeless people. If I see them and I have money, I'll give it to them.

Gilbert stated:

...and I consider myself to be a really, you know, kind hearted good person also.

Dominic said:

I am a good child.

Success Factors

The students were asked to describe what they attributed their academic success to; this was asked in order to obtain their own perceptions on the factors that allowed them to become high achievers. The success factors were classified under two separate categories that fell into *external factors* and *internal factors*. The categories that emerged under external factors were: *school characteristics, family, school staff and external motivation*. The characteristics of this school were considered contributory to the respondents' success because it is an 'all boys' school. The participants reported having fewer distractions in this school, thereby being able to focus on their studies. The role of family was described in terms of the value family members assigned to education. Most parents were not educated themselves, but were invested in ensuring

their children seized the opportunities afforded to them. They remained actively involved by having their children stay on top of their homework assignments and demonstrated pride when the students obtained honor roll status. School staff was instrumental in terms of providing guidance and demonstrating care toward the students. The value that school staff added to the students' success was indistinguishable from typical schools because the staff here was personally invested in their wellbeing and academic success. External motivation referred to receiving rewards for making honor roll. The students that made honor roll were given the opportunity to see the Harry Potter premier movie among other prizes; this provided the students with incentive and motivation to stay on the honor roll track. Anthony stated:

mmmm...at first when I was here in my freshman year they would give prizes to those guys who did good, actually the actual first quarter I was here I got an honor roll and they brought us to see the Harry Potter premier movie or something and I saw after that my whole freshman year the prizes would come with success then after the freshman year, they just stopped and I began to do it for myself because all the guys would tell me that at the end it matters for getting into college so I tried to do better.

Thomas reported:

I was going to school twice per week until I joined wrestling. And when I joined wrestling I still had some disciplinary problems. Like we had wrestling practice and I made honor roll actually. No, I remember that I made honor roll because my freshman year, we went to go see Harry Potter. It was a special screening before it came out in the United States. How could I forget this! I made honor roll and I

decided to go to the movie theater, you know, in New York rather than you know going to wrestling practice. I didn't like the coach number one, and I didn't like working out. I was very lazy then.

On the role the school played Robert stated:

It's an all guys' school, there's less distractions, more time for you to study, more more (pause) I don't know how to say it, more people that you can just be yourself around, sometimes.

On the role family played Manny reported:

my mom...she hasn't guided me but like she's always been there trying to help me. She has no clue what's going on, but she is trying. Just having me in honor roll and getting certificates makes her happy, and I like that. I like to see my mom happy, not mad at me.

Carlos stated:

I think my mother, for school, she was always pressuring me about homework and grades for studying, ever since I was a little kid. I remember when I was in Ecuador, you ate and you went straight up to do your homework. I think in Ecuador it's more of a friendly community there because all of the kids would just want to go down to the field and play around, but my mom wouldn't let us until we finished our homework. My mother helped us to establish our priorities.

Dominic said,

...probably my dad. My dad helped me like with the studies and stuff like that...he stepped in cause like when he had to meet Father Ed, my dad like he just told me that he is going to take over and help me do better.

Santiago said,

my parents, they are working hard, be smart about what you do with time management.

About school staff, Dominic reported,

I think by asking for help, like going to look for people, which I didn't do at first. I mean like the only reason why I got help was cuz like I was in a jam so basically I pretty much got lucky and they started helping me to get my grades better.

Thomas stated,

...I had the, I guess, the necessary resources such as the teachers, staff and administrators here that really cared about me. A great example is when I came here in the eighth grade, I did not go to school; my parents are deaf so like I would use that as an excuse ...when I did not feel like going I waited for my parents to leave and then I stayed home. They were going to work and thought I left for school, but no. And one time father Balbano sent father Ed to my house to come get me. I saw them; they banged on the door and I just ignored them...but you know that

shows that they cared because in any other school you wouldn't have teachers and administrators coming to your house to pick you up.

Gilbert said,

...counseling has helped me. I had teachers and friends who kept telling me...good things about myself, ... I had teachers that said I was bright, even though I didn't really believe it myself. But they really strongly believed I was talented, that I was bright, and they were always there. The problem I had in school was that the depression didn't allow me to do some of the things I had to get done, but with people behind me, it just helped me a lot to do better.

Gerald reported,

definitely when I'm doing as well as I am supposed to be he (my counselor) is one of the guys that is beating me up for it, sometimes literally. He is not the only one but he is one of the major ones, especially since he lives with me, (dorm) when he is passing through report cards and sees me, like the last quarter he is going to come after me.

The categories under internal factors were described as, *determination, intelligence and defeating stereotypes*. These variables fell under this category because they are traits that are found primarily within the individual. Although the environment does play a role in determining factors such as determination and intelligence, individual genes play at least an equally important role. Defeating stereotypes refers to countering the image that Hispanics have come to represent: a group of individuals who are lazy and uneducated. Often, Hispanics and especially recent

immigrants, find themselves being hired for menial work, e.g., working as janitors. The students expressed a fervent desire to overcome filling in this stereotype and becoming just another statistic. Manny reported:

...guess like growing up and seeing all the people not doing as good as they could.

I want to be different. I think I can get to the top. Peter stated:

...so I see that I could move forward, prove everyone wrong that coming from the ghetto doesn't always lead to failure, like there is hope.

Determination was described as hard work and pushing through in whatever activity the students were involved, whether it be school work or organized sports. The students reported that the combination of having a vision of becoming who and what they wanted to be and having supportive family helped them work harder. More importantly in contributing to determination was the role family members played. It appeared that family members instilled the importance of working hard in order to obtain what they wanted. As Robert stated:

my determination, I was told by my parents that if I get good grades I'd have a prosperous future and I know that is true now, like cause they've been telling me this since I was six or something. So they're like get your education, do good in school and you'll be rewarded for that. And I've seen people who have done good in school and gotten into good colleges and make a good living and that is what I am trying to aim for.

Albert reported:

just hard work and determination and wanting to go to college. I always wanted to go to the college of New Jersey...but with baseball and academics you always have to work hard cuz if you don't, my father always told me, there's always going to be somebody out there who is working harder.

The students identified *intelligence* as a factor that helped them succeed academically. They considered themselves to be intelligent and capable enough to do well in school related activities. Of greater importance, they did not feel as if they had to expend as much mental energy in performing the work required; instead, it seemed to come naturally to them. They also had the confidence that they knew they were smart, deriving this attribute internally allowed them always to have access to it. As Juan stated:

...in this school you just pay attention a little bit and things click for me I don't do algebra, I really don't do my homework cuz I listen in class I understand it. I get it for some reason; mentally things just click for me things make sense, there's a reason why we learn stuff back in the day, because it makes sense now...if I put in some effort teachers have told me I would have a 4.00 GPA.

Peter reported:

...knowing that my family members are skilled, he was always looked down at friends that were 'good'...he could get a lot of potential, I see that in me.

Personal Difficulties

As a way to complement the question on ‘obstacles’ the students were asked to describe any additional difficulties they had in life. The rationale for this question was twofold; one was to elucidate any other factors that may not have come up in the previous question on ‘obstacles’ and second, to ensure that saturation was achieved in this area, which is considered a precursor to resilience. In other words, in order to be considered ‘resilient’ one must, beforehand, have undergone significant obstacles in life. There was considerable overlap among the responses, leading to several similar categories; this also occurred in the question on obstacles. The most salient themes that were shared on the responses to both questions, and were recurrent across the board were the lack of a father figure and parental abuse. The students described feeling the need for a father intensify as they got older, primarily because of not having a father to talk to about male issues or their aspirations. The lack of guidance from a father resonated more seriously when the students would witness other boys who did have a father present in their lives. One student described being affected to the point that it drove him to associate himself with negative peers. This, in turn, led him to be expelled from school. He also displayed some behavior problems as a result. Peter reported:

At the beginning of my sophomore year I started being sensitive since I didn’t really talk to my dad much...my mom was there...but I wanted a guy to talk to, men stuff. I wanted a father figure there. I’d go to the boys but they just joke around...I wanted a dad...I was looking for people to talk to.

Manny stated:

...other kids get to see their fathers; they have guidance which you know is cumulative that I'm not going to have...I don't have a father to tell me if I wanted to go to college and have the doors open, to start doing well in freshman year. I had to realize that for myself and fail and learn from my mistakes. That's what dragged me down.

The students reported experiencing either physical and/or emotional abuse from a parent as a major difficulty to overcome. One student reported that he was involved in playing baseball and as a result of an incident in which he suffered a physical blow from his father, he had to stay in the hospital and consequently could not continue to play baseball. He describes: "that hurt because I really wanted to play baseball and I knew I was going to make the cut." The incident also prevented him from taking an opportunity to work for the school's 'five-twenty' program which required pushing around big machinery. In addition, he could not join the spring polo team due to the injury. Another student, whose parents were disabled, described his father as being angry all the time and hitting him for what appeared to be no reason; his mother was described as an alcoholic who would act irresponsibly at times and who attempted to commit suicide. Another student described witnessing his father batter his mother and then abandoning them when he was seven years old; he stated: "My father showed me a lot of bad things." As a result he did not want to be like his father and that was his motivation for being a better person than his father was. After his father left he was taken away by child protective services as a result of his mother's beating; he was able to return to her within a year.

Impact of Hispanic Culture

Last, the researcher wanted to explore whether or not culture played a role in the participants' academic success. Of particular interest was the role that Hispanic culture may have had on their willingness to do well in school. The categories that emerged were: fluency in another language (Spanish), defeating stereotypes, heeding opportunities, role models, advancement of race, minority scholarships, supportive family, and family instilled values (work ethic and determination). This last theme is one that surfaced earlier concerning the question on factors that led to success. It refers to teaching a strong work ethic through hard work and perseverance. Hispanic families were described as being 'tight' families who love and support their children. This love and support was perceived as a factor that helped in their academic success. As Gerald stated:

Hispanic families have issues and emotional problems and stuff like that but they are definitely tight families; they are strong and supportive of each other. They are very loving. As crazy as I know some of my family is, I know they love me to death for sure. Sometimes I get really angry at my mom for some of the things she says or does, but I know it's because she really does love me...so it's one of the strongest things about growing up in a Hispanic family. He adds:
my dad definitely put my work ethic, my determination; he taught me not only by watching him and knowing the things he does, but by actually really teaching, like this is how you do things around here, from literal construction type work, to business type work, to interviews; all of that he taught me.

Having the opportunity to be awarded scholarship based on the status of being a minority was identified as an important contribution related to being Hispanic. As Juan stated:

Being Hispanic has helped me a lot in terms of being a minority, it financially helped me with scholarships and stuff being in certain programs that try to help Hispanics...there were positives being Puerto Rican.

Being able to advance their 'race' was described as important. They saw themselves as the 'bridge' that could close the gap between those family members who came before them. As Juan reported:

My family is all Puerto Rican; we didn't come from a fruitful place we came from a lot of hard times that self-consciously always drove me a little bit to always want to be better and help my family get them out of where they are, makes me want to do better cause I want to be better than my past but also help the people who came before me like my grandma and my aunts that live in Puerto Rico; they are not living in a great place but I know I can help them if I do better.

On role models, Thomas stated:

I don't have many people that I can look up to in my family...but my aunt, my mom's sister-like my grandmother had thirteen kids and most of them died because of drugs, alcohol, you know alcoholism...not really a lot of good examples over there. But you know my aunt she had to drop out of high school she can...earn money...make money for the family to support because she came into

the United States with her and my mom...but now she has her cosmetologist license and she owns her own shop.

The students described 'heeding the opportunities' as tied in with being a member of a minority group and taking advantage of minority grants and scholarships. In addition, they stressed the importance of taking advantage of the opportunities that their parents and relatives did not have. As Carlos stated:

A lot of people go out and party, relax, don't come to school, skip classes, a lot of people over there in Ecuador are really hard working and don't have those opportunities, so I see a lot of Hispanic people who don't take the opportunities that we really have, and see Hispanic people who are also minority here, and being a Hispanic who does well will give me recognition and also a lot of self-interest.

Manny reported:

Probably knowing where my family came from, my mom grew up over there and it was different over there than here; she me stories; she only got to high school. She didn't have a clue what to do...I just learned from that, from other people's mistakes, not mistakes but just realized the opportunity I have she didn't have.

Juan said:

Being Hispanic has helped me a lot in terms of being a minority; it financially helped me with scholarships...being in certain programs that try to help Hispanics. I was able to be a part of that there were positives being Puerto Rican.

The students described wanting to overcome the perception that other people have of Hispanics who can be thought of as ‘dumb’. They did not want to fall into that category and become another statistic. Some were encouraged by experiencing racism, yet others persevered through having downfalls. Yet others just wanted to prove the world wrong and show people how not every Hispanic has to fall into the statistic. As Dominic stated:

In general, Puerto Ricans don't do good successfully and I guess like for me if I do good in school then I stand out more, which kind of helps me out. That's probably the only thing that I stand out more if I do better in school; the people would notice me more.

Gilbert said:

That influenced me a lot to my success because being Puerto Rican –well Hispanic, in general, helped me because I usually heard all these statistics about that this percent don't graduate from high school and all these things...I didn't like that applying to me because like I thought I don't want to be part of that statistic. I want to be different than that so that actually influenced me.

Albert reported:

I guess stereotypes is one of them. There's always people that are like well you are going to go to school bit after that they say you are gonna be a janitor or something; you're gonna be cleaning...I guess with me I fell into the stereotype when I started stealing and people star making jokes about you but then I realized

that Mr. Lamourt and father Ed and my parents told me that's not who you really are, so let's fix it; it shows you how to be better...Puerto Ricans, a lot of them, are janitors trying to make money; you always try to be better so you can put a better name on the Puerto Rican race.

Robert stated:

People say that Hispanics are dumb. People have said that to me before. All we're good for is manual labor. And I want to prove them wrong. People call me 'spic' sometimes; people call me illegal, go back to where you came from-swing back where you came from and I want to prove them wrong; I want to show them that Hispanic males, females, Hispanics in general, Latinos they can be more than just farm workers; they can be more than just manual labor, and not all of them are illegal...I am a minority and I am not the richest person in the world but I can still get good grades and compete with the richest people in the world.

The ability to be fluent in Spanish was considered valuable because it allows them to converse with others in that language and there was importance attributed to having a thorough knowledge of another language. Santiago stated:

Being versatile-Spanish comes easier now. In school being able to converse with other people with knowledge you know. Speaking another language is good for knowledge and good for all around good thing to have this kind of background to help you.

Chapter 4

Discussion

Introduction

The research question for this study involved exploring and describing the personal attributes and home/school/community factors that are expressed in academically successful Hispanic inner-city male youth. Because this was primarily a qualitative study, the researcher did not set out to test an *a priori* hypothesis; instead, the idea was to gather rich descriptions through the use of open-ended questions about the factors that led the participants to be academically successful, despite the impending obstacles they encountered. This approach for studying resilience has received support from other researchers in this area (Luthar, Cichetti, & Becker, 2000; Luthar & Brown, 2007), who maintain that a qualitative approach may prove more informative than quantitative methods that presuppose a set of hypotheses. In this study, theory was derived from the data; the resulting data were then used to guide and inform theoretical constructs.

When studying resilience, the focus has generally been on identifying risk and protective factors in isolation. This method may lack the ingredients required to get a better understanding of the interaction that exists between the individual and his or her environment, and the manner in which they contribute to resilience. This study differed from past studies in resilience because it seeks to understand the specific interactions between the environment and individual characteristics that form the basis for fostering resilience. The focus was to take a close look at

the factors at play within the naturally occurring context of the school attended by the students and the communities in which they live.

Summary of the Results

The areas that were contributory to academic resilience included, being involved in extra-curricular activities and participation in sports, both of which helped to create character and build responsibility in the students. Also, holding religious/spiritual values and having mentors were influential, because they provided a sense of hope for the future and afforded the students with support through life's obstacles and school performance. In addition, culture played an important role in acquiring resilience because the students embraced the values of society at large, yet maintained the traditions and preserved their ethnic culture's roots. Machismo did not play a significant role in developing academic resilience; however, attending a single-gender school did have a positive and significant influence in their ability to succeed in school, because it minimized distractions and facilitated concentration. Furthermore, the participants reported a number of life obstacles and personal difficulties they had encountered, which had a substantial impact on their ability to succeed and brought into play coping mechanisms. The participants reported on their individual characteristics, and on their perception of the reason(s) for attaining their academic success.

Extra-curricular Activities and the Athletic Program

Most of the students reported that they were involved in extracurricular activities both in school and outside in their communities. Some reported that they get involved in helping out

through their churches, and others were part of programs offered to youth through community organizations. Through participation in extracurricular activities, the students achieved a sense of belonging, learned to be team players, built character and developed a sense of responsibility and commitment, which in turn helped them to be more committed to school work. The role that the school's athletic program played was significant in terms of helping the students build character, learn about commitment and responsibility, and become team players. At a time when these adolescents are undergoing identity issues and trying to figure out who they are, a strongly founded program such as this one helps them discover their inner strengths.

Religion/Spirituality and the Role of Mentors

Most students reported that they believed in a Higher Being, and it was this belief that rendered religion/spirituality significant for achieving their goals. Mentorship was important in helping the students succeed through difficult times. Mentors included coaches, teachers, guidance counselors, school administrators, and parents. The mentors' roles took the form of advising and direct teaching for the students during times when they faced difficult situations. The obstacles that the participants described fell into three categories, family discord, family disability and lack of father figure. Family discord included divorce, marital conflict and abuse. Family disability included both physical and psychological difficulties and last, the lack of father figure meant the fathers were missing from the students' lives or they had little contact with them. The most significant effect of lacking a father was the feeling of alienation and lack of guidance it aroused in the students.

The Role of Culture

The students stated that they identified with both cultures, and they expressed a strong desire to preserve their ethnic cultural roots, by participating in traditional family events, listening to music and eating ethnic foods. However, the desire to ‘fit in’ with the mainstream culture was quite prevalent among the responders.

Single-Gender School and Machismo

For most students, attending an all male school helped them concentrate on school work by eliminating the distraction associated with trying to impress members of the opposite sex. Some described being involved in romantic relationships as being time consuming and they were glad to be in a non co-ed school setting. Others also reported that wearing a uniform combined with no girls in school was beneficial because it eliminated the need to ‘dress to impress.’

Machismo did not seem to have played a major role in the students’ abilities to succeed academically. They expressed the ideas that although they knew others who tried to act cocky and tough, it did not reflect who they were, nor did they have a desire to act ‘macho.’

Personal Characteristics

The most salient personal quality identified by the participants was leadership. Being a leader in their school, in sports activities, in community programs and in working was a prevalent feature that was both valued and practiced by the students. They consider themselves to be leaders and role models to whom others looked up and they were proud to uphold their

roles as leaders. Another salient quality was dependability. These students regarded themselves as being dependable, meaning that others could count on them to perform what was expected of them. This was seen across their roles in the family, such as helping their mothers with younger siblings or performing chores around the house. At school their teachers and coaches could depend on them to assume their responsibilities and even excelling on the playing field, and teachers counted on the students to assume various responsibilities in the classroom.

Determinism was also highly valued and practiced. These students were determined to see projects through to completion; they did not give up or change paths half way; instead, they persevered in any given endeavor to accomplish a goal. They were internally driven and had an "internal locus of control", which meant that their motivation to complete tasks came from within themselves, and they appeared to derive great satisfaction from their accomplishments.

Many of the students described how, in the beginning of their freshman year, the school staff would offer rewards for those who excelled; one such reward was the opportunity to see a premier of the movie 'Harry Potter' before it appeared in national theaters. This proved to be a great incentive for the students and after they received awards such as these, they began to perform well on their own without the expectation of obtaining an external reward. Generosity was another prevalent trait found in the participants. Being kind and helpful toward others was given high significance. In essence the students described themselves as being a "good person", which meant being sympathetic toward others and exercising perspective taking. Being reserved was a common trait among the respondents. They expressed the idea that, primarily, they liked to keep to themselves and do their work quietly. Last, having a sense of humor and 'being fun' was a salient trait found among the students.

Obstacles and Difficulties

Difficulties and obstacles involved many of the same categories; these included parental abuse, lack of a father figure, family disability and family discord. The family background factors that were identified as having a significant contribution to the students' academic success were defeating stereotypes and heeding opportunities (minority scholarships).

Summary of the Scales Results

In addition to the open-ended interview questions, the participants' scores on previously administered scales, which included Rotter's locus of control, resilience scale, school sentiment index and Beck's self concept measure, were also examined. A quantitative approach was used in this instance; the scores were analyzed for correlational trends. In addition, the scores obtained on the resilience scale were analyzed to ensure that all of the participants were identified as being resilient.

Quantitative analyses of data were not possible due to the small sample size. Examining trends in the data revealed the following: participants who exhibited an external locus of control had a higher regard for school, as was evident on their positive responses on the School Sentiment Index. School played a more crucial role for students who derived their motivation from external sources. By contrast, those who showed an internal locus of control seemed to have a higher self-concept, and viewed themselves as resilient, as evidenced in their scores on Beck's self-concept measure and the resiliency scale. Rotter's locus of control was found to be inversely correlated with Beck's self-concept index, suggesting that students, who attributed

greater control over their surroundings to internal factors, had higher perceptions of their own self - worth.

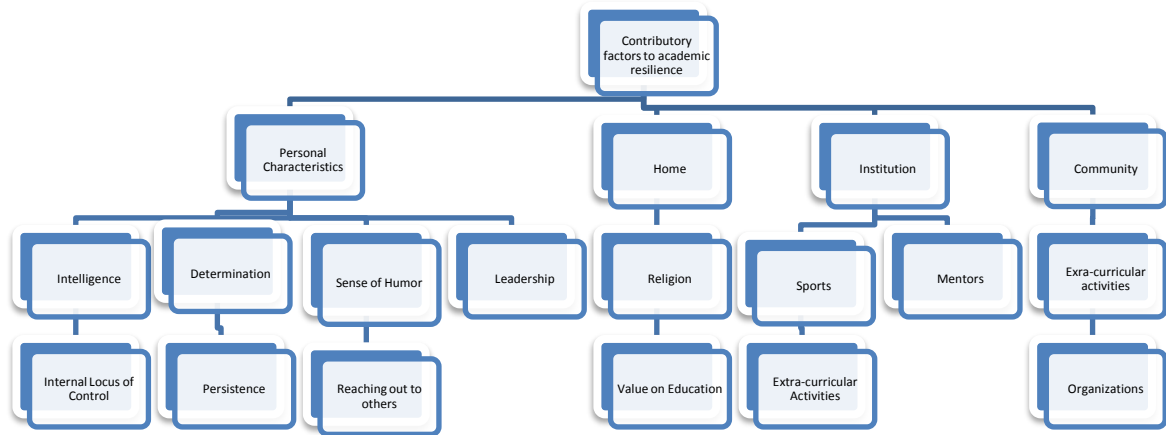
Interpretation of Findings

In this study, the interest was on Hispanic, inner-city male adolescents and the factors that led them to attain success in school; i.e., they were academically resilient, despite having to overcome significant personal difficulties. The constructs that emerged from this study produced a set of themes which were classified under home/community, school (institution), and personal characteristics. The explanations and interpretations for individual themes uncovered in the data analysis, and a description of the interaction between personal characteristics, institutional factors, and home/community components that foster resilience in our pool of participants are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The following figure is a representation of these themes and the emerging constructs.

Figure 3.1

Factors that Contribute to the Development of Academic Resilience



Personal Characteristics

The personal characteristics in the pool of participants included perseverance/commitment, determination, leadership, intelligence, sense of humor, and generosity. Participation in sports had a significant impact in helping to develop a sense of commitment, and to help build leadership skills in the students. Hence the school's athletic component played a crucial role in these areas. This sense of commitment transferred into the classroom, because the students, in turn, became more strongly committed to school related work. The students had an opportunity to work on building their leadership skills by assuming such roles as captains of the various teams. The students considered themselves to be intelligent because they did not have to invest as much energy to understand the school material. As one

student stated, "It came easy to me...for some reason I just get it." Higher intelligence and a sense of humor can be explained through biological mechanisms that operate on an individual basis. Past research on economically disadvantaged minority students have also found that academically resilient youth demonstrate traits, such as, intelligence, persistence and self-regulation (Mendez, Fantuzzo, & Cichetti, 2002). Others, such as Masten (2001) have found that intelligence and cognitive capacities may have significant contributions that lead to resilience. In addition, her work suggests, that in the same vein, intelligence alone is not sufficient in leading to desirable outcomes; the individual must also be able to form strong relationships with others to succeed academically.

Components of Institutional Structure

The school characteristics included the presence of a strong athletic component, caring and committed school staff, and the use of external rewards as motivators. The athletic component provided the basis for building leadership skills, which were pivotal in helping the students achieve academic success. Sports' participation and extracurricular activities provided the students with structure; this in turn helped them also to become structured with regard to school related work. As one of the students described it, instead of coming home and just hanging out he had to attend practice; therefore, he had to become organized in order to get his school work done on time.

School staff played a significant role in the lives of the students, helping them to attain academic success. Faculty members who are concerned, provide guidance for the students and

hold them to high expectations; these were factors that fostered academic resilience. For these youngsters, the lack of a father figure was a major life obstacle which may have been exacerbated because of their developmental stage. During early adolescence, especially for boys, the need to have the same sex parent present appears to be more pronounced. The boys expressed the idea that the lack of guidance or just someone to talk to about 'guy stuff' was difficult to overcome. The school counselors played a major role in helping to ameliorate this need by providing guidance and mentorship to the boys at a time when they need it most. Further support for the role that teachers play was provided by Wang (1995), who emphasized the importance of the helping relationship between the teacher and student; it is seen as a key component of academic resilience.

Past research has indicated that academically resilient students tend to gain and seek support from family members and school staff (Mendez, Fantuzzo, & Cichetti, 2002). This finding further supports the notion that it is the interaction between the personal characteristics and the environment that fosters academic resilience. Further support for this interaction was provided by the studies of Masten & Coatsworth (1998), which indicate that self-control and compliance, rule-governed conduct, academic achievement, and the formation of a cohesive sense of self may not be enough to survive and succeed in dangerous inner-city neighborhoods.

The Role of Extracurricular Activities

Participation in extracurricular activities served as a catalyst to build character, leadership skills and provide a sense of belonging. Because involvement in extracurricular activities is a voluntary act, it presupposes some level of motivational characteristics on the part of the student. Therefore, it implies that these students sought to integrate themselves and seek a sense of

belonging through more “socially accepted” forms of activities. This point is one that diverges from the literature, which suggests that minority males may disidentify with mainstream values and with opportunities and seek out gang involvement in order to fulfill a sense of belonging and pursue academic achievement. A plausible explanation for this disparity is that the participants' inclinations towards identifying with the mainstream culture may lead to successful pathways. This finding suggests that seeing value and heeding potential opportunities, such as minority scholarships that are inherent in mainstream culture may be the key to pursuing academic achievement or other less socially desirable paths. In this study, however, students seem to identify with both cultures, that is, their ethnic culture as well as the mainstream culture; hence, it is difficult to ascertain how much influence the involvement with their ethnic culture may have had in their desire to pursue academic achievement.

Sport Participation and Academic Resilience

Involvement in the schools' athletic program was similar to involvement in extracurricular activities because it helped to build character; however, in addition it also taught them about commitment and being a team player. Through the mental and physical demands placed upon them in the field, the students learned that in order to succeed in sports, they must commit themselves, which requires time, effort and sacrifice. This notion, in turn, translated into the classroom because students became committed to seeing projects through to completion. The concept of commitment converges with previous findings in the literature, confirming that commitment or task persistence was identified as a predictor of academic resilience (Martin & Marsh, 2006). More specifically their findings suggest that pedagogical strategies that involve direct instruction on persistence should be incorporated when the aim is to increase academic

resilience. Furthermore they suggest that in order to achieve this, it is necessary to examine executive function factors, such as self-regulation and the ability to plan for the future, both of which were identified as precursors to acquiring persistence/commitment. A limitation worth noting is the fact that the school attended by the participants had a strong athletic component. In schools where participation in sports is not given as much importance, it would be difficult to use involvement in sports as a way to teach commitment and task persistence. Perhaps future research should focus on elucidating other such activities that can foster persistence.

The Role of Religion/spirituality on Academic Resilience

Spirituality played a significant role in the students' lives and in their achieving academic success; however, religion did not. Church attendance and religious affiliations were not as prevalent as the belief in a Higher Being. Prayer was however, highly valued and was considered to provide a sense of hope. St. Benedict's, the school attended by the students, is a Catholic school administered by monks, and part of the curriculum requires that the students take religion classes and attend morning convocation. During these daily morning meetings the teachers and students have a chance to discuss the importance of treating others as they would treat themselves: the motto is "what hurts my brother, hurts me."

Positive Role Modeling

The influence of mentors was most prominent among students for whom fathers were missing in their lives. In these instances school counselors played a significant role by

representing as father figures. The influence of mentors has been supported as one that contributes to help build resilience in children (Kenny, Gallagher, Alvarez-Salvat, & Silsby, 2002). Mentors can add value to children by providing guidance, emotional support, positive role modeling, academic and life advice, all of which can be instrumental in helping children reach their goals.

Single Gender School

Attending an 'all male' school was influential in helping the students succeed academically because it allowed them to focus on school work rather than in getting involved with trying to impress members of the opposite sex. Co-education unfortunately has an inherent disadvantage because it can serve as a distraction to boys. In addition, the requirement of wearing a uniform also freed time for the boys because they did not have to worry about fashion.

Role of the Home and Community Environment

Home Factors

The home characteristics included a combination of negative circumstances, such as abusive fathers, divorce, low income; they also included characteristics such as homes that provided nurturing, limit setting, and high expectations. The effects of holding the students to high expectations in school related work was important, because the students were expected to complete homework assignments and attend school. Despite the fact that sometimes the home environment was chaotic, it appeared that the combination of having at least one positive role

model along with personal characteristics, such as perseverance, may have contributed to the development of academic resilience in the participants. The positive effect of the home environment as it relates to academic resilience is a finding that converges with past research. Wang (1995) examined academic resilience in inner-city youth, using an ecological perspective that encompassed family, schools and community. He emphasized the importance the role that the family plays in building resilience by providing a supportive atmosphere, accompanied by appropriate limit setting. Family members were also instrumental in providing mentorship for the students. This finding is supported in past research, suggesting that supportive families can help build resilience (Wang, 1995).

Religion/Spirituality: Family's Influence

Faith in God and religious values were instilled by the students' families, and had an impact in the students' academic achievements. This notion of belief in a Higher Being may be associated with the ability to attribute meaning to life's events, identified in past research, as a protective factor (Masten & Coatsworth, 198; Bonanno, 2004).

Cultural and Ethnicity Factors

Identification with both mainstream culture and family of origin culture was prevalent among the responses provided. However there was a stronger desire to identify and follow the rules of the mainstream culture. The students expressed a strong desire to 'fit in' with their peers, and ultimately achieve society's '*status quo*'. This in turn, influenced the students to seek out other opportunities that would help them advance toward desired goals such as minority

scholarships. Family is a given priority for Hispanics, and the culture of the school helps them bridge the gap. Within the school Hispanic students demonstrate a desire to help their fellow Hispanic students. Those who may be struggling to 'fit in' either within the culture of the school or society in general find help from other Hispanic students within the school. The most significant factor that served as a contributor to achieving academic success, relative to ethnicity, was the notion of defeating typical stereotypes commonly associated with Hispanics. The students were adamant and appeared relentless in their desire to overcome the stereotype threat. This finding diverges from previous research (Graham, Taylor & Hudley, 1998) which found that for minority adolescent males who do not seek to identify with mainstream values, the threat of falling into the stereotype is increased (Steele, 1997). Based on this discrepancy, perhaps the key in defeating stereotypes may lie in an individual's desire to identify and pursue the values instilled by mainstream culture. An additional aspect of this study was the focus on the role that ethnic background and the extent of the identification or the lack thereof with those values influenced their academic resilience. It appears, from the findings, that close adherence to ethnic culture was highly valued, as was participation in traditional and ethnic cultural norms; i.e. eating rice and beans, and for some, speaking Spanish with family members. Another significant manner in which ethnic background played a role was in affording scholarship opportunities based on a status as a member of a minority group. Cultural association, however, continues to be an elusive topic in the literature. A study by Zarate, Bhimji, and Reese (2005) examined the ethnic identity of Hispanic adolescents by the labels they use to identify themselves and the impact of these labels on their academic achievement; it was found that one label, i.e.; Puerto Rican and American, is insufficient to define the various meanings identified by Hispanic adolescents.

Community Characteristics

The community characteristics involved both positive and negative aspects because it included a combination of high crime and drug infested neighborhoods, as well as non-profit organizations, including religious organizations that afforded the students with after school extracurricular activities and volunteering opportunities to help the less fortunate. The influence that community had on fostering academic resilience may be linked with some aspects of personal characteristics. The students' determination to achieve personal growth may have contributed to encouraging the students to seek out organizations that offered opportunities to volunteer in their communities, thereby helping to develop in the youth a sense that they were contributing to bettering themselves and their communities.

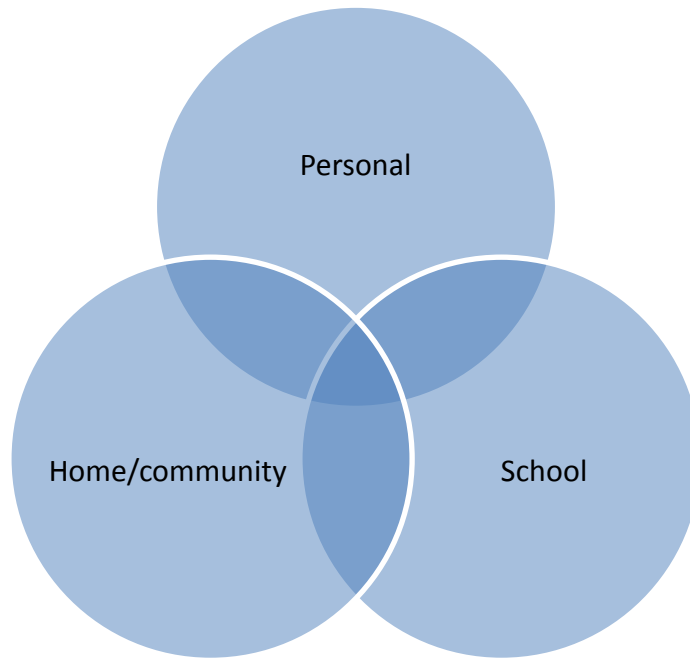
Conclusions

In summary, based on these findings, the factors that contribute to academic resilience in all children appear to be intelligence, persistence, internal motivation (internal locus of control), determination, reaching out to others for help, mentorship, leadership potential, and intelligence. These findings converge with previous ones that have posited the idea determining the key factors that have been associated with resilience are (a) relationship with caring adults, (b) self-regulation of emotion and behavior, (c) brain development and cognition, and (d) desire for the child to thrive in her/his environment (Masten, 2001).

It appears that Hispanics share many of the factors that are commonly associated with academic resilience development. However, this study uncovered additional information that may be unique to Hispanic populations. Cultural norms and values are adhered to closely in Hispanic families, and families tend to stay close together, a term described in the literature as "*familism*". This is an aspect that often facilitates the possibility for extended family members to become mentors for the children and it can be an invaluable ingredient to the healthy development of adolescents and to the building of academic resilience. For Hispanic students, in addition to the aforementioned factors, having adults in the family who are warm, caring and who value education, having the opportunity to qualify for minority scholarships, having faith in God and prayer, being dependable, identifying with and accepting mainstream values, and having a sense of humor were also attributable.

The most important finding in this study was the interaction between the home/community environment, school and personal characteristics that contribute uniformly to the development of academic resilience. The combination of cognitive abilities, a parent who emphasizes education and a strong connection to the school community e.g., through an athletic component, serves as an example of this interaction. Any one of these factors in isolation is insufficient in and of itself to produce academic resilience; however, when all of the components are present, the chances for the student to become successful in school are possible. As Masten (2001) pointed out, intelligence alone is not enough to ensure that the child will succeed. Clearly the combination of a strong supportive school staff that is willing to provide guidance to students and school counselors who take on the role of mentors, provide the backbone for academic resilience in the school setting. The following diagram represents this interaction.

Figure 3.2

Interactive Components between the Main Themes

It appears that the foundation for building academic resilience originates in the child's home environment, and is subsequently reinforced in school and the community. Families contribute to the development of the child's motivation and desire to succeed by promoting the attainment of higher education, and monitoring the child's academic activities, without regard to their own level of education. Parents use their own experiences and struggles to reinforce the importance of education to their children, and provide encouragement to seize opportunities that are afforded to them. A sense of superseding their parents is instilled in the children, and nurtured through parental involvement.

There were biological influences worth noting with respect to temperament. From these findings it is possible that it takes a certain type of temperament to be able to succeed against all the odds. In addition, the combination of the parent's style of parenting with the child's temperament may have a significant influence on the ultimate outcome of the child.

The lack of influence from "machismo" on the young boys' lives, both at school and in the world outside was noteworthy, because "machismo" tends to prevail in traditional Latino families. Somehow the boys did not relate to those who tried to behave in a "macho manner" nor did they desire to behave in this way. They did not feel as though acting "macho" would help them accomplish their goals. Perhaps, because of the way in which they turned away from everything else that would go counter to realizing their dreams, they also chose not to engage in macho ways because it would not yield desired results.

Implications for Schools

The purpose of this study was to explore the concept of success of Hispanic, inner-city male adolescents. The hope is that these findings may serve as a guide to inform systemic change. It is clear that academic resilience is not a static phenomenon; there are inherent interactions between the individual and his or her impact on the environment. If the goal is to help build academic resilience in adolescents, then it is necessary to look beyond the construct of personal traits and inborn executive capacities, and begin to extrapolate relationships among these and the environment. In order to bring about systemic change it is necessary to examine the school, home, community and individual characteristics, not in isolation, but rather in the ways in which they intertwine with one another. What effect does the school structure have? What are the characteristics of the optimal home environment? What is the makeup of the community? What is the role of teachers and other school staff, etc.? How do all of these elements combine in order to foster academic resilience?

Overall, it appears from these findings that academically resilient Hispanic adolescents have inherent biological traits, such as intellectual capacity, sense of humor, ability to persevere,

generosity and dependability. These personality traits would be described as inherent??, thereby precluding them from being acquired; however, as stated in the introduction to this study, an alternate view to the "trait" construct is to assign a term described in the literature as "hardiness." Individuals considered as having "hardiness" believe they can learn from both good and bad experiences, have attributed meaning to their experiences and have an internal locus of control. In viewing 'hardiness' as a skill allows for the possibility of developing a skill-based model to incorporate this model into intervention programs.

These students also had school staff members who are supportive and instrumental, and who are genuinely concerned about their future. According to Masten (2001), one of the key factors that have been associated with resilience is relationship with caring adults. This finding has significant implication for schools. Perhaps the development of a mentor program whereby teachers can partake in special training that helps them gain skills and knowledge necessary to act as mentors for the students could be implemented in the high schools.

Another implication for schools is the development of sports programs and of creating opportunities for students to participate in extra-curricular activities, especially for those students who are not skilled at sports. Our findings in this study suggest that through participation in extra-curricular activities, such as, photography, drama, music, arts, creative writing, etc., and sports, students have a chance of developing skills considered essential at developing academic resilience, such as, leadership, commitment, responsibility, teamwork, togetherness, and character building. Currently, public high schools, although may have an athletic component built in, it is not tailored around building of these skills; rather, its focus is on competitiveness. In addition, public high schools generally do not offer much in the way of extracurricular activities for those who are not sports oriented.

Limitations of the Study

Although qualitative methods may render richer data, which increases an understanding of the constructs arising from the data and helps develop theories that enlighten the phenomena explored, they lack representativeness because of the small sample size (Bolton, 2007). Furthermore, due to the comprehensive nature inherent in qualitative analysis, examination of a range of variable is limited (Bolton, 2007). Another limitation inherent in qualitative analysis concerns the introduction of "researcher bias" (Key, 1997). Because the researcher is considered part of the instrumentation used in collecting and analyzing the data, the investigator may impart his/her own biases when making interpretations and drawing conclusions about the data. In addition, the logic utilized in qualitative analysis is considered "inductive," which leads to making inferences about a phenomenon, rather than "deductive" which makes use of statistical analysis. This aspect brings into question the validity of the findings and contributes to rendering the conclusions questionable (Merriam, 1988).

Other limitations of this study included the school setting. The findings in this study may not be generalized to the total population, because of the unique nature of the school where the data was gathered. There may be certain criteria that differentiate the participants in this study from other students. For instance, the parent(s) of the students in this study would typically take the time to enroll their children in this school, thereby, rendering the makeup of the student body different from the general population. Although, St. Benedict's is not considered a selective school, the individual characteristics of the students that agree to enroll in this prep school may differ from typical students attending public schools. For instance, sport participation is as important to the goals of St. Benedict's prep, as is the academic curriculum. Because candidates

are highly encouraged to take part either in sports or in other extra-curricular activities, these students' characteristics may differ, perhaps rendering them more highly motivated to take part in these activities.

In addition, this study was limited because it examined only Hispanic males; therefore, the findings cannot be generalizable. Hence the findings in this study may not apply to females, or to students with other ethnic backgrounds.

Future Directions

Future research in this area might include studying academic resilience among students attending public schools. This would allow the chance to examine whether or not key institutional components identified in studies such as the present one, are in place. It would also make the findings more generalizable to the broader population, because there are more minority adolescents in underprivileged neighborhoods attending the public schools.

Examining academic resilience among female Hispanic-American adolescents would also gain valuable information that would add to the understanding of the factors involved in developing resilience across genders.

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Appendix A

Assent Form

My name is Aida Ismael-Lennon and I am a doctoral student at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine.

I am conducting a study entitled *An Examination of Academic Resilience among High-Achieving Hispanic-American Male Inner-city Adolescents*. I am interested in discovering how students, such as you are able to succeed in school despite having had obstacles that may have interfered with your ability to do well in school.

If you agree to participate in the study you will be asked to answer some questions by me and your answers will be recorded. The questions I will be asking of you will require you to describe any obstacles to success in school that you may have encountered in your life and how you handled it, to provide a description of your personal qualities and to describe, from your perspective, how you came to attain success in school. In addition, there will be a questionnaire asking you to provide your age, grade, GPA and to list any sports you participate in. There will also be some questions about your cultural heritage. All of this will take about 90 minutes of your time.

You will not be asked to provide your name. You will be asked to select a pseudonym, which is a fake name; this name will be used to identify you in the report of the interview. Your real name will only appear on this form, and this form will be filed in the guidance counselor's office separately from the information collected during the interview. The information from your

interview that I share with others will not refer to you by name so no one will know that you are the one who provided me the information.

You do not have to participate in this study if you do not want to. Deciding to participate in this study will not hurt you in any way. You may withdraw from this study at any time if you so choose, even after you have agreed to participate. You will not be compensated for participating in this study, although the responses you give may help to better understand how students facing obstacles are able to succeed academically and may help us researchers find ways to help other students succeed as well.

Singing below indicates that the purpose of the study has been explained to you and you have been given the opportunity to ask questions to help clarify your understanding of the study and that you are willing to participate in this study. As stated earlier, you have the option of withdrawing from the study at any time without any explanation even after you have agreed to participate.

Signature of subject _____

Subject's Printed Name _____

Signature of investigator _____

Date _____

I understand that the interview session will be tape recorded for review by the researcher after the interview is completed. I understand that the taped copy of the interview will not identify me by name and that the tape will be destroyed at the end of the study.

Signature of subject _____

Subject's printed name _____

Date _____

Appendix B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF STUDY

An examination of Academic Resilience among High Achieving Hispanic-American Male Inner-city Adolescents.

TITLE OF STUDY IN LAY TERMS

Interviews with successful Hispanic-American students from an urban high school to gain their perceptions of the factors related to their success.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this research is to find out the components of academic resilience, ie., the ability to withstand certain obstacles to achieve success, in urban Hispanic high school students. The purpose of the study is to gain greater understanding of the experiences, thoughts and ideas of students who have overcome obstacles to succeed in school, ie., who are "academically resilient."

Your child is being asked to be in this research study because he was selected by a school counselor as a student who has succeeded in school despite obstacles. If you do not provide your consent or permission, your child cannot be in this study.

INVESTIGATOR(S)

Principal Investigator: Dr. Rosemary Menutti

Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine

Department: Psychology

Address: 4170 City Avenue

Philadelphia, PA 19131

Phone: (215) 871-6414

Responsible (Student) Investigator: Aida Ismael-Lennon

The interview your child is being asked to volunteer for is part of a research project.

If you and your child have questions about this research, you and your child can call Dr. Menutti or Aida Ismael-Lennon at 215-871-6414.

If you and your child have any questions or problems during the study, you and your child can ask Dr. Menutti or Aida Ismael-Lennon, who will be available during the entire study. If you and your child want to know more about Dr. Menutti's background, or the rights of research subjects, you and your child can call the PCOM Research Compliance Specialist at (215) 871-6782.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURES

If your child decides to be in this study, your child will be asked to participate in an interview and will be asked a limited number of questions. The interviews typically take 60-90 minutes and will be conducted at school at a time that does not interfere with the student's academic program.

The interview will be tape recorded to be transcribed at a later time. The transcription serves as a record of the responses to the questions so that the researcher can analyze the content.

Recording the interviews ensures accuracy of the responses. The recorded responses and transcriptions will be kept confidential and there will be no personally identifying information contained within the recording or transcriptions. Your child will only be identified by way of a pseudoname thereby assuring that your child will not be personally identified as a participant in the study.

The study will take about 90 minutes for each session. There will be 1 session(s) over the course of 1 day, for a total of 90 minutes of your child's time.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

You and your child may not benefit from being in this study. Other people in the future may benefit from what the researchers learn from the study.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Your child will be asked about environmental and personal factors that led to their academic success. The information will be confidential and stored in a way that will not identify your child. The interview will take place on a one-to-one basis at a time that does not interfere with their academic program. Each student's participation is voluntary and they can decline to participate prior to or at any time during the interview without penalty. Students who complete the interview will not be compensated.

ALTERNATIVES

The other choice is to not be in this study. There is no penalty for failing to participate nor

reward for participation.

PAYMENT

You and your child will not be paid for being in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information and records relating to your child's participation will be kept in a locked file. Only the researchers, members of the Institutional Review Board, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration will be able to look at these records. If the results of this study are published, no names or other identifying information will be used.

REASONS YOUR CHILD MAY BE TAKEN OUT OF THE STUDY WITHOUT YOUR AND YOUR CHILD'S CONSENT

If health conditions occur that would make staying in the study possibly dangerous to your child, or if other conditions occur that would damage your child or your child's health, the researchers may take your child out of this study.

In addition, the entire study may be stopped if dangerous risks or side effects occur in other people.

NEW FINDINGS

If any new information develops that may affect your child's willingness to stay in this study,

you and your child will be told about it.

INJURY

If your child is injured as a result of this research study, your child will be provided with immediate necessary care.

However, your child will not be reimbursed for care or receive other payment. PCOM will not be responsible for any of your child's bills, including any routine care under this program or reimbursement for any side effects that may occur as a result of this program.

If you and your child believe that your child has suffered injury or illness in the course of this research, you should notify the Research Compliance Specialist at (215)871-6782. A review by a committee will be arranged to determine if the injury or illness is a result of your child's being in this research. You should also contact the Research Compliance Specialist if you and your child believe that you and your child have not been told enough about the risks, benefits or other options, or that you and your child are being pressured to stay in this study against your and your child's wishes.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your child may refuse to be in this study. Your child voluntarily consents to be in this study with the understanding of the known possible effects or hazards that might occur during this study.

Not all the possible effects of the study are known.

Your child may leave this study at any time.

If your child drops out of this study, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which your child is entitled.

I have had adequate time to read this form and I understand its contents. **I have been given a copy for my personal records.**

I agree to allow my child to be in this research study.

Signature of Subject: _____

Date: ____/____/____ Time: _____AM/PM

Signature of Witness: _____

Date: ____/____/____ Time: _____AM/PM

Signature of Investigator or Designee _____
(circle one)

Date: ____/____/____ Time: _____AM/PM

Appendix C

Interview Questionnaire

1. What is your age?
2. What grade are you in?
3. What is your GPA?
4. Are you in the honor roll? How many quarters have you been in the honor roll?
5. What is the highest level of education attained by your parents /legal guardian?
6. How many people are there in your house, including yourself?
7. What is your approximate household income?
8. Please tell me about any extra-curricular activities you are involved with, in and outside of school? Do you belong to any organizations in the community?
9. Tell me how has taking part in extra-curricular activities influenced you, specifically with your academic success?
10. Tell me about the school's athletic program and the role it plays for you as a student here
11. Tell me about your religion/spirituality beliefs and associations and how it fits into your academic success and school experience.
12. Many times students have mentors. Do you have a mentor, if so could you share with me the influence a specific person has had on you in general, and specifically with your success in school.
13. Please tell me about any obstacles in your life? Describe a specific problem and how you handled it. Any other problems?

14. Please tell me which culture, ie., Puerto Rican, Colombian, American, etc.) do you identify with most, and describe how you balance between assimilation with the mainstream culture and preserving your ethnic culture?
15. Describe how attending an 'all male' school may have influenced your experience in general and specifically your academic success.
16. Please tell me what the word 'machismo' means to you, and what role it plays in general and in school.
17. Please describe who you are in all areas of your life (at home, in school, with friends, in your community, etc.) What are your personal attributes?
18. I have heard that you have been quite successful in school; Would you agree? What do you think has led to that success? What else?
19. Could you describe any difficulties you have encountered, either in your academic or personal life. How did you handle it?
20. I am particularly interested in the story of Hispanic-American adolescents; What about your background may have been factors in your success? How have you dealt with assimilating the U.S. culture and your family of origin's culture?

Appendix D

List of Tables

Table 1

Parent Education Level

Education	Parent	
	Mother	Father
GED		1
HS	3	5
Trade School	1	
2 Yr College	1	2
Some College	3	1
College Graduate	3	1
Graduate School		2

Table 2

<i>Parents' Income Level</i>	
	Frequency
Yearly Income	
10,000-30,000	1
31,000-50,000	5
91,000-130,000	2
Unknown	4
Total	12