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Spirituality and Hope as Influences on Family Cohesion Among African American Men

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Jennifer DeSouza

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Abstract

Spirituality and Hope as Influences on Family Cohesion Among African American Men

by

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B.A., Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, 2000

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Clinical Psychology

Walden University

November, 2014

Abstract

Researchers have found that African American men have a history of difficulty in maintaining family cohesion. Researchers have also found that, in comparison to European American men, African American men are more likely to populate the penal systems, are more abusive to their partners, are less supportive of their children, and are less likely to have stable cohesive relationships. Evidence suggests that African American men draw strength from spirituality and hope, which are the core values of their culture. Drawing from these previous findings, as well as the stages of faith theory, hope theory, and the circumflex model of marital and family systems, this quantitative, non-experimental study examined the roles of spirituality and hope on family cohesion among African American men. The INSPIRIT, the hope scale, and the family cohesion scale were administered to 110 African American men. Multiple linear regression analysis revealed that hope mediated a significant relationship between spirituality and family cohesion ($p < .05$). These findings may inform family-centered programs that facilitate cohesion.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, especially the males: My hubby Clive DeSouza, who through the struggles of writing this dissertation was there for me in the times of my greatest needs. Thank you dear. Thanks for holding things together as I dedicated my time to writing. My eldest nephew, Leon Lemonias, has been a great support to me, likewise Darrel Edwards, who persistently cheered me along when I felt like giving up. My youngest nephew, Josh Lawrence, helped me to unwind with the little silly things he says to me. My prayer for you continually is that God will bless and keep you in His care and that you will be great Black men as you encounter and overcome the barriers in life. I want you all to succeed in life and be the best that life has to offer.

Lastly I would love to dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Lurlene Reid, my twin sister, Beverley Brissett-Lawrence, and my elder sisters, Sharon Doeman and Betty Brown; thanks for your continued support and prayers as I struggled through this ordeal of writing. Thanks for your prayers and your phone calls; I truly appreciated them; they were sources of strength and encouragements. Thank you all.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

There appears to be a grave concern in society as it relates to family cohesion (Chaney, 2011; Dixon, 2009; Tanner 2004). Family cohesiveness is decreasing because of the many problems that are affecting it (Boyras&Sayger, 2012; Lightsey& Sweeney, 2008; Williams, Auslander, Houston, Krebill&Haire-Joshu, 2000). Some researchers have found that African American men have a history of difficulties maintaining good family cohesion (Brelsford, 2011; Chang, & Banks, 2007; Cutrona, Russell, Burzette, Wesner, & Bryant, 2011), and since there is a strong connection with spirituality and hope within the African American families (Beach et al., 2011; Harvey & Cook, 2010), this group of men was used in this study to address the family cohesion problems that exist within the African American men's community. This current study unearthed findings that the use of spirituality and hope unfold in the quest to influence African American men's family cohesion. Previous studies have shown that families with real spiritual bonds and hope were better able to rise to challenges that threatened their wellbeing and were able to cope better under stress (Chaney, 2011; Diddle & Denham, 2010; Mandara& Murray, 2002).

While previous studies have addressed spirituality, hope, and family cohesion in relation to the Caucasian population (Aarons, McDonald, Connelly & Newton, 2007), African American women (Jesse, Schoneboom,& Blanchard, 2007), youth (Townsend & Lanphier, 2007), Asians (Walton & Takeuchi, 2010), and Appalachian populations (Diddle & Denham, 2010), a survey of the literature did not reveal any studies that

addressed spirituality, hope, and family cohesion among African American men; therefore, this gap in the literature was the focus in the current study. Consequently, the current study examined spirituality and hope and how they influence family cohesion among African American men.

The potential positive social change implications of this study are the following: African American men were empowered with knowledge by attending clinical group meetings, educational outreach within the community, or through religious organizations, learning how to address and cope with family cohesion. The information from this current study was shared with administrators, clinicians, and agencies who are working with individuals and groups who are experiencing family cohesion related concerns. These findings are available so that clinicians can have current information in order to plan appropriate interventions for African American men and also to help other men and women from other ethnicities. Consequently, the teachings on spirituality and hope can lead to a better overall quality of family life and cohesion. African American men will be able to cope with family cohesion problems after they are taught the principles of spirituality and hope. They will be better fathers and husbands and overall better men who are able to solve the problems in their families because they will be educated on how to do so. The implications for positive social change include the potential to understand family dynamics better by applying the principles of spirituality and hope to the lives of African American men so that they can learn to cope with any family cohesion problems, thus improving relationships within the family and the community. I hope that educated African

Americanmen will be more understanding within their families, leading to cohesive families and eventually better communities,whichwould be a positive social change.

The results of this study will help African American men to lead lives that are more family-oriented after the family cohesion problem is addressed. African American men are likely to be more aware of the needs of the family and better able to cope with them without developing cohesion problems. Society will have more African American men who will contribute positively to society by being spiritual and hopeful. Individuals, families, and the community will be empowered with knowledge, which may lead to better the family's dynamics, thus improving the overall quality of life and sustained well-being by channeling their thoughts and actions through spiritual and hope that are supportive and cohesive behavior. The major sections highlighted in Chapter 1 are the introduction, background, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions and hypotheses, theoretical framework for the study, nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, significance, and summary.

Background to the Problem

Studies have found that the effects of family cohesion protect the psychological well-being of women but not men (Walton & Takeuchi, 2010). The family structure has benefited immensely from spirituality (Cutrona, Russell, Burzette, Wesner& Bryant, 2011; Townsend, 2007), and since African American men do possess levels of spirituality (Jefferies, Dodge &Sandfort, 2008) and hope, (Chang & Banks, 2007), the current study examined the impact these variables have on African American men's family cohesion.

Walton and Takeuchi (2010) noted that research on family cohesion has focused on women and their psychological well-being, but not on men, so this gap was established: There is a need for much research as it pertains to African American men. The above mentioned studies have linked the gap in that they discuss African American men and their family cohesion concerns and how spirituality and hope were used in making an impact for them.

Spirituality and hope have been discussed in a substantial number of studies, related to women; however, after careful analysis of the literature, there is a lack of information on spirituality and hope and their influences on African American men (Chang & Banks, 2007; Ciarrocchi, Dy-Liacco & Deneke, 2008; Taylor & Chatters, 2010; Utsey et al., 2008). After carefully analyzing articles on family cohesion, I noticed that African American men were not widely investigated; therefore, the current study focused specifically on African American men as more research needed to be conducted as it pertains to this population in our society (Adebayo & Adebayo, 2010; Boyar & Sayger, 2009; Perry, 2009). Studies have been conducted on various groups using similar variables as the current study, including the Latino population (Brown & Brooks, 2006; Rivera et al., 2008), Asian-Americans (Walton & Takeuchi, 2010), African American and Caucasian women (Chapman & Steger, 2010; Harvey & Cook, 2010), Appalachians (Diddle & Denham, 2010), Iranians (Rahgozar, Yousefi, Mohammadi & Piran, 2012), and Nigerians (Adebayo & Ogunleye, 2010). These studies showed that spirituality and hope were successfully used among these groups to improve family relationships; the current study, therefore, proposes that its usage prove successful with the African American men population as well.

Yeasting and Jung (2010) provided the view on hope, and while Wang et al. (2007) focused on the use of the mediation model in their study, information from these articles were relevant to this research question because similar variables were used. Scioli et al. (2011) utilized the Hope Scale (Snyder, 1986) in their study, and Walton and Takeuchi (2010) used the Family Cohesion Scale (Olson 1987) in their studies. These scales were used in this research with a combination of three variables: spirituality, hope, and family cohesion with African American men. Unson et al. (2008) focused on spirituality using similar variables; moreover, studies conducted by Chatters et al. (2008) and Taylor et al. (2008) showed similar results on spirituality; however, much more information is still needed about hope as it pertains to African American men.

While others researchers have addressed the family cohesion concerns in a general manner and with others populations as well, this study focused specifically on African American men and how using spirituality and hope as means of impacting change can be realized. In an effort to address the gap, this study provided empirical data and research collected from the surveys conducted with African American men on spirituality, hope, and family cohesion. New information was added to existing literature, which produced further enlightenment to the problem that exists among the African American male population in relation to family cohesion.

Problem Statement

There is a breakdown of family cohesion within the African American population (Chaney, 2011; Perry, 2009; Gallup, 2007; Tanner 2004; Tripp, 2001). Manifestations of such indicate that African American men fill the prisons (William & Finney, 2008), are less educated and less stable (Futris, Nielson,& Olmstead, 2010), are more abusive to their wives (Owen, Thompson, Shaffer, Jackson,&Kaslow, 2009), are less supportive of their children (Perry, 2009), and are inclined to join gangs and do drugs (Redman, 2010). Lack of empirical data may be the primary contributor to the absence of intervention and may prevent agencies or individuals from being prepared to discuss the family cohesion problems among African American men (Chang & Banks, 2007; Ciarrocchi et al., 2008;Constantine & Sue, 2006; Mattis&Jagers, 2001; Taylor & Chatters, 2010; Utsey et al., 2008). Various studies have addressed spirituality and hope as they relate to women;however, based on the literature, there is a lack of information on spirituality and hope and their impact on African American men (Chang & Banks, 2007; Ciarrocchi et al., 2008; Taylor & Chatters, 2010; Utsey et al., 2008). Articles on family cohesion and African American men have not beenwidely studied; therefore, there is much to be done as it pertains to this society (Adebayo &Adebayo, 2010; Boyar &Sayger, 2009; Perry, 2009). The problem that this study is concerned with is providing quantitative data on the influencesof spirituality and hope on family cohesion amongAfrican American men.

The current study filled the gap in the literature related to spirituality and hope by providing current information and empirical data. This study added current data to previous studies regarding spirituality and hope among African American men. In addition, the

information about spirituality, hope, and family cohesion among African American men was used to compare with other ethnic groups. The current study found that spirituality and hope impacted African American men's family cohesion, thus strengthening previous studies whose findings suggested that spirituality and hope brought about positive changes in the lives of individuals. A detailed discussion of the gap that exists and the review of the literature are discussed in the following Chapter 2.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative and nonexperimental inquiry was to examine the relationships between the independent variable spirituality and the mediating variable hope with the dependent variable family cohesion to consider whether or not the variables can change African American men's family cohesion. The study examined and contributed to the existing literature, bringing added empirical data that provided more information on the current concerns of African American men as they battle with family cohesion concerns.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

A nonexperimental quantitative analysis design was used in examining relevant information that was useful in answering the research questions and discussing the null and alternative hypotheses. In addressing the study question, a clearer and better understanding is essential in clearing up any misconceptions of the topic.

Research Questions, Alternative and Null Hypotheses

Research question 1. Does spirituality, measured by the index of core spiritual

experience, significantly predict influences on family cohesion among African American men?

Alternative hypothesis 1. Spirituality, measured by the index of core spiritual experience will significantly predict influences on family cohesion among African American men?

Null hypothesis 1. Spirituality measured by the index of core spiritual experience will not significantly predict influences of family cohesion among African American men, as measured by the family relation cohesion scale?

Research question 2. Does hope measured by the hope scale significantly predict influence of family cohesion among African American men as measured by the family relation cohesion scale?"

Alternative hypothesis 2. Hope measured by the hope scale will significantly predict influences of family cohesion among African American men as measured by the family relation cohesion scale.

Null hypothesis 2. Hope measured by the hope scale will not significantly predict influence of family cohesion among African American men as measured by the family relation cohesion scale

Research question 3. Is there a relationship between spirituality and family cohesion and if so, can this relationship be mediated by hope?

Alternative hypothesis 3. There is a relationship between spirituality and family cohesion, and this relationship can be mediated by hope.

Null hypothesis 3. There is no relationship between spirituality and family cohesion, and the relationship cannot be mediated by hope

Theoretical Framework

The principles that formed the basis for this study are as follows: The stages of faith theory, developed by Fowler (1981), hope theory, developed by Snyder, (1986), and the circumplex model, developed by Olson (1989).

The Stages of Faith Theory

The stages of faith theory posited that a higher level of spiritual attainment can be realized as one develops more spiritually (Fowler, 1981). As applied to this study, the theory holds that the expectation of the independent variable, which is spirituality, influenced the dependent variable, which is family cohesion, because spirituality is said to be of great importance in the family. It was used to determine the level of spirituality among the participants and how well they were able to support and advance their spirituality. The fundamental concept of the theory is that the more matured an individual is, the higher the level of spirituality will be for that individual.

Rainbows in the Mind

Rainbows in the mind theory (Snyder, 1986), explains the possibility of attaining whatever one sets out to do, as long as there is internal or external motivation. The developer of this theory used the rainbow to depict hope, as that was what the rainbow originally represented. This theory is significant to this research because it points to what can be accomplished when hope is present. Snyder (1986) separated himself from other

hope theorists because he believed that the hopeful person focuses on a positive outcome, whether or not the individual has to alter the route to obtain the goal. Therefore, this hope theory proved resourceful as the concept is embraced.

The Circumplex Model of Marital and Family System Theory

The circumplex model of marital and family systems theory (Olson, 1989) has three dimensions, namely communications (negative and positive), adaptability, and cohesion. Communications must be learned in order to move on to the next dimension. The fundamental concept among the circumplex model of marital and family (Olson, 1989) is that there are steps to achieve. Once the step is mastered, one advances to the next. This is similar to the concept of the stages of faith theory (Fowler, 1981) in which family adaptability measures the ability of a relationship to adjust to changes while cohesion focuses on the closeness within the relationship.

The concepts of the stages of faith theory (Fowler, 1981), the hope theory rainbows in the mind (Snyder, 1986), and the circumplex model of marital and family systems (Olson, 1989) approaches are similar in that each of them emphasizes levels of attainment and stages of development. Through depicting where one moves from one stage or one dimension to the other, each movement shows an accomplishment. As soon as one stage or level is mastered, he or she moves to the next stage. The more advanced individuals become, the more lessons they learn and more positive changes are made. The above mentioned principles support the conceptual definitions of spirituality, hope, and family cohesion specific to the current study.

Previous studies related to spirituality and hope and family cohesion have used the nonexperimental quantitative approach to collect data using survey instruments. The use of survey instruments in the current study to collect data from African American men about their spirituality, hope, and family cohesion is considered appropriate. Moreover, the arguments help the nonexperimental quantitative approach of collecting data using surveys tools.

The Mediation Model

The mediation model (Kenny & Baron, 1986; Preacher & Hayes, 2007;), proposed that intervention occurs when regressing the mediator on the independent variable, regressing the dependent variable on the independent variable, regressing the dependent variable on both the independent variable, and ultimately when the mediator influences both the independent and dependent variables. The quantitative approach used multiple regressions to analyze the data (Preacher & Hayes, 2007) for this current research.

Finally, in summarizing the implications for the theories, the stages of faith theory was used in conducting a study (Fowler, 1981), that produced findings the following research question: Does spirituality measured by the INSPIRIT significantly predict family cohesion, as measured by the family relation/cohesion scale, for African American men? The hope theory: Rainbows in the mind was also employed in a study that produced findings addressing the next research question: Does hope measured by the hope scale significantly predict family cohesion as measured by the family relation/cohesion scale for African American men? Finally, the circumplex model of marital and family systems theory and the

mediation model were also used in a study that produced findings addressing the last research question: Is there a relationship between spirituality and family cohesion? And if so, can this relationship be mediated by hope? A more detailed explanation of this is given in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

Given the nature of this research, a quantitative design is used to test objective theories by examining the relationship among variables (Creswell, 2008). This quantitative method was chosen because it was the most appropriate for this type of study due to its objectivity in gathering information and for reporting the data collected (Creswell, 2008). The three variables are spirituality (independent variable), hope (mediation variable), and family cohesion (dependent variable). The use of spirituality and hope and their impact on African American men's family cohesion were examined.

The data were collected from African American men 18 years and over using questionnaire surveys. Then the data were analyzed as multiple linear regressions using the SPSS 20.0 software.

Definitions

Spirituality. This is defined as the feeling or perception of well-being that comes from being in relation with God, and a sense of purpose and life satisfaction that accompanies that relationship (Brome, Owens, Allen, & Veviana, 2000). Other definitions are that which connects one to all (Walsh, 1999), and the belief that there exists a force

greater than oneself, and the importance of spiritual over material wealth (Krause & Chatters, 2005; Maynard-Reid, 2000).

Hope. This term is defined as the perceived capability to derive pathways to desired goals and motivate oneself via agency thinking to use those pathways (Snyder, 2009). Hope has also been described by many as a basic, fundamental, and essential part of life (Yeasting & Jung, 2010).

Family. This is described as a social institution responsible for child production, child rearing, and emotional and economic support for its members (Lamanna & Reidman, 2003). In the African American context, the family is made up of a husband, wife, children and other members of their extended families, such as grandparents, uncles, and aunts. It is also considered a means for the proper functioning of the society, where principles are taught to the younger members so that they will develop with correct training as it relates to family values.

Family cohesion. Defined as the emotional bonding or togetherness or separateness that family members have towards one another (Hetherington & Kelly, 2004; Olson, 1999; Olson & Hamilton 1983).

African American. The name used to describe Blacks living in the United States. The title African American was first used by the New York Times on April 19, 1925, followed by Malcolm X, who used it in a speech in 1964. Dr. Ramona H. Edelin introduced it into common usage in the 1970s. However, Reverend Jesse Jackson is most often credited with popularizing the term, beginning in the late 1980s. It was in 1988 that

Jesse Jackson announced its usage officially at a national conference in Chicago (Martin, 1991). Formerly the terms *Blacks* and *Negro* were used. For the sake of this study, African American was used to represent the people of Black decent. Further explanations and descriptions will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Assumptions

This study attempted to provide a better understanding of the correlations between spirituality, hope, and family cohesion among African American men. In pursuit of this study, the following assumptions were made:

The first assumption was that since the members volunteered, they made an effort to give an honest response to the survey and to be as responsive as possible during the interview. This was very essential for the validity of the results.

The second assumption was that the six stages-of-faith theory developed by Fowler (1981) was the most appropriate theoretical framework for this study and contributed to a better understanding of spirituality and how it can help with fostering better family cohesion among African American men.

The third assumption was that the selected measures that were appropriately employed in this study led me to make accurate conclusions regarding spirituality, hope, and African American men and family cohesion.

Scope and Delimitations

The subject of family cohesion as it relates to spirituality and hope is very general, and this study tried and operated within a particular scope, which are African

American men. The sample size was limited to 110 participants; this allowed me to generalize about the general population (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2007). The men were from any career, of any marital status, with no particular educational level, and from various religious groups; however, men from other ethnic groups were not included in the study. After carefully analyzing articles on family cohesion, it was noted that African American men were not widely studied in the area of family cohesion using these two variables of spirituality and hope (Adebayo & Adebayo, 2010; Boyar & Sayger, 2009; Perry, 2009); therefore, the topic was chosen based on the gap in the literature, which indicated that more research was needed to provide added information to address how spirituality and hope impact African American men's family cohesion.

This study was delimited to African American men ages 18 and over, and other people from other races and women were exempted from the research. Other groups such as adolescents, African American women, Caucasian women, and college students were excluded because they were already widely investigated. The focus of the study was spirituality and hope impacting African American men and their understanding of family cohesion. The three theories, stages of faith (Fowler 1981), hope theory: Rainbows in the mind (Snyder, 1986), and the circumplex model of marital and family systems (Olson 1989), were employed in the study and were considered appropriate. Fowler's (1991) stages of faith theory were chosen because it showed a progression of development that is needed for improvement and proves critical for African American men as they seek to improve family cohesion. The hope theory: Rainbows in the mind (Snyder, 1996) was chosen

because of the portrayal of hope in a vibrant, bright, and lively way. Hope was presented in a colorful way, attracting individuals to investigate it and finally get attached to it. The hope theory posited that hope exists for everyone at any given time and anywhere that life exists. Thus, hope was crucial in helping with making changes for the men in the study. Finally, the circumplex model of marital and family systems (Olson, 1989) was chosen because of its focus on family cohesion, which is also the focus of the study. Varied suggestions were made that would allow for better cohesion within the family, and that is the essence of the study.

Other ideas related to the area of study were not used because of differences that were identified in the theories which were misleading or were not clearly understood. For example, Oser (1991) theory, stages of religious judgment has five steps in spiritual maturity. It was excluded because I believed that the theory was contradictory; in Stage 1, the theory stated that God does what he wants in people's lives and they had no say, while in Stage 3, the author mentioned that people are autonomous and responsible for the world and for their own lives. I did not want any misconceptions; therefore, I excluded the theory from the current study. Next, the hope theory by Nekolaichuk, Jevne, and Maguire (1999) was considered; it stated that there are three dimensions to gaining hope, namely personal spirit, risk, and authentic caring. Based on the definition of hope, I excluded this theory. Lastly, family systems theory, although it focused on family cohesion as part of the theory, was too broad, and family cohesion was not dealt with from a wide perspective, so it also was excluded. Even though the focus of this study is on African American men in

Hempstead, New York, the data were generalized to all African American men who live in the United States.

Limitations

There were numerous limitations that could affect the internal and external validity, construct validity, and confounder variables in this study. One such limitation of the study could be reflected in the sample size where the thoughts of the general population of African American men was not generally represented with the view from the sample size 110, calculated using the GPower3 software (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009). Another limitation is that this study was limited to only African American men ages 18 and over; therefore, the views might not be readily embraced by younger African Americans, and females were exempted from this study. One of the potential threats of the current study to internal validity was instrumentation. The limitation that participants all have different experiences was reflected on the surveys. Then the threat to external validity was that the results of the current study cannot be generalized to individuals who were not involved. This stands true that what might be considered valid in the current study might not be for others. This study as it relates to construct validity has a limitation in that the instrument used to measure spirituality, although widely used in other studies, was not reliable (Kass, 1993). A confounder variable is the presence of a variable that is overlooked in the study. A limitation in this study was that there could be confounder variables that are overlooked and could change the variables being studied, thwarting the results so that they do not show the actual relationship between the variables. However, none was known.

According to Creswell (2008), quantitative analysis is used to test actual theories by examining the relationship among variables; since this was also my intent, this approach was adopted. Although this approach used only empirical data to present findings, it was chosen over the mixed method that uses both empirical and interviews because of its objectivity (Creswell, 2008). Studies are limited pertaining to this topic; therefore, I relied on information collected and analyzed from this current study to make any suggestions or recommendations. Biases can occur at any point in an analysis, and, therefore, extra care was taken to ensure that all the necessary areas in the study were discussed. Since there was limited literature on the topic, I could show bias by over- or underrepresenting findings from current research, and this could influence the outcome of the study. No biases have been identified in this study. I strived for objectivity and presented findings in an undiluted form (Creswell, 2008). Reasonable steps were taken to address limitations by being as objective as possible.

Significance of the Study

This is an important study because it examined the relationship between spirituality and hope, and how these will impact African American men's family cohesion. Such a study has not previously been conducted. . Through this research, there was an awareness of the lack of family cohesion within African American families. The problem was investigated here and will likely result in increased studies being conducted on the topic. The findings and recommendations of the current study were presented, hereby advancing

knowledge in the discipline. In so doing, positive social changes can be evident where African American men will likely show more family cohesiveness.

With family cohesion being an area of great interest, I propose that the recommendations from this study be submitted within communities through community outreach programs, thus educating African American men on their importance with family cohesion and what can be done to improve it. The findings were disseminated to agencies and clinicians in the local communities, who will likely use the data to address their groups or individuals during interventions. Current literature provided by this study was added to the existing literature and was used with the African American men and other ethnic groups. The potential contribution of this research should benefit both practitioners and scholars by adding current information about African American men to the existing literature, with the hope of providing more resources for both clinicians and the African American population to work with and to help bring about positive changes within families. After the completion of the study, one of the recommendations is that the findings be incorporated into educational materials and clinical programs for the African American population. Researchers are urged to use the findings of this study to develop educational programs to be used in the communities. Society will benefit by having more educated African American men seeking to influence their families through family cohesion. This current study could also serve as a springboard for further research on other ethnicities.

The implications for positive social change include the potential to understand family dynamics better and practicing them for improving the family, which would be very

crucial in facilitating changes in the homes and the community. Once African American men are empowered with knowledge on how to address and cope with family cohesion conflicts through seminars and workshops given by different groups within the communities, it will consequently lead to a better overall quality of family life and cohesion. These findings were shared with clinicians, agencies, and educators who incorporated them into their interventions, providing educational resources for the African American men and others who benefited as well. Educating men about the importance of spirituality and hope within the family through teachings within spiritual groups will help the community. Improved families will lead to positive changing communities where there are more united family members coming together to improve family cohesion within their respective communities. Through research and the measurement of spirituality, hope, and family cohesion, this study proves crucial for the greater benefit of the community and the field of clinical psychology in that the current information provides useful resources for African American communities and other communities to benefit from the findings.

Summary

While previous studies on spirituality, hope, and family cohesion have been conducted, a gap remains in the literature as it pertains to African American men (Ciarrocchi et al., 2008; Taylor & Chatters, 2010; Utsey et al., 2008; Walton & Takeuchi, 2010). This study explored the topic of spirituality and hope and their impact on African American men's family cohesion, adding information about African American men to the existing literature, with the hope of providing more resources for the African

American population to work with. There is an indication worldwide that families are affected by cohesion problems (Boyras & Sayger, 2012; Lightsey & Sweeney, 2008); therefore, this study examined the variables spirituality and hope, to discover whether or not they can influence family cohesion among African American men. Another emphasis was whether or not spirituality and family cohesion can be mediated by hope; this is likely to bring about changes in the way African American men perceive family cohesion.

In this chapter, the research topic was introduced to readers giving them a synopsis of the study, while highlighting the problem that exists and what prompted the research. The need for literature pertaining to African American men, spirituality, hope and family cohesion was presented, giving readers the reasons they were used in the study. The theories that support the current study and the significance of the study were also presented. This helped with informing readers about the topic of the research. The areas discussed in this chapter were the introduction, background, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions and hypotheses, theoretical framework for the study, nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, importance, and summary. Chapter 2 presents a deeper examination of the literature regarding spirituality and hope impacting African American men's family cohesion. The areas discussed in Chapter 2 are the introduction, the literature search strategy, theoretical foundation, literature review, summary, and conclusion. Chapter 3 presents the methodology that was used to calculate and analyze the data collected from the survey questionnaires. The main headings that are addressed are the introduction, the study design and rationale, methodology, threats to

validity, and a summary. Chapter 4 presents information on the sample that was surveyed and reports the findings from the surveys that were conducted. Areas that are discussed in Chapter 4 are the introduction, data collection, treatment or intervention fidelity, results, and a summary for the chapter was given. Finally, Chapter 5 focuses on the discussion and analysis of the data collected. Additionally, it highlights the limitations of the study, makes recommendations and gives the implications of the study, and finally, the conclusion of the study is given.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The family has been an integral part of society and the problems relating to family cohesion remains a concern (Chaney, 2011; Perry 2009; Tanner 2004; Tripp, 2001). Lack of empirical data may be the primary contributor to the absence of intervention and may prevent agencies or individuals from being prepared to discuss the family cohesion problems among African American men (Chang & Banks, 2007; Ciarrocchi et al., 2008; Hook, Fischer & Belvet, 2008; Mattis & Jager, 2001; Taylor & Chatters, 2010; Utsey, Constantine & Sue, 2006). The purpose of this quantitative nonexperimental inquiry was to examine the relationships between spirituality and hope and how they influence family cohesion among African American men using these three theories: stages of faith theory, Fowler (1981); hope theory: Rainbows in the mind, Snyder (1986), and the circumplex model of marital and family systems, Olson (2002). This study helped in better understanding the connection between spirituality and hope and their influence on family cohesion among African Americans men and presented previous studies related to spirituality, hope, and family cohesion.

A review of current literature indicated that there is a decline in family cohesiveness because of the many problems that are affecting families (Boyras & Sayger, 2012; Lightsey & Sweeney, 2008). Moreover, there is a lack of information on spirituality, hope, and family cohesion and their impact on African American men (Chang & Banks, 2007; Ciarrocchi, et al., 2008; Cutrona et al., 2011; Taylor & Chatters, 2010; Utsey et al., 2008).

Most research on family cohesion focused on women and their psychological well-being while the needs of men have not been addressed (Walton & Takeuchi, 2010); hence, this study focused on African American men in particular. African American men possess levels of spirituality (Jefferies et al., 2008), and hope (Chang & Banks, 2007); therefore, spirituality and hope were used to address the family cohesion problem that exists within the African American population.

The major sections discussed in chapter 2 are the introduction, the literature search strategy, theoretical foundations, the literature review related to key variables or concepts, and a summary and conclusion.

Literature Search Strategy

The Walden University library was used as the main source in attaining information for this study. The EBSCO database system at Walden University through PSYCINFO Academic Search Premier, Thoreau, Wiley Online Library, Questia, Google Scholar, and SAGE database systems were the primary search engines used. Google Scholar was very useful in getting me to other peer-reviewed articles from other universities. Keywords used in the search were *spirituality*, *hope*, *family cohesion*, *family relationship*, *African American men*, and *Black-Americans*. Current literature from 2007 to 2013 was also researched from the 1990s because it was important to show the continuity of the topic. The literature search was predominantly peer reviewed articles; however, textbooks and government websites were also used.

This chapter is organized as follows: introduction, literature search strategy, theoretical foundations, literature review related to key variables and concepts, and a summary and conclusion. While there is some research that addresses all the variables together, or the proposed sample and population, information was taken from research and generalized to a current issue.

Theoretical Framework

The three principles that formed the framework for the current research are as follows: stages of faith theory that was developed by James Fowler in 1981. Next, hope theory: rainbows in the mind that was developed by Charles Snyder in 1987. Lastly, circumplex model of marital and family systems was developed by David Olson, in 1989. These methods were discussed in the following sections.

Stages of Faith

James Fowler developed the stages of faith theory in 1981. Fowler, being a Methodist layman, had concerns about religion and faith and wanted to make a distinction between the two. He coined this theory to explain the difference between religion and faith. The question he wanted to be answered was whether faith or religion is the most fundamental category in the human quest for relation to transcendence. According to Fowler (1981), faith is a holistic orientation and is specifically concerned with the individual's relatedness to that which is universal. Also, he indicated that the definition of faith is similar to the definition of spirituality.

Fowler's theory was applied by members of various churches and synagogues (Fowler, 1981; Lewis, 2008). Parker (2009) examined ways in which the stages of faith theory could be used in the counseling and pastoral fields. He recommended that the spirituality should be used in informing supervisors on religious issues. In addition, he purported that using the method would prove very useful, especially since it provided developmental stages of faith that would be used as a guideline.

A survey of the literature did not reveal any validity or reliability data for the stages of faith theory. Despite the absence of validity and reliability results for the stages of faith theory, Streib (2005) reported that Fowler's stages of faith theory has been widely used in several quantitative and qualitative dissertations. As a result, the stages of faith theory were used to answer Research Question 1: Does spirituality, measured by the index of core religious experience, significantly predict family cohesion, as measured by the family relation/cohesion scale, for African American males?

In conclusion, the stages of faith theory supported the present study by showing how spirituality can be used to help improve and impact the African American men's family cohesion, thus adding more current information to the existing information and supporting data that were presented before.

Rainbows in the Mind

The hope theory rainbows in the mind, was developed by Snyder (1986), who was an optimist. He was very disappointed when individuals constantly made excuses for not doing the things they needed to do. He reasoned that there must be a better way to

accomplish what needed to be done. Consequently, the hope theory: rainbows in the mind, was developed. The theory guided the study in answering the following question: Does hope measured by the hope scale significantly predict family cohesion as measured by the family relation/cohesion scale for African American males?

The method was applied to various individuals in mental health institutions and college students. Previous studies showed that individuals with the hope excel above those individuals who did not possess hope (Bailey et al., 2007; Chang, & Banks, 2007; Snyder, 2002). Based on the hope theory, students with hope performed better academically than their counterparts without hope (Chang & Banks, 2007; Snyder, 2009). Recent studies have examined European Americans, adolescents, and patients in the counseling environment, but none have examined African American men. As a result, this study contributed to hope theory as it relates to African American men. A survey of the literature revealed that there needs to be an increase in research when researching hope within the African American population (Lopez et. al., 2000; Snyder, 2002) because there is a lack of literature to support this issue. Consequently, an examination of the literature revealed that the hope can be very beneficial to the African American men (Chang & Banks, 2007). As for this study, there are a large number of African American present in the Hempstead area, which proved very critical in gleaning the information on this topic. Therefore, examining how hope mediated between spirituality and family cohesion is very crucial in understanding the family cohesion problems encountered in this community.

According to Chang and Banks (2007), hope is missing from the African American population because of racism and oppression experienced by their forefathers, which continues today, whereas, for the African American men, the odds are against them, and everything they are involved in seems to be wrong and punishable by the law (Cooke, 2001; Mattis, Hearn, & Jagers, 2002); Therefore, much pressure is present in the African American men's world (Davidson & Wingate, 2011; Perry, 2009; Riina & McHale, 2010). The current study used hope as a mediation to seek creating a linkage between spirituality and family cohesion. The hope theory: rainbows in the mind sought to improve the African American men's behavior, thus making life more passionate and striving to obtain goals. The rainbows in the mind theory guided Research Question 2: Does hope measured by the hope scale significantly predict family cohesion as measured by the family relation/cohesion scale for African American males?

Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems

The circumplex model of marital and family systems was developed by Olson (1989) to integrate research, theory, and practice (Olson, Russell & Sprenkle, 1979, 1989). Therefore, family cohesion was tested through the circumplex model of marital and family systems since the theory relates directly to family cohesion. There are three dimensions in this model, namely, family cohesion, flexibility, and communication. However, for the purpose of this analysis, only family cohesion, which centered on the degree of togetherness or separateness of family members, was observed. The primary hypothesis from the circumplex model suggested that stable couple and family systems seem to be

more practical in comparison to the unstable units (Olson, 1999). Using the circumplex model of marital and family systems is purported to help with the family cohesion and hopefully result in bringing positive changes, and as it pertains to this study in particular, as it influences the lives of the African American men (Olson, 1999).

A pioneering study conducted by Clark (1984) focused on families with mental health issues and found a high level of imbalance within that group, while Carnes (1989), who focused on sex offenders, found high levels of unbalanced family types. While there is strong empirical support for the hypothesis that stable families are more useful than unstable types, there is a lack of evidence to support the findings that any particular symptoms are related to any specific family system. However, while the circumplex model of marital and family system shows support for the family, much information is still needed in support of the many principles that exist. The circumplex model of marital and family system answered Research Question 3: Is there a relationship between spirituality and family cohesion, and if so, can this relationship be mediated by hope?

The three methods mentioned above are the stages of faith theory that was developed by James Fowler in 1981. Next, the hope theory rainbows in the mind theory was developed by Charles Snyder in 1986. Lastly, the circumplex model of marital and family systems was developed by David Olson, in 1989. These all proved very imperative in the current study. Based on the developmental or progressive manner in which the ideas are used, they helped in showing the progress of impacts that can likely produce positive changes with family cohesion in the lives of African American men. Knowing that changes

happen in stages, these methods develop in a step by step progression or in the development in the lives of African American men as they seek to change family cohesion. Therefore, using spirituality and hope to affect African American men's family cohesion, the use of the ideas proved beneficial to bring about changes that are sought after in family cohesion. Since all three theories focus on developmental stages and levels of progress, they supported the variables and aided in bringing help to the issue by adding information and building on a new component to the existing theory. Thus, the mediation model was introduced in this current research, adding a new component to the theoretical framework. It fits the theoretical framework by adding a sequence of stages and how one variable aided the other in fulfilling its work. This model is discussed below.

The Mediation Model

The mediation model posits that there has to be a predictor, a mediator, and an outcome variable in a research study (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Therefore, mediation occurs when the predictor variable (spirituality) impacts the dependent variable (family cohesion) through the mediator variable (hope). This process is called pure mediation because there is only one mediator variable. The importance of using the mediation model is that it goes beyond simply describing the variables to an understanding of the function and the relationship of the variables present (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Over the past years, the mediation model has been widely used in research in the field of psychology (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Dijkstra, Beersma & Cornelissen, 2012; Frazier, Tix, & Barron, 2004; Preacher & Hayes, 2008; Van-Tongeren, Hook, & Davis,

2013) and has continued until the present. However, improvements need to be conducted on a more frequent basis (Conger, 2007; Preacher & Hayes, 2008) so that the results and hypotheses can remain consistent. The mediation model guided Research Question 3: Is there a relationship between spirituality and family cohesion, and if so, can this relationship be mediated by hope?

Van-Tongeren, Hook, and Davis (2013), in their study of defensive religion as a source of meaning in life, surveyed 423 undergraduate (308 females, 115 males) at a large, mid-Atlantic university where participants received partial course credit. Their ethnicities varied (Caucasian/White: 53.2%, African American/Black: 21.3%, Asian: 13.5%, Hispanic/Latino: 3.8%, Native American: .7%, Other: 7.6%). Participants' religious affiliation ranged from 25.3% Protestant, 19.4% Catholic, 11.3% not religious, 8.3% agnostic, 5.0% atheist, 2.6% Buddhist, 2.4% Muslim, 1.7% Hindu, .9% Jewish, and 23.2% other and how many years they practiced their religion. Participants reported on a 7-point scale average when asked "How religious or spiritual would you consider yourself?"

The goals of the research, according to Van-Tongeren, Hook, and Davis (2013), were to provide evidence that religion is a motivated form of social cognition that serves the existential function of providing meaning in life and to consider whether defensive religious beliefs provide meaning in life and how such beliefs was practiced. Research data supported the goal of the study by reinforcing that defensive religion was associated with higher meaning in life and that this relationship was fully mediated by belief in literal immortality and religious commitment. However, overall based on the mediation model,

belief in literal immortality and religious commitment significantly mediated the effect of defensive religion on meaning in life.

Van-Tongeren, Hook, and Davis (2013) posited that through their work, an understanding of how religion promotes meaning in life was met. Furthermore, while defensive religion may provide meaning in life, there are other religious meaning systems that may not be as effective at providing existential comfort, and, therefore, they encourage other researchers to examine how religious beliefs may provide meaning by considering characteristics of one's religious organization, such as group cohesiveness, individual loyalty, and belief exclusivity. There are limitations to the study according to Van-Tongeren, Hook, and Davis, which are a cross-sectional, correlational design was used, limiting the analysis of the data; they also needed replications using experimental designs. Consequently, they were unable to draw conclusions about the relationships between variables. They, therefore, suggested that more experimental work be done since it would demonstrate the causal chain of the effect of defensive religion through both mediators in parallel and would provide more conclusive evidence for our initial findings here.

Dijkstra, Beersma and Cornelissen (2012), in their study about the emergence of the activity which reduces conflict associated with stress (ARCAS) model: a test of a conditional mediation model of workplace conflict and employee anxiety, surveyed employees from diverse organizations in a wide variety of areas, such as accountants, the health field, retail, academia, culinary arts, and legal and human resources. One hundred thirty-threesurveys were distributed, and 72% were completed and returned. All

respondents had Dutch nationality and 62% were women while only 38% were males. The study aimed to test and extend the emerging activity reduces conflict-associated strain (ARCAS) model, and they predicted that the relationship between task conflict and employee stress would be reduced to the extent that people would experience high organization-based self-esteem (OBSE). Based on the predictions of the study, the mediation model confirmed a conditional mediation model in which organization-based self-esteem through its relationship with problem-solving conflict that management used reduced the relationship between task conflict and employee stress.

Dijkstra, et al., 2012 stated that are limitation in the nature and rather small size of the sample. The question is; to what extent the findings derived from this sample can generalized to the population of employees in general? The cross-sectional nature of the study design limits the conclusions regarding causality. It cannot be certain whether conflict causes tension, or strain causes conflict, or the two variables mutually influence each other, so there is a significant barrier noted. Researchers are encouraged to conduct future studies examining their model in an experimental context.

Jankowski and Sandage (2011) in their study on meditative prayer, hope, adult attachment, and forgiveness: a proposed model, studied 211 masters-level students from a Protestant-affiliated university in the midwest who were recruited from both classes and orientation sessions ranging from age 21 to 63 and the mean age was 34.58, and $SD(10.79)$. The sample was 51.7% female, 48.3% male, 33.2% single, and 49.8% were parents. Assessed participants identified as 89.6% European American, 3.8% Asian or Asian

American, 3.3% African American, 1.4% Native American, 1% Hispanic. Most of the participants are associated with one of six defined majors, including master's degrees in divinity (52.5%), children and family ministries (15.2%), theological studies (11.4%), marriage and family therapy (8.1%), Christian thought (3.3%), Christian education (2.8%), or leadership (1.9%).

The hope scale (Snyder, 1986) is a 12-item self-report measure designed to assess participants' goal-oriented thinking was used, which is similar to what is used in the current research. Hope was used as a mediator in the study under review; also, it was used in the current study which was very supportive as data were examined and compared. The results suggest that hope and adult attachment together mediated the relationship between meditative prayer and interpersonal forgiveness. While the data supported the predictions of the topic, much can be done to address the limitations that surfaced.

The participants were mainly European-Americans, therefore, the generalization might not hold true for other ethnicities including the African American men, therefore research within other religious traditions and within more ethnically diverse samples is needed. Suggestions by Jankowski and Sandage for experimental design studies on this topic, were encouraged, also for varied age groups and other sample populations, such as prisons and hospitals.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables

For the purpose of this study, spirituality and hope were studied in their relation to African American men's family cohesion. Also, this research examined other studies that

have used spirituality, hope, and family cohesion principles to establish the theoretical framework for their studies. While these variables were considered together, or separately, in different studies, they produced valuable information to help with the quest for improved family cohesion. Through the use of spirituality, hope and family approaches, a better understanding of each theory was achieved. Thus presenting information so that a clearer understanding is made to demonstrate further to the populace how using spirituality and hope can produce valid information and suggestions so that African American men's can consider their family cohesion. According to Wills (2007), any clinician who communicates information in the clinical setting should consider the potentially transformative nature of spirituality, with a focus on how individuals are vested as change agents in personal well-being and the well-being of others. Spirituality is viewed as an essential aspect of life, and numerous researchers have investigated and included spirituality as part of the quality of life (Koenig, 2008; Mattis & Jagger, 2010; O'Connell, & Skevington, 2007; Perry, 2009).

Finally, based on previous research, the use of spirituality was essential in bringing about changes in the everyday life of individuals and also African American men as they seek to make positive changes on family cohesion (O'Connell, & Skevington, 2007). In the discussions that followed, spirituality, and hope were investigated, to find out, how they impacted the African American men's family cohesion.

Spirituality

Taylor and Chatters (2010), in their quantitative research, considered the importance of spirituality and religion in the daily lives of African Americans, Caribbean Blacks and Non-Hispanic Whites. The findings indicated that African Americans and Caribbean Blacks were more likely in identifying that both spirituality and religion are important to them in comparison to their Non-Hispanic White counterparts. They further argued that the Caucasians are more likely to indicate that either spirituality or religion is necessary, not both. Consequently, for African Americans spirituality was a dominant source in bringing forth changes (Cacioppo, et al., 2005; Cutrona, et al., 2011).

Historically, a previous study on religion and spirituality were conducted by (Kass, 1987) using non-probability samples of the general population or specialized subgroups that excluded minorities such as African Americans, and were more exclusively Caucasians. Interestingly the study by Taylor and Chatters (2010) comprises one of the few studies to explore religion and spirituality using data from a national probability sample. Taylor and Chatters included 6,082 participants who were interviewed face to face. The participants were 18 years and older. The ethnic distribution of the participants was: 3,570 African Americans, 891 non-Hispanic Caucasians and 1,621 Blacks of Caribbean decent. In the study Taylor and Chatters (2010) measured the importance of spirituality in the lives of the participants by asking the question, how important is spirituality in their lives? The item had three response options: very imperative, fairly important, not too important, or not important at all. The result of the study showed that 84% of the participants reported

that the spirituality played a very critical role in their life. The study found significant racial differences in the response to questions regarding the importance of spirituality and religion. The findings of the study were consistent to previous studies (Chatters et al., 2009; Taylor, Chatters, & Jackson, 2007), which concurred that African Americans were more likely to report the importance of spirituality in their lives.

The current study gleaned from the study conducted by Taylor and Chatters (2010) by narrowing the research to African American men and examining how spirituality was used to expose important aspect of family life. No more can anyone wait and speculate about what will happen, each person can become proactive and make a difference in life as it relates to spirituality and how it can help in bringing about positive changes, especially with family cohesion. While Taylor and Chatters (2010) focused on the importance of spirituality and religion in the lives of African Americans, Caribbean Black and Non-Hispanic Whites, the current study focused on spirituality and hope, the impact on African American men's family cohesion.

Weisman de Mamani, Wasserman, Duarte, Koneru, and Llerena (2010), in their quantitative study, examined 150 (99 females and 51 males), undergraduate college student's written narrative on what spirituality meant to them and the role it played in their lives. The study had two aims which were to understand qualitatively what the term spirituality signifies to them and to understand the subtypes of religious beliefs and how these beliefs relate to individuals' family cohesion, Weisman de Mamani et al. (2010), included a multi ethnic group, 41% Caucasian, 37% Hispanic, 11%, African American, and

11% others in their study. A chi square analysis was utilized to analyze the data. The family environment scale (FES) was used to evaluate the participants' self-report of their spirituality and family cohesion (Moos & Moos, 1981). The FES is a 90 items true-false measurement that contains 9 subscales. Responses for the study conducted by Weisman de Mamani et al., were classified into one of the following categories: neither experiential/personalized (e/p); nor dogmatic/ritualistic (d/r); primarily d/r; primarily e/p; and e/p + d/r and spirituality was rated on a scale ranging from 1 (Not at all important) to 5 (extremely critical). In order to evaluate reliability different individuals were asked to rate separate subscales of the tests. Internal security of the family cohesion of the FES was used to assess participant's family cohesion. The coding was designed that a higher score for the 9 true-false items suggests a higher family cohesion. The internal reliability using the Cronbach's alpha was .77, which is .01 less than the initial internal security found by the original developer of the subscale (Moos & Moos, 1981).

The results indicated that males ($M=16.08$; $SD= 1.97$) and females ($M= 15.81$; $SD=2.30$) showed no difference in family cohesion and that there was no difference on male and female's spirituality based on the results from the FES. Ethnic groups were assessed, Whites and minorities (African Americans, Hispanic and other). The minorities were grouped as one because there was not enough represented to classify each group separately. The findings suggest that there was no difference between the Whites and minorities as it relates to family cohesion, but minorities were found to be more spiritual than the Whites. A one-way analysis ANOVA revealed a difference between the groups for

spirituality and family cohesion. Prior research along with current research show consistency with study hypotheses and partial correlations showed that participants who supported being more spiritual on the FES also endorsed having more family cohesion. Unlike this study, the current study will use the family cohesion scale and the multiple linear regressions to gather and review the data collected. While the previously mentioned study used a different scale, similar variables, (spirituality and family cohesion) were used.

The result from the above mentioned study showed that family cohesion has mental health benefit and that turning to God for support is the preferred option of the members(Weisman de Mamani et al., 2010). The study conducted used college undergraduates who can be considered one of the limitations of the study. This will somewhat determine limited because of educational levels. The current study focus on African American men age 18 and over, with educational level from the undergraduate to the post Ph.D. level. There will be a better representation of data versus a cluster of data. While education is considered important, it would certainly be more versatile when there is diversity in the population studied, and that will be seen in the current study where age and the educational level will be more diverse, and giving a better representation of data. The current study will be more objective in that it involves a wider range of people, although it is the same ethnicity, unlike study done by Weisman de Mamani et al., who did not get results for each separate group, because African American, Hispanic and other were combined. A good representation of data was not given for each group; therefore in comparing with the current study, there would not be a good correlation.

The method was used as a compliment to spirituality has some flaws. According to its critics, there seem to be some prejudice against the female gender (Owens, et al., 2009). It is also said that the stages of faith theory lacks openness to a postmodern perspective (Gergen, 2001) and that Fowler's non participation in the critique process somewhat suggest an end to this approach. These critics are somewhat suggesting that because of the subjectivity of the theory it has begun its decline and that the embracing of alternate existing faith development theory is in effect. However, amidst the criticism of the stages of faith theory it is widely used and continues to make an impact in the spiritual world and also its usage in the current study was very informative in providing information on the development of one's spirituality.

Narayanasamy and Narayanasamy (2008), in their qualitative study, investigated the healing power of prayer and its implications for nurses, states that all spiritual entities use prayer as recourse in their daily lives to bring solace and comfort to self and others. Prayer is considered to be an important aspect of spirituality, and is used by all major religious groups for connectedness to their higher source of deity or God to help with spiritual or physical well-being (Chatters & Taylor, 2008; Rogers et. al 2007). In their research, the authors found that a prayer as a form of spirituality was very imperative to patients in holistic care facilities, they in turn asked for the use of prayer in their care. The authors proposed the need for prayer in health care services as was indicative in their research. This current research is cognizant that prayer is very essential in the African American spiritual life (Beach et al., 2011), and is therefore, proposing that the use of

prayer will be important to bring about changes in their understanding of family cohesion. African Americans are very religious, and they believe that God answers prayers (Humphrey, Hughes, & Holmes, 2008). Prayer is a very fundamental aspect of spirituality and is, therefore, accepted and asked by most individuals when they are faced with problems and sickness (Harvey & Cook, 2010). Prayer according to the study is a powerful source of spirituality, providing coping strategies in the most crucial times of family and health crisis (Ai et al., 2007; Taylor et al., 2010)

Based on the definition for spirituality which is defined as a feeling or perception of well-being that comes from being in relation with God, and a sense of purpose, and life satisfaction that accompanies that relationship (Brome, Owens, et al., 2000), and since there is no relationship without communication (Humphrey, Hughes, & Holmes, 2008; Kemeny, 2008). Prayer is one of the forms of communication used in the religious aspect; it will be tested to see how it can be used to bring about positive changes with family cohesion. In this research prayer was found to generate a mechanism for neutralizing stress and supports positive reactions and also prayer is good for all aspects of well-being. While the implications for prayer were explored in nursing there is a must for further research because the findings are not conclusive they are indicative of what was researched. Previous researchers contend that if prayer can be useful in other areas of life, using it in the life of African American men should likely prove helpful in bringing about positive changes in their understanding of family cohesion. Prayer as the essential aspect of

spirituality commands a lot of attention as the need for it grows in the medical field and other areas of life also (Beach et al., 2011; O'Connell, & Skevington, 2007).

Chapman and Steger (2010) in their study on race and religion studied 221 nonclinical undergraduates. The study sought to investigate race and religion: differential prediction of anxiety symptoms by religious coping in African American and European-American young adults. The sample included 71 males and 150 females. 55% were European-Americans while 45% were African Americans. Spirituality has been the central importance in the lives of African Americans (Chapman & Steger, 2010). Therefore it was of dire importance that the study explored whether or not the concept of spiritual coping was beneficial or harmful in these ethnic groups, and for the sake of this research emphasis will be on African Americans.

The moderator analytic approach was used with multiple regressions to examine whether or not there was a difference in the coping with stress between African Americans and their counterpart European-Americans. Although the above mentioned study focused on using religion/spirituality to help with the prediction of stress, a topic that is completely different from the current, the fact that spirituality is one of the variables is very meaningful to the researcher. In their study, Chapman and Steger (2010) found that African American reported meaningfully more positive/spiritual coping, less anxiety symptoms, and less negative religious/spiritual coping than their European-American counterparts, which was consistent with previous hypothesis and also with the hypothesis from the current study.

The limitations from this study is that the sample is composed of young people, the results cannot be generalized to the older adults population because of varied points of view; the sample was not a clinical one, therefore the results could be different. The findings from the study supported previous research that African Americans are more apt to embrace spirituality and rely on it for support in times of discrimination and pressure in life (Pieterse& Carter, 2007; Riina& McHale, 2010, Riina& McHale, 2012; Townsend & Lanphier, 2007). Based on the findings a strong support for the current research is present. However, the researcher suggested the further research to done using new models to examine the African American population so that researchers can understand their anxiety and coping strategies.

Hope

Hope according to the definition is how one uses perceived capability to derive pathways to desired goals, and motivate oneself via agency thinking to use those pathways, (Snyder, 2009) while hope has been described by many as a basic, fundamental, and essential part of life in coping with stress situations (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). A life without hope can prove futile; however, a review of the literature reveal that the hope is a powerful factor in realizing one's dreams or aspirations (Carver & Scheier, 2002; Snyder, 2002). In reviewing the literature, a quantitative study conducted by Chang and Banks (2007), examined 46 European-Americans, 30 African Americans, 33 Latinos and 46 Asian-Americans, mixed gender, they wanted to clarify and extend the Snyder (1994), and Snyder (2002), hope theories to a more diverse population. Chang and Banks (2007) in their study also stated that the majority of research examining Snyder's model of hope is

surveyed on European-Americans college students, unlike the study under review, this current research will narrow the search to African American men specifically. They further contend that a much need to be done in relation to hope and other ethnic groups such as Asians-Americans, Latinos and African American; thus, this current study will play an important role in providing information in the areas much needed ethnic group providing added information that will be posted to support the previous findings. The hope scale was used to assess agency and pathways thinking of these individuals, likewise in this current study the hope scale will be used to determine what influence hope will have on family cohesion among African American men. There were some differences with the procedures for the survey, those participants for the study under review were not made aware of the purpose for the survey until after they were complete, while the participant for the current study were knowledgeable on the purpose for the study.

The current researcher cannot make a prediction on the outcome of the current study but based on the information that will be presented, it is likely that the current information will help data that was presented previously on the topic. Similar procedures of confidentiality will be in effect for this current study as the one under review. The result from the study under review showed that there was one significant difference in the company thinking between the different ethnic groups: Latinos ($M=12.67$, $SD=2.13$) over the African American ($M=12.07$ $SD=2.53$), European American ($M=11.74$, $SD=1.96$). However, for the pathway's thing there was no significant difference. Based on the reviewed study Chang and Banks (2007) concluded that the function of hope was more

similar than was dissimilar across the four ethnic groups studied. Now since there was not much testing done with a different ethnic group (Chang & Banks, 2007; Scioli et al. 2011) came to a consensus that one cannot generalize the findings. It is with these concerns in mind that the current researcher will seek to conduct a study using African American men to find out the impact of hope in their lives. Since there is limited data from the African American populace that this study will provide empirical data that can be presented as forms of proof of examination and for correlation studies in the future.

Although, through hope, African Americans have seen a great change in life, to-date there is still oppression and discrimination which has caused them to mistrust even within their families (Chang & Banks, 2011; Whaley, 2001). The introduction of hope will likely bring about changes, in the lives and within the families of African American men. In support of Chang's and Bank's (2007) study, Riina and McHale (2010, 2012) also address discrimination within the African American families as a factor that produced stress and family cohesion concerns, under the family cohesion heading. The family issue is certainly a cause to be reckoned with as it is addressed so widely. The current study will draw upon these references bringing to light, more information as it refers to the use of hope in the lives of African American men. Some limitations of the study are that it was not a large sample from a diverse population from which to conduct their survey, the variable were generalized to the groups, so it is recommended that for future studies, the variables be specific to each group. The study may be limited in generalizability because of its sample that includes only college study.

Scioli et al. (2011) in their quantitative study to identify the nature of hope and to measure hope, tested 145 adults (60 males and 85 females), their ages ranging from 23-80 years old, also 80 college students (18 males and 62 females) ages ranging from 18-22 and internet sample where 542 individuals (121 males and 403 females) completed the survey. Since hope can be expressed as a trait or state (Scioli, 2011) hope was measured using different hope scales such as the trait hope scale, state hope scale, Herth (1991) Snyder hope scale (1991), to measure hope, and found out its importance. The social and behavioral sciences, also the applied field of medicine, clinical and counseling psychology and the educational field would benefit immensely from a theoretical and empirically supported measure of hope, especially considering that previous analysis came from the nursing field. In the fields of health psychology and behavioral medicine (Snyder, 1986), hope scale (1991), is widely used to determine goal oriented individuals, and those individuals who have the desire to reach their goals. With an analysis of hope empirically supported, it can be more widely used to support various studies, including the current study, using hope as a mediation may likely bring about changes for African American men's perception of family cohesion. The Snyder hope scale (1991) is the hope scale used in the current study, and it is one of the hope scales used in the study under review, it includes the four components of hope, namely mastery, attachment, survival and spirituality, unlike the other scales. Scioli et al., (2007) found that the hope is considered universal.

Davidson, Wingate, Sligh, and Rasmussens, (2010) surveyed 115 African American college students (37 males and 78 females), examining hope and its relation to suicide risk among African Americans. The study examined whether there were any correlations between hope and death in African American. The revised trait hope scale (Shorey& Snyder, 2004) was used to measure hope and whether or not there were any relations to suicide risk among African Americans. It measures goals, pathways and agency, and hierarchical regression analyses were used to test the hypothesis. Results from the study showed that the hope was related and predicted higher levels of acquired capabilities, was a predictor of perceived burdensomeness. Another finding of the study is that hope is a predictor of suicidal ideation Davidson, et al., (2010).

Davidson, et al., used hope as a predictor while the current study used hope as a mediator, the intent of both studies is to show the importance of hope in life. It is interesting how both studies use hope in bringing across its essence as an important element in our society. In their study used hope as a predictor, indicating that hope will support the findings that hope is a worthwhile source to help guard against committing suicide. This current study used hope as a mediator, to show that hope in whatever way it is used will likely be very rewarding. Both studies used the hierarchical analysis to interpret data. While the study conducted by Davidson, et. Al., (2010) reported on African Americans college students, the current student will focus on a more diversified group within the African American community making it a stronger study than the one done by Davidson, et.al.

Stoddard, McMorris and Sieving (2011) in their study on how social connections and hope matter in prediction of early adolescent violence is far different from the subject under review but as the gap indicated that there is limited literature on the topic, other topics researched using the variables are considered. The study was done to examine the relationships between social connections, hope and violence among young adolescents and to find out whether adolescents relationships in the family and school connectedness and violence involvement were mediated by hopefulness. The sample ($N=164$) was 51% female, 42% African Americans, 28% Asian, 13% Hispanics and 17% mixed race. About 15% of the sample reported mixed ethnicity or mixed background. More than half (56.1%) the sampled students lived with two parents while 35.7% lived with one parent and 8.2% of the sampled students were not living with either of their parents. The average age at the time of the survey was 12 years old. One may ask what do adolescents have to do with the current student under review? The answer is; there is a lot in common, the variables are similar, where the connectedness of the family is examined and is been mediated by hope, which is similar to the theme of the current research. If school and family connectedness can be mediated by hope, similar principles will be adhered to in the current student to answer the research questions of whether or not family cohesion in the current research or family connectedness in the study under review can be mediated by hope.

Stoddard, McMorris and Sieving (2011), used the multivariate regression analyses to examine parent-family connectedness, school connectedness and hopefulness were associated with violence involvement. The results from their research found that a parent-

family connectedness was shielding effect against violence; school connectedness did not offer much protection. Hopefulness, on the other hand was related to lower levels of violence. High levels of hopefulness were reported by the sample ($M=2.21$, Range 0-3) and attachments to parents and family ($M=2.48$, Range 0-3). The results showed that adolescents who were more connected to their families were less likely to be part of violent behaviors, and hopefulness was significantly negatively related to violence involvement ($r = -.24$). Parent-Family connectedness and school connectedness were positively and significantly correlated with hopefulness ($r = .34$, $p < .01$ and $r = .48$, $p < .01$). As a result, the relationships between the social connectedness variables, hopefulness and violence involvement met the criteria necessary for assessment of mediation (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Preacher, & Hayes, 2008).

When making a correlation between the research under review and the current research, one may ask why review a study with adolescents to make a comparison with women. Here is an important thing, both researches use similar variables family connectedness/family cohesion and hope as their mediation. A review of this research showed similar questions with presumable results that will be similar; therefore, the use of the research under review is considered appropriate although the sample shows a significant age difference. It is by no coincidence that Ginwright, 2011 wrote, “for young people, the diminished capacity for hope is one of the most significant threats to civic engagement” therefore the connectedness of family and parent is very essential as both entities work together to building more hopeful and structured lives for individuals.

Davidson and Wingate (2011) in their quantitative research on racial disparities in risk and protective factors for suicide, examined a sample of African Americans and their Caucasian counterparts on how the importance of hope and spirituality helped them buffer suicide. While this topic does not relate directly to the current research, the variables, spirituality and hope are used in both researches. The research done will provide information that will prove very informative and relevant to the current research on African American men and how the use of spirituality and hope will be used to impact their family cohesion.

Davidson and Wingate used the hope theory and religiosity to hypothesize that African American would have higher levels of protective and risk factors based on their spiritual background, relative to their Caucasian counterpart. Because of spirituality and hope as the core of the African American's life it is seen where they were able to buffer stressful situations in life including, divorce, death, discrimination and incarceration (Cutrona, et. al. 2011; Davidson, & Wingate, 2011; Redman, 2012).

The sample for the first study were 129 college students, (84 women and 45 men) and only participants who identified themselves as Caucasian ($n = 94$; 62 women and 32 men) were included. The age ranged from 18 to 38 years. 41.5% were freshmen; 22.3% were sophomores, 19.1% were juniors and 17.0% were seniors. The sample for the second study was 115 who identified as African American college students (78 females and 37 males). Participants ranged from 18-31 years of age. 22.6% were freshmen; 26.1% were sophomores, 25.2% were juniors and 25.2% were seniors and 0.9% represented other.

Although, African American participants had higher levels of education, they had lower income, which according was a factor in the family cohesion problem within the African American population.

The revised trait hope scale (HS-R2) (Shorey& Snyder, 2004) was used in the study, while the hope scale (Snyder, 1986) was not directly used; it is embedded in the 18 items self-reported measure. An 8-point Likert-type scale ranging from *1=definitely false* to *8=definitely true* was used. Acquired Capability for Suicide Scale (Van Orden et. al. 2008) is a 5-item self-reported measure that assesses the degree to which a person bears the pain that is associated with suicidal behavior. The scale uses a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *0=not at all like me* to *4=very much like me*. Interpersonal needs questionnaire (Van Orden et. al. 2008) is a 12-item self-reported test, where 5 items were used to assess belongingness and 7 items were used to assess burdensomeness. A 7-point Likert scale was ranging from *1=not at all true for me* to *7=very right for me*. Depressive symptom inventory-suicidality subscale (Metalsky, 1991; Metalsky& Joiner 1997) was used. This is a 4-item measure. The final scale that was used is the intrinsic religious orientation scale (IROS) (Allport& Ross, 1967 as modified by Genia, (1993) which measures the strength of religious beliefs to the degree that religious belief play in the lives of the members. A 7-point Likert scale ranging from *1=strongly disagree* to *agree 7=strongly*. Although all the above mentioned scales are not applicable to the current research, the HS-R2 and the IROS will prove useful as it reports the effect of hope and religion on the participants. The data will then be used to support current findings and present data for current and future use.

Two multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs) were conducted to investigate differences in protective factors and to examine ethnic differences in risk factors for suicide. Univariate analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to determine which variables contributed greatly to the omnibus effect. Findings will be used to make a comparison and see how useful the various analytical processes are. Results from the study indicated that African Americans may have higher levels of hope as protective factors that are necessary in buffering suicide ideation, suicidal attempts and from suicide itself. It has been established in two studies that hope is related to lower levels of suicidal ideation (Davidson et. al. 2010; Davidson & Wingate, 2011). Also, African American demonstrated a higher level of intrinsic religiosity and regular church attendance than their Caucasian counterpart. Importantly, there was a significant difference in gender in relationships to church attendance. Since it is proven that African Americans are exposed to a greater level of stressors and have lower rates of suicide (American Association of Suicidology, 2008), two researchers are proposing that the strategies that are used by the African Americans could be introduced to the general populace as a means of reducing suicidal rate (Davidson & Wingate, 2011). African Americans reported higher levels of hope and intrinsic religiosity, and regular church attendance and prayer than their Caucasian counterparts (Davidson & Wingate, 2011) if this theory of hope and religion continue to prove significant, then, this can facilitate a pilot study and make recommendations from the results.

The research is considered influential in that studies were conducted on two entirely different race, then the results were compared and discussed. One minute concern is that the sample size could be bigger to make the results more substantive. Recommendations were made for further study using different variables and other factors. As skeptics of the Hope Scale, Carver and Scheier (2002) express concerns over three out of the four agency items measures confidence/optimism instead of selecting company. Shorey et al., (2002) responded to their criticism by reminding them that the initial study cited three agency items as things that were said to get individuals motivated. Supporters of the hope scale stated that the hope scale will help with student success tasks especially when evidence seems to support the notion that the more active the hope of fulfilling a dream, the stronger the desire to remain in school and attain the goal that was set (Chang, & Banks, 2007; Iheke, 2000; Lopez et al., 2000). Finally, the four agency items have been substantiated for over forty years (Shorey et al., 2002) therefore the use of the hope scale will continue, despite its controversial concerns from its critics.

Family Cohesion

In surveying the literature, Boyraz and Sayger (2012), in their quantitative survey highlighted the importance of family cohesion for fathers of children with and without disabilities. The purpose of the study was twofold, first finding the well-being of fathers of children with and without disabilities, and second was to examine the effect family cohesion, adaptability, and paternal efficacy. The research questions that were answered are; whether or not fathers of children with disabilities differ from fathers without

disabilities in terms of perceived psychological well-being, and to what extent do socio-demographic factors, family cohesion, adaptability, paternal self-efficacy account for the variation in the psychological well-being of fathers. And last, whether or not fathers of children with and without disabilities differ in terms of the factors that contribute to their psychological well-being (Boyras&Sayger). The web-based surveys were to collect the information and fathers had to be over age 18. The total for the study was 280 fathers that included sixty three fathers of children, with disabilities and 217 fathers of typical developing children were surveyed.

In their research three instruments were used namely: scales of psychological well-being, family cohesion and adaptability evaluation scale (FACES-111) and the paternal self-efficacy scale (PSES). The short form of scales of psychological well-being (PWB-SF; Ryff, 1989) is a 54 items instrument, measuring six dimensions of well-being, known autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose if life, and self-acceptance. Next, they used, Family Cohesion and Adaptability Evaluation Scale (FACES-111: Olson, Portner, &Lavee, 1985) is a 20-item, self-reported instrument that assesses family functioning. Lastly, the paternal self-efficacy scale (PSES), which is a self-report measurement that assesses how parents perceive to carry out their functions such as providing for their families. The MANOVA was used to analyse the data and the result shown significant age difference between fathers with and without disabilities. The result of the MANOVA showed a statistical significance, $WilksA=.915$. $F(6, 273) = 4.244$, $p=.000$. The results of the data showed a significant difference in psychological well-being.

According to Boyraz and Saygera quantitative study has a number of limitations that are: all instruments were self-reported so there could be biases, the survey was done via the web, therefore there could be misrepresentations of the fathers, most of the father of children with disabilities were Caucasian with higher levels of education and income than those without children with disabilities versus fathers of children with disability. Finally, they concluded that despite the limitations this study contributes significantly to the literature by examining the effects of family environment and also the importance of family cohesion.

Although the study examined fathers of children with and without disabilities, the current study will also focus on men in general but it is likely that the sample will include fathers with or without disabilities. Also, they included several ethnic groups in their study. However, the current study will focus on African American men only. By using African American males as the participants of the current study, will add to the literature as it relates family cohesion.

Walton and Takeuchi also, examined family structure and processes and well-being among Asian-American, found that family cohesion effect gender and nativity, protecting the psychological well-being of women and American born personnel but not men and foreign born individuals. Taking this a bit further the current study will focus on a particular race and gender and the African American men unlike the former that focused generally on Asian-Americans to find out the impact such will have on them. The current researcher hypothesize that spirituality and hope will affect African American perception of

family cohesion and so used the findings from the surveyed research, it will be used in helping in bringing new information to light. According to Walton and Takeuchi, cohesive family relationships lead to emotional satisfaction and alleviate distress whereas conflictcentered and less cohesive families lead to demoralization and decrease in healthy living. In adding to previous studies, the current study will add much needed information to the literature about African American men using spirituality and hope to change family cohesion.

Riina and McHale (2010) studied 150 African American families in their quantitative study and reported on various factors including discrimination, warmth and conflict within the family. 150 African American families reported, and 60-90% reported that they had been discriminated against. Males reported more discrimination among male than female. However, European American families who have been documented have linked stressful situations with family relationship or family cohesion (Murray et al., 2008). A limitation of this study is that the focus is based on the female sex, therefore much need to be known about the male gender and how they cope within the family. The report on the study yield valuable information however there is a lack of information as it pertains to African American men. The current study will examine the impact it will have on family cohesion and report data.

Riina and McHale (2012) studied 192 African American parents, mothers and fathers involved, who were reporting on co-parenting satisfaction within the family. The research was done to find out whether or not there was satisfaction in co-parenting and

what support was present within the family. Both studies done by Riina and McHale (2010) and Riina and McHale (2012), revealed that discrimination was part of the factor that added to family cohesion problems.

A quantitative study conducted by Townsend and Lumpier (2007), examined how family affects racial identity among African American youths and found that family interaction and cohesion can affect their children helping them to be resilience as they face obstacles in life. Participants included 52 African American's parent-child dyads from a community predominantly African Americans. 30% of adults in the area did not graduate from high school (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). The entire student attended the same elementary school, with an enrollment of 650 students then, with 97% been African Americans and entitled to government subsidized lunch. The purpose for this study was to examine the influences of parental efficacy, family coping and adaptive family functioning (including family cohesion) on the development of ethnic identity among African American youths. When the importance of the family is viewed in this study (Kannan et al., 2010), it showed the great influence that it has on it youth (William-Morris et al., 2010), and it is by no mere coincidence that the current research seeks to find out how the use of spirituality and hope will affect family cohesion. Family cohesion was measured by the family cohesion scale (Tolan, 1991) and this scale will also be used in the current research. Based on the results it will be tested to see whether or not there is a correlation between the variables that are used. The mediation model by Baron and Kenny (1996) was used and tested using the Pearson correlations, but it failed to support the first two criteria of Baron

and Kenny's test, therefore no further mediation analysis was done. In the current research the mediation model was used and consistent with the research questions and hypothesis, it will attempt to answer the question on whether or not hope will mediate between spirituality and family cohesion. A hierarchical regression was used to test components of parental efficacy, family coping and family functioning including family cohesion, similar analysis will be used in the current research. According to the authors, family is the most important agent of socialization for youth as they transition from the different levels of development operating including family cohesion, similar analysis will be used in the current research. Family is the most important agent of socialization for youth as they transition from the various levels of development

Townsend and Lanphier also contend that family influence including family cohesion is essential in the lives of youth and that it helps them to be more focused and resilient, while this is so in the literature under review, the current literature will try to provide evidence that spirituality mediated by hope can provide influencing factors that can affect family cohesion among African American men. Mostly importantly, the current research will attempt to show that the spirituality is an important aspect of the African American men's world and that it can likely help to make changes within the family, impacting family cohesion. Limitations of this study are; the sample size was too small to provide significant results about the family, the age group was too young and therefore, could not reflect the thoughts and insights of the older generations, its design was too limited being cross-sectional versus been longitudinal. The current study had a broader

age gap to deal with in that the age group range from 18 and over. Finally they suggested that added research on the subject of how racial socialization would change racial identity as it relates to parenting and family components should be done.

Brelsford (2011), in her quantitative study: divine alliances to handle family conflict: theistic mediation and triangulation in father-child relationships, studied 76 father-college student dyads with students between the ages of 18 and 25 years of age. There were 53% females, and 47% males, answering questions about their biological fathers. The study found that better relationship functioning was evident because of father-child spirituality, 44% of father reported attending religious meetings once or twice a week, while 46% of students reported praying at least few times a week. According to Brelsford, father and children who reported better family relationships indicated the importance of spirituality in their lives. The study focused on primarily Caucasians (89.3%), African Americans (2.7%), Latino (1.3%) and Asian or Pacific Islander (5.3%). These participants were from families who were either divorced (16%), never married (11%), or separated (3%). Although the use of different measurement scales and statistical analysis were used the essence of the research remains similar, in that, the importance of spirituality, using theistic mediation, was used to test the coping skills of fathers. The study under review used theistic mediation while the current study used the mediation model, to bring across their viewpoint on how spirituality can be used to produce positive changes. A t-test was used to analyze the data. There were limitations to this study in that the sample was tiny and mainly Caucasians thereby limiting the generalizability of the study. The researcher

suggested that a further work be done on this topic to facilitate better understanding and to present more data to substantiate proof of findings.

The Mediation Model

The mediation model had been used widely to explore ways in which a mediating variable could integrate information thus putting forth information to support research questions and hypothesis that are proposed in the various researches.

Owens, Thompson, Shaffer, Jackson and Kaslow (2009) in their quantitative study on intimate partner violence and child adjustment, used the mediation model (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Findings from the mediation model suggest that the intervention occurred in this study. Findings suggest that low-income African American mother-child dyads, maternal psychological distress and the report from children on family cohesion mediated a link between intimate partner's violence and children's psychological adjustment. Emotional distress mediated the relationship among nonphysical, with internalized and externalized problems. Family cohesion mediated the effects on children perception of inter-parental conflict (Owens et al., 2009). A complete mediation occurred in this study.

Stoddart, McMorris and Sieving (2011) used the mediation model in their quantitative study to examine whether or not social connection and hope matters in predicting early adolescent violence. The independent variables (family and school connections) must affect the dependent variable (violence involvement) and can be mediated by hopefulness. The relationship between social connectedness and violence was mediated by hopefulness while evidence of mediation between family-parent

connectedness and violence relationship exist. The study supported previous hypotheses that relationships between social connectedness and violence involvement can be mediated by young hopefulness. Hopefulness seems to mediate both the relationship between family connectedness and violence involvement and the relationship between school connectedness and violence involvement. A complete mediation occurred in this study, and similar result is expected in the current research.

Townsend and Lamphier (2007), in their quantitative study on family influence and youth started with the use of the mediation model (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Preacher & Hayes, 2008), to test the mediating influences of parental efficacy (independent variable) with family characteristics and family effectiveness (mediators), and they found a significant relationship between the variables. However, the second criteria, parental efficacy (independent variable) had no effect on racial identity (dependent variable), no significant relationship was established; therefore no further use of the mediation model ensued. Partial mediation occurred, which is not valid and it is important to note that in order for mediation to occur all three criteria have to be met.

Salsman, Brown, Brechting, and Carlson (2008), in their quantitative studies on the link between religion and spirituality and psychological adjustment: the mediating role of optimism and social support, found confidence and social support emerge as mediators of the links of being religious and adjustment and between spiritual and adjustment. The mediating analysis was done using recommendations from Baron and Kenny (1986) that intervention occurs when the following conditions must hold true: the independent

variables (religion and spirituality) must affect the mediator (confidence and social support) in the first equation; the independent variables (religion and spirituality) must be shown to affect the dependent variable (life satisfaction) in the second equation, and the mediators (optimism and social support) must affect the dependent variable, (life satisfaction) in the third equation.

In study 1 mediation did occur, in only one aspect, intrinsic religiousness was associated with the mediating variables (confidence and social support), and both dependent variables (religion and spirituality). However, extrinsic religiousness and the spirituality scale did not meet the preconditions for negotiation and they were not used further for any analysis. Partial mediation occurred versus complete mediation, which is necessary for the justification of the use of the model. In study 2 the relationship between religiousness and adjustment and spirituality and change was mediated by confidence and social support. Full mediation occurs when controlling for social support and intrinsic religiousness contributed to the complete reconciliation that occurred. Also confidence, prayer fulfillment provided to the predictions of satisfaction with life that indicate full intervention. The use of the mediation model in the above mentioned studies will prove beneficial for the current research, in that it will lend some support to the current study by sharing the procedures of how the model was used and how it can bring more understanding to this problem.

In reviewing the various studies as they relate to the research question 1: does spirituality, measured by the INSPIRIT, significantly predict perceptions of family

cohesion, as measured by the family relation/cohesion scale, for African American males?

It would seem that this issue was partially addressed by some researchers. Taylors and Chatters (2010), for example, examined the effects of spirituality in the lives of African Americans, Caribbean Blacks and Non-Hispanic Whites found that religion and spirituality is very critical in the lives of all three ethnic groups mentioned, although, for the African American families, spirituality is considered as the core element. Weisman de Mamani et al., (2010) suggested that the family cohesion was higher among students who claimed to be more religious than their counterparts. Based on the gap in the literature, there is a lack of information in relation to African American men. This current study will focus on that particular population sample, and will gather information from the various survey questionnaires, to be used alongside the existing information. Consequently, there will be empirical data added since this is a quantitative research, thus filling the gap for empirical data, and current information to the existing literature. The current research supported the existing literature by confirming and adding current data to existing literature.

Scioli et al., (2011) in their study discussed the importance of hope and how hope provides that which is necessary to make on one's dream and goals and focus on building family relationships. Davidson and Wingate (2011) examined African Americans and their Caucasian counterpart on how hope and spirituality would help against suicide. They found that the hope is a very fundamental part to counteract suicidal thoughts and actions and build better family relationships. Consequently, research question 2: Does hope measured by the hope scale significantly predict spirituality as measured by the INSPIRIT scale for

African American men?was not addressed to this particular population sample. The current research worked directly with African American men, therefore, current information, and empirical data gleaned from the survey questionnaires, was added to the existing information. Current information and empirical data will be provided, thus filling the gap where information is lacking.

Boyraz and Sayger (2012) discussed the importance of family cohesion for fathers with and without children with disability. Here it was found out that spirituality and family cohesion are very crucial and that there is a relationship between the two variables. Townsend and Lanphier (2007), examined how family influence youth. It was found that adolescents with strong family ties are less prone to getting into trouble. Research question 3: Is there a relationship between spirituality and family cohesion, and if so, can this relationship be mediated by hope, was observed in African American men. Information received from this mediation was shared with other researchers and used with the existing literature to support the issue under review. Current and added information was attained thus producing current evidence to support the gap in the literature.

Summary and Conclusion

The current study addressed the question on spirituality and hope and their influence on family cohesion among African American men. Spirituality is said to be a universal entity affecting worldwide community. The research revealed that the spirituality is a very crucial aspect in the lives of African Americans (Chapman & Steger, 2010; Taylor & Chatters, 2010). As a result, spirituality was used to aid with the family cohesion

problem that exists within the family. Hope also is a universal factor in life, and with it an individual can accomplish as he deems possible. The research also revealed that hope proved very essential in helping to change the family cohesion problem that exists, because spirituality helps individuals to be hopeful or optimist (Ai, et al., 2007; Davidson & Wingate, 2010; Davidson & Wingate, 2011). Hope will mediate between spirituality and family cohesion to influence African American men's perception of family cohesion. Family is part of a worldwide community and the most cohesive families there are, the more the community will produce progressive citizens. The family is very critical in the African American population (Pieterse & Carter, 2007; Riina & McHale, 2011; Riina & McHale 2012; Townsend & Lanpier, 2007).

In an effort to give more current literature and empirical data on the subject, continued research on spirituality (Taylor, et al., 2009), hope (Bailey & Snyder, 2007; Ciarrocchi et al., 2008), and family cohesion (Barr et al., 2012; Boyraz & Sayger, 2009) as suggested by each above mentioned researcher will continue. The current study is needed in order to address the gap for more research on African American men, considering that the variables, spirituality and hope appear to influence and family cohesion. Studies have suggested that family cohesion has eroded in the African American families (Townsend & Lanphier, 2007), however there is limited statistical data to support this, so this is one reason this study proved informative because it provided much needed research and empirical data to substantiate the need as it relates to African American men. Other reasons

for this study are that the findings contributed to the research and also influence the clinical approach to working with African American men.

The focus of this quantitative non-experimental inquiry is to examine the relationships between spirituality, and hope as influences on family cohesion among African American men. What is not known is whether the spirituality and hope will adequately address the different variables or whether or not the research questions were answered. What is known is that spirituality is a well-researched area (Dorsey, Forehand, & Brody, 2008; Elman, & London, 2011; Jankowski, & Sandage, 2011). Also, that the principles of spirituality are used in many disciplines and with all ethnicities to influence changes. The African American families consider spirituality and hope as important aspects of their lives, therefore, it is likely that spirituality and hope will change family cohesion if the principles are embraced (Dorsey, Forehand, & Brody, 2008; Elman, & London, 2011; Taylor, & Chatters, 2010).

The findings from the present study filled the gap in the literature, which indicated a lack of empirical and research information on the topic researching African American men's spirituality and hope and how they can influence family cohesion. By adding current research and numerical data to the existing study information, it will lend support to the issue. The added information will then be used by clinicians, social workers and counselors in their quest to help the African American men with their family cohesion problem.

Chapter 2 focused on the literature review of the variables being considered in the study and the principles supporting the variables. The sub-headings were: the introduction,

the literature search strategy, theoretical foundation, literature review, summary and conclusion. Chapter 3 presents the methodology, which centered on how to calculate and analyze the data collected from the surveys questionnaires. The main headings that were addressed are the introduction, the study design and rationale, methodology, threats to validity, and a summary.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

Introduction

The African American society has been plagued with a lack of family cohesion, especially among the male population (Perry, 2009). Less than one third of the African American men are in a stable, cohesive relationship that involves taking care of their children (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2002). Furthermore, there is a tendency for African American men to ignore family togetherness, commitments, and responsibilities, due to economic problems and reports of low marital satisfaction (Broman, 2005; McLoyd, Cauce, Takeuchi, & Wilson, 2000). This family cohesion problem was studied in relation to spirituality and hope, to determine whether or not there is a relationship between the two variables. Moreover, whether or not there was any significant improvement within the family if spirituality and hope is introduced is addressed here.

The purpose of this nonexperimental quantitative study was to test the stages of faith theory, Fowler (1981), the hope theory rainbows in the mind, Snyder (1986), and circumplex model of marital and family systems, theory, Olson (2002). Since there are levels of spirituality, it can be understood that each person related to situations based on their spiritual level. The theory was used as a guideline for understanding spirituality. The circumplex model of marital and family systems was employed to aid in better understanding the functions of the family. The rainbows in the mind theory helped one into gaining insight on hope and how it operated as it seeks to reconcile between spirituality and family cohesion. It is likely that this study will help in better understanding the connection

between the independent variables (spirituality and hope) and their relationship on the dependent variable, family cohesion.

Chapter 3 included the following headings: the introduction, the study design and rationale, methodology, threats to validity, and a summary.

Research Design and Rationale

The variables that were employed in this study are spirituality, hope, and family cohesion. Spirituality is the independent variable, with family cohesion as the dependent variable, and hope as the mediation. There are three research methods, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods, but after careful review of the three types of research methods, I decided that the quantitative method was best suited for this study. This quantitative analytic method was used to analyze data that guided the following research questions: Does spirituality, measured by the INSPIRIT, significantly predict family cohesion, as measured by the family relation/cohesion scale, for African American males? Does hope measured by the hope scale significantly predict spirituality as measured by the INSPIRIT scale for African American men? Is there a relationship between spirituality and family cohesion, and if so, can this relationship be mediated by hope? Using the quantitative approach with studies that yield empirical data is appropriate. Creswell (2008) postulated that a quantitative analysis is used to examining the relationship among variables. This method was chosen because it the most appropriate one for this type of study because of its objectivity in gathering information and for reporting the data collected (Creswell, 2008).

The quantitative approach proved more efficient in this study because it demonstrated more unbiased results since the data were analyzed by a reliable software (the SPSS 20.0), which was recommended by the university. However, when utilizing the quantitative method, time and resource constraints can be a problem because the participants will have to be given a period of time in which to complete the survey. If not done within the time, then rescheduling the time for new participants to complete the surveys is eminent. In order to obtain a required quota, the surveys would have to be received in a timely manner so that if the quota is not met, then new members will be asked to complete the surveys to meet the required number. A quantitative approach is employed when the guidelines have been followed (Creswell, 2003). The time given for the return of the surveys was 1 week, if surveys were not in at the given time, the process was re-done until the desired quantity was reached.

It is my intention to examine the influence of spirituality and hope on African American men's family cohesion. In order to adequately consider the above mentioned variables, when deciding which method was the most appropriate, the choice was the quantitative approach. Providing empirical data collected from the three studies was consistent in advancing knowledge in the area since current information about the topic under review is lacking in the existing literature (Chang & Banks, 2007; Taylor & Chatters, 2010; Utsey et al., 2008). The mediation model was also considered to be important in addressing the use of the variables spirituality, hope, and family cohesion; therefore, it was used to make

further claims on the use of spirituality and hope as they seek to affect African American men's perception of family cohesion.

The Mediation Model

Preacher and Hayes(2008) and Baron and Kenny (1986) posited that when using a mediation model, the relationship between predictors (spirituality), mediator (hope), and predicted variable (family cohesion) can be tested with a series of regression analyses. First, the independent variable (spirituality)hasto be a significant predictor of the dependent variable (family cohesion). Preacher and Hayes recommended the following as stages to testing intervention:Initially, regressing the mediator on the independent variable; next, regressing the dependent variable on the independent variable;and finally, regressing the dependent variable on both the independent variable and on the mediator. Figure 1 below shows the simple mediation modelwith its variables spirituality, hope, and family cohesion, and the path of the mediation process, which is discussed further in Chapters 3 and 5.

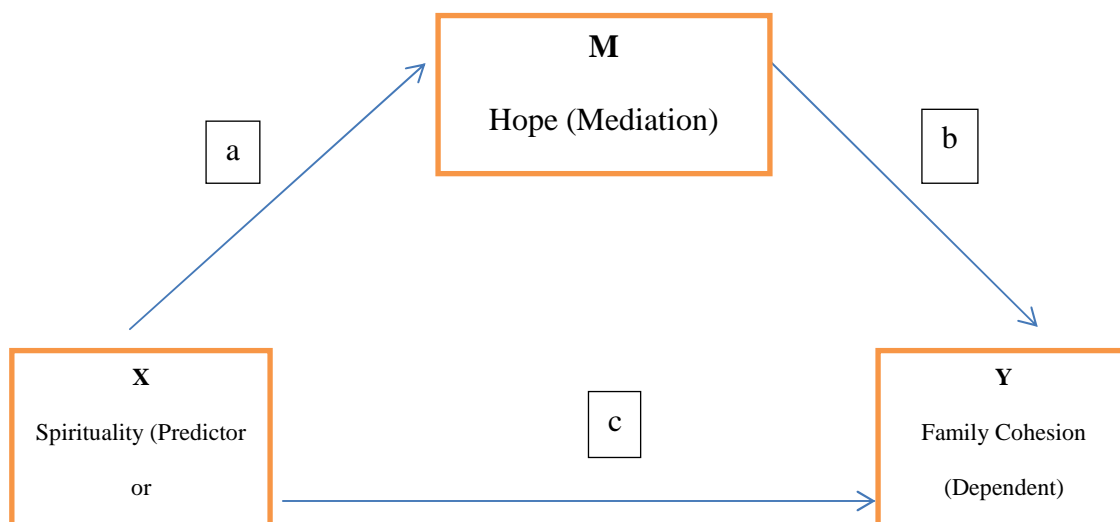


Figure 1. Simple mediation model.

Three Stages to Testing Mediation

1. Regressing the mediator variable on the independent variable:

Hope \longrightarrow Spirituality

2. Regressing the dependent variable on the independent variable:

Family Cohesion \longrightarrow Spirituality

Regressing the dependent variable on both the independent and mediator variables:

Family Cohesion \longrightarrow Spirituality and Hope

According to Preacher and Hayes (2008), in order to establish mediation, the following conditions must hold true: The independent variable (spirituality) must affect the judge (hope) in the first equation; the independent variable (spirituality) must be shown to

affect the dependent variable (family cohesion) in the second equation, and the mediator (hope) must affect the dependent variable (family cohesion) in the third equation.

Establishing Mediation

1. The independent variable (spirituality) must affect the mediator (hope) in the first equation:

Spirituality \longrightarrow Hope

2. The independent variable (spirituality) must be shown to affect the dependent variable (Family cohesion) in the second equation

Spirituality \longrightarrow Family Cohesion\

3. The mediator (hope) must affect the dependent variable (family cohesion) in the third equation.

HopeFamily Cohesion \longrightarrow

If these conditions all hold in the predicted direction, then the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable must be less in the third equation than in the second. Perfect mediation holds if the independent variable has no effect when the mediator is controlled. It is the intent that this mediation model will help in better understanding the connection between spirituality (predictor) and hope (mediator), and their relationship on African Americans men's family cohesion, the intended outcome (the dependent variable). The independent, mediation, and dependent variables were surveyed using the demographics as guides to the specific information that was gleaned from the study. It is addressed in the following paragraph.

The demographics that were used in this model are age, marital status, parental status, religious affiliation, and educational levels. These variables helped in determining what impact they will have on the way African American men embrace family cohesion. The diagram below will show an illustration (Figure 2). The demographics age, marital status, parental status, religious affiliation, and educational levels changed the dependent variable since these variables were analyzed alongside the results from the measurement scales to answer research questions. The covariate's variables, family structure and employment, were not listed as variables to be researched; however, they can influence the dependent variable (family cohesion).

The model below shows the demographic variables that were used to change the independent variable (spirituality), which also impacts the dependent variable (family cohesion). The various demographic variables that affected spirituality eventually led to changes in family cohesion. Figure 2 below shows the demographics and the mediation model that will be further discussed.

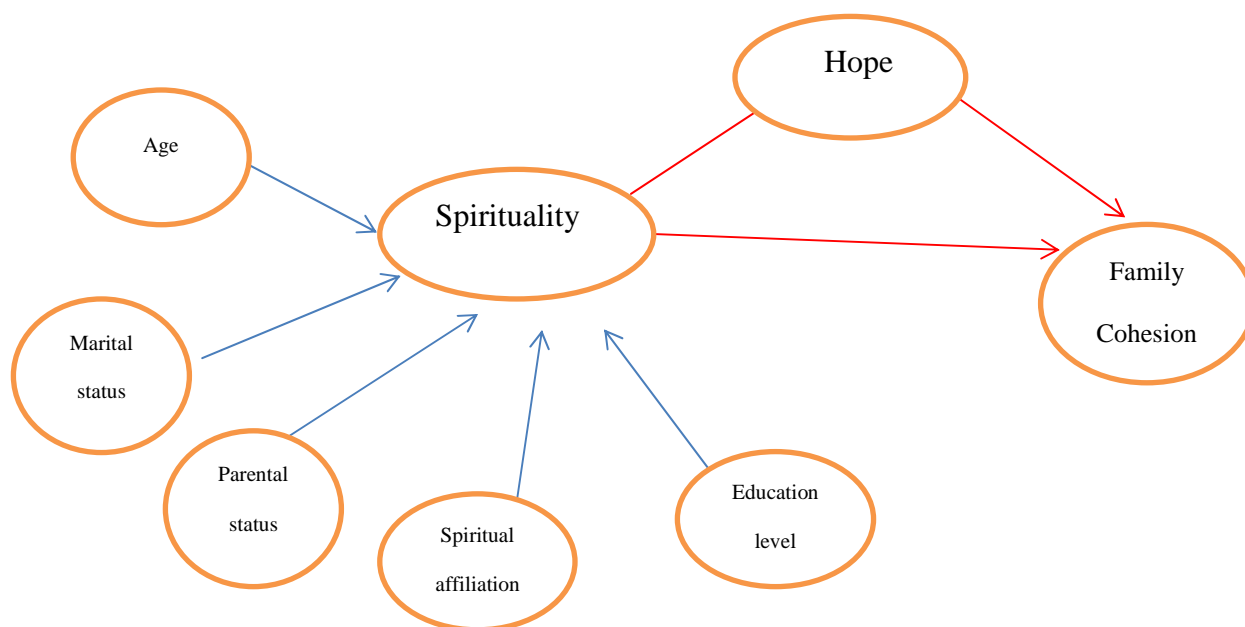


Figure 2. The mediation model with the demographic variables.

Methodology

Population

The group that was investigated in this study is African American men, ages 18 and over. These African American men were from various religious groups, with different levels of educational backgrounds. Their marital status was single, married or divorced, with or without children. The population sample size was 110 participants.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

I gathered information from a different representation of religious groups among African American males. New York is the state having the largest African American population, with Hempstead having more than 50% of its populace being African American.

This is a good reason for this research to be conducted in Hempstead because it will give a better description of spirituality among the populace in the study.

The participants were from the area of Hempstead, New York. Hempstead has a population of 56,554 people (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), with a population of 29,678 African Americans, which is 52.48%; Hispanics, 44.2%; Whites, 6.6%; Asians, 1.3%; American Indians, .20%; Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, .02%; persons reporting two or more races 1.4%, and Other.4%. Hence, there is a very significant number of African Americans to work with within the area. In this population, 66.6% are high school graduates, 16% have a BA or higher, 6.5% have a professional degree, and there has been an unemployment rate of 9.9% since August 2012. Thirteen and a half percent live below the poverty line. West Indian ancestry makes up 11.1% of the population, and the population density is 14,659 people per square mile; this is very high, resulting in a high crime rate and family problems. Catholics make up 68%, Jewish 20%, and all other religions 11%. The other groups are classified as Muslim 1.1%; Greek Orthodox .8%, Episcopal 1.6%, Evangelical Lutheran 1.9%, Methodist 1.7%, Lutheran .5%, Presbyterian.5%, and other 3% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

In 1908, New York was called the melting pot of the world by Zangwill, simply because one can find natives from almost every country of the world living within its boundaries. New York is considered one of the most diverse states in the USA (US Bureau of Census, 2010) with statistics of other races such as Italian, 14.4%, Irish, 12.9%, German, 11.1%, and English 6%, American Indian and Alaska Native persons, 0.6%, Asian persons,

7.3%, persons reporting two or more races, 3.0%, persons of Latino origin, 17.6% and White persons not Hispanic, 58.3%. There are numerous representations of religious groups. Catholics make up more than 40% of the residents in New York State, Protestants are 30% of the inhabitants, Jews make up 8.4%, the Muslims make up 3.5% of the populace, and the Buddhists make up 1%, while 13% claim no religious affiliation. The largest Protestant denominations are the United Methodist Church with 403,362, the American Baptist Churches with 203,297, and the Episcopal Church with 201,797 members. The fact that the African American population is so high 52.48% (U.S. Bureau of Census, 2010) will prove to be very informative in this research. Figure 3 below shows the calculation for the sample size that was used in the study.

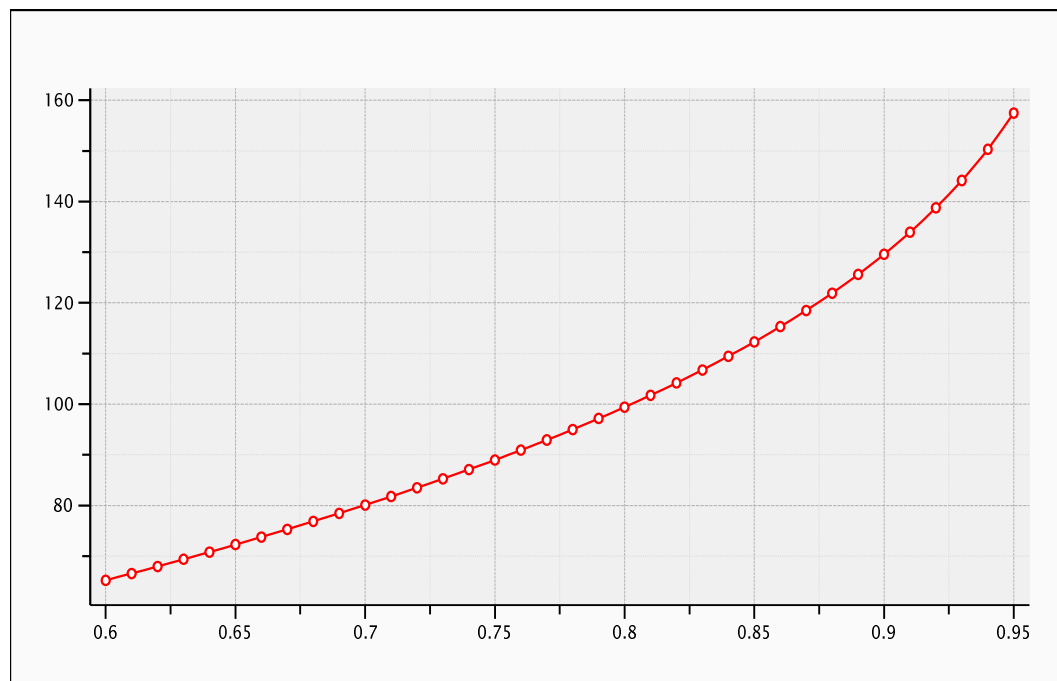


Figure 3. Power as a function of sample size.

A power analysis, using the GPower3 software was conducted to determine the appropriate sample size for this study (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). An a priori power analysis, assuming a medium effect size ($f=.10$), $\alpha=.05$, indicated a minimum sample size of 100 participants is required to achieve a power of .80, however for attrition purposes a 10% of the sample size was added to make 110. The use of a medium effect size ($f=.10$) is the appropriate effect size for this proposed study. The designated sample size of 110 that was determined from the GPower3 (*figure 3*) will be used in this study (Faul et al., 2007).

Group sample was drawn from a population of African Americans men's group, ages of 18 and over. This sample will include individuals from any spiritual group, African Americans with any educational background and career, from any socio-economic group in order to be able to generalize the results to a larger population from which the sample will be drawn. African American males ages 18 and over who are interested in family cohesion and believe that they can benefit from the research study, are eligible to participate. Also, those who believe that by participating in the study, they can be part of something that will be helpful to themselves and others will be welcomed to do so. Finally, those who will provide necessary information, for present and future use in the African American homes and communities, are welcome.

The group that was chosen is African American men 18 years old and over are classified as adults, and as adults one has an idea what he will embrace in terms of beliefs. This study will exclude African American women, also men and women from other

ethnicities. A sample size of 110 will be surveyed, based on the Gpower3 software (Tabachnick, & Fidell, 2007). It is my hope that useful data was collected and used in presenting information to the various communities that can benefit from the information gathered from the surveys.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The potential participants are African American men 18 years and older. The owners, pastors or leaders of the barbershops, churches and theaters will be approached and given a brief summary on the research that would ensue. The researcher will obtain permission from the pastors of the churches, directors of theaters and owners of barber shops to post flyers and to leave research packages in their buildings inviting African American men to volunteer to participate in the survey. Once permission is granted flyers will be placed in the different locations. Once permission is granted to use the facilities (barbershops, churches and galleries), permission was sought from the Walden institutional review boards (IRB), to study the sampled population (approval # 02-18-14-0111698). Walden University's IRB approval and executed letter of agreement for each organization that facilitated an African American man for this study were obtained prior to distribution of any forms and measurement scales used in the proposed study. The individuals who were excluded from the studies are women, anyone under the ages of 18, and no other ethnicities, while those who were included are African American men, ages 18 and over. An information session was held at the specified location mentioned on the flyer. Researcher provided volunteers with an overview of the study including explanation of the

survey instruments. Volunteers were reminded of the importance of answering the survey items as honestly as possible. In addition, informed consent and confidentiality were discussed with the volunteers.

On their way out from the information session, interested parties picked up a research packet at the door. Included in the research packages are the invitation letter, review and demographic surveys, key rings, and self-addressed, stamped envelopes for volunteers to send back their completed documents. Once the volunteers picked up a research packet they were reminded that the documents are time sensitive and were given the deadline to return the completed packets to researcher using the self-addressed stamped envelopes. Volunteers were encouraged to complete and send back completed packages to researcher as soon as possible. If on the deadline enough research packets were not received by the researcher, added flyers and research packages would be placed in the permitted locations. This process would be repeated until the intended volume was obtained. Once the projected amount was collected, the results were tabulated and calculated so that the information was analyzed and interpreted correctly. The information was then analyzed to determine whether or not spirituality and hope can impact African American men's family cohesion. Dissemination of result from the study to participants and stakeholders ensued.

In this analysis, the statistical sampling or numerical approach was employed, where the population to be sampled was chosen on a systemic or random basis. This information gleaned from the sample population was used to yield generalizations

about the population. One had to be African American male, 18 years and over to be part of this study. All other ethnicities and females were excluded.

Individual bags containing the informed consent, invitation letter, the demographic questionnaire, list of counseling services, the three measurement scales (Appendices A, C, D, J, K, & L), a pen, a token, and a self-stamped returned envelope were given to members, or left on the main desk in each place. Volunteers had a week to finish and send back the completed questionnaires to the researcher. If, within one week the bags were not received then the process of recruiting more members was repeated until the desired amount was obtained. Once the data was collected the instruments were scored, following that, the data was classified, after which the information was analyzed using the SPSS 20.0 software. Precise instructions on how to complete forms and surveys questionnaires were provided, along with phone numbers and e-mail address, contact information of the researcher, and advisor for the study. No debriefing was necessary. If the need arises for any queries, the researcher's contact information is listed on the letter accompanying the consent form, for research concerns only. There was no need for any follow-up interviews, however if there was any reason for such, the email and contact number for the researcher is available in the envelope that was given to each member. A keyring was given to each member; this token is not a form of payment, but only to show appreciation for their voluntary involvement in the study. The demographic information that were collected is age, educational level, marital status, parental status and religious affiliations.

Instrumentations and Operationalization of Construct

The three measurement scales which were used in this study are; the INSPIRIT (Kass, 1981); the hope scale (Snyder, 1986); and the family cohesion scale (Olson, 1987). These three scales were chosen because they were very relevant to the study; previously they were used in other studies to examine related variables but with different populations such as African American women, Latino-Americans and Asia-Americans. (Unson et al., 2008) focused on spirituality using INSPIRIT also, related variables, also studies conducted by (Chatters et al., 2008; Taylor et al., 2008), showed similar results, these results were critical to this research on African American men's family cohesion. Yeasting and Jung (2010), provided views on hope while (Wang et al., 2007) focused on the use of the mediation model in their study. Information from these articles was relevant to this research topic.

Participants were encouraged not to share the survey with others, because of confidentiality concerns. Surveys were not shared with anyone, and will be kept in an anonymous state in a locked cabinet, supported with a password. Permissions from the developers of the tests and the necessary information that go along with the test scales, for use in this study, are listed in the Appendices E-L. Below the three measurement scales were discussed in terms of their usage, validity construct and reliability.

INSPIRIT

INSPIRIT measures perceptions and behaviors of individuals that reflect a high degree of internalized spirituality. It was also used to assess areas of an individual's

spirituality that may benefit from further examination and internalization. The original sample was composed of outpatients in a hospital-based behavioral medicine program $N=83$. The sample ranged in age from 25-72 years ($M = 46.2$, $SD = 11.2$) with a mean=46.2, and $SD=11.2$. Females accounted for 66% while 94% were Whites. Religious backgrounds included Catholic 37%, Protestant 23%, and Jewish 40%. Educational background was high mean = 16.1 years and $SD = 2.5$. African Americans were excluded from the initial study using the INSPIRIT, however the developer Kass (1986) encourages other ethnicities to use the scale so that they can have more diverse results relevant to the different races. The conceptual foundations of the INSPIRIT, and its original item pools were developed by Kass in 1985-1986. Validation of the INSPIRIT in the areas of, factor analytic refinement of the item pools, measure of internal reliability, measurement of construct validity, and preliminary clinical testing, was conducted by Kass from 1987-1990, in partnership with various medical doctors and doctors of philosophy. Additionally, the psychometric properties of the INSPIRIT scale such as factor structure, reliability, and construct validity were exposed to external verification in a study by (VandeCreek, Ayres, & Bassham, 1995).

The INSPIRIT according to Kass (1981) is composed of 7 items. Each question can be scored 1, 2, 3, or 4. The lowest possible score on the INSPIRIT is 7. The highest possible score is 28. Each piece uses a Likert scale ranging from 1-4, where 1=1 point, 2=2 points, 3=3 points, and 4= 4 points. Questions 1-6 contain individual items, where each question is scored according to the number chosen. For example, question 1 if Likert 1 is

marked, it is one point gained if Likert 2 is marked two points are allotted, and that follows up to question 6. Question 7 is a checklist list of 12 spiritual experiences that many people have reported. Likert scales are used in Question 7 to designate whether or not the individual has had any of these religious experiences, and the impact they have had on the person's cognitive appraisal regarding the existence of the sacred aspect of life. In summarizing, the INSPIRIT scale is designed to measure of internalized spirituality, or as a measure of an aspect of spiritual well-being, rather than as a comprehensive measure of spiritual well-being. Although the scale has been tested on Caucasian population, it is still relevant to the current study, because the test items are general and not specific to a particular ethnic group, Lewis (2008). The developer believes that the INSPIRIT can be applicable to any race, although the initial testing excluded the African American race (Kass, 1986) and that it will be just as valid and reliable in gathering and making a general statement about the African American population as it did for the Caucasian race. Lewis (2008) believes that there is a need of culturally appropriate and sensitive measure of spirituality in African Americans to strengthen the quality of research in this group.

Construct validity. The construct validity of the INSPIRIT was assessed through two lines of inquiry, (a) the first method evaluated the merging and valid variance of the instruments with other scales that measure related domains, and (b) the second approach measured the ability of the INSPIRIT to distinguish between sub-groups within the sample population, where these sub-groups can reasonably be hypothesized to score differently on this instrument. Kass (1995) and VandeCreek et al., (1995) both have

conducted validation tests and found both supported that the results provided validly adequate statistical data based on the information gathered and interpreted. Kass et al. (1991) demonstrated that the INSPIRIT has a substantial degree of internal consistency and concurrent validity, reporting a Cronbach's Alpha reliability score of .90. The reliability of the INSPIRIT was tested by the Cronbach's alpha coefficient which was used to decide the strength of the internal consistency of the scale.

Reliability.Based on the original sample of 83, Kass and his colleagues found Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient to be .90. The mean score for the INSPIRIT was 2.8 (SD=.83) (Kass et al., 1991b). VandeCreek's study of 371 found Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .81. The mean score for the INSPIRIT was 2.97 (SD = .74) (VandeCreek et al., 1995). In Kass' subsequent study of 735 reported in this manual, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was .87. The mean score for the INSPIRIT was 3.3 (SD = .62) (Kass, 2000). All three data from the three studies suggest a high degree of internal consistency among the seven items of the INSPIRIT scale supporting the reliability of the test.

Hope Scale

The hope scale (Snyder, 1986), measures an individual's confidence in being successful at life and in solving problems faced (Snyder, 1995). In other words, the hope scale measures the state of hope that an individual possesses. The hope scale is comprised of 8 items, which are categorized into two subscales namely, agency, and pathways. The capability to map a route to one's desired goal is called pathways, while the motivation to use the routes is called agency. According to Snyder (1986), in order to be categorized as

someone who possesses the hope both, agency and pathways have to be evident. Hope is said to be a two way domain, in that it can be high or low based on different experiences in life, any sad situation makes one less hopeful while any joyous situation makes one more hopeful (Snyder, 1986). The initial measurement scale was used on undergraduates, to test their feelings of hope. Scores can range from a low of 8 to a high of 64. Items are scored using an 8-points Likert scale where, 1=definitely false, 2=somewhat wrong, 3=somewhat real, and 4=definitely true. By summing the scores of all the items of the Agency and the Pathway's groups, we get a score for the Hope scale. The total score for the Hope Scale is derived by summing the total company and the pathway items. According to Carifio& Rhodes (2002), the evidence for the reliability and validity of the scale is excellent.

Construct validity.The hope scale has received extensive concurrent and discriminant validation support. A typical mean score is 49 ($SD=7$). No differences in the scores of men and women have emerged. The pathways and agency subscales can be examined separately to provide additional information for both the applied and research issues. The scale has been used with samples of undergraduate college students, graduate students, psychiatric outpatients and inpatients, adults with spinal cord injuries, adventitiously blinded older adults, elderly women, women undergoing treatment for breast cancer children in drug rehabilitation programs, veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder, and men in treatment for drug dependencies (Babyak, Snyder, &Yoshinobu, 1993). The hope scale was measured against other scales such as beck depression had a high inverse relationship ($r = -0.51$) and the problem solving inventory ($r = -0.62$), giving strong support

that the hope scale is a good predictor of problem solving confidence and academic success (Carifio & Rhodes, 2002).

Reliability. This instrument demonstrates internal reliability (Snyder, 1995; Ihrke, 2000; Carifio & Rhodes, 2002). Test-retest reliability coefficients were $r=+0.85$ for a three weeks interval ($n=130$) and $r=+0.73$ for an 8 weeks interval ($n=115$). Two studies found R-tt coefficients of $+0.82$ for an interval greater than 10 weeks which are evidence to support Snyder's argument that hope is an enduring personality trait (Carifio & Rhodes, 2002). Alphas ranging from; $.74-.88$ for the overall scale, and alphas of $.70-.84$ for the agency and $.63-.86$ for pathway's subscales separately) and temporal reliability (tests-retests ranging from $.85$ for 3 weeks to $.82$ for 10 weeks). It has two separate yet related agency and pathways factors (r ranging from $.38-.69$, with a modal r of $.50$ across many samples), as well as an over-arching hope factor (using traditional and confirmatory procedures).

Limitation. Hope can be measured in all age groups, using quantitative measures that cover the main types of hope. The scale has strong internal security; however, it could be improved by sampling more diverse populations as hope may be a luxury that those in the western world have access to, while others from the underdeveloped countries may not have (Babyak, Snyder, & Yoshinobu, 1993). Quantitative measures are less developed and require further study to improve the correlations between an individual's hope score and an observer's hope rating (Babyak et al., 1993).

The Family Relation Cohesion Scale

The family relation cohesion scale (Olson, 1986) is a measurement scale used to assess various aspects of the family. There are six-subcales: (belief about family, cohesion, shared deviant beliefs, support, organization, and communication). Each subscale can be used independently to measure areas of interest. Therefore, since the focus of the study relates to the family, the family cohesion subscale will be used. Family cohesion scale is a 13-items scale which was used to measure family cohesion. A numeric score will be generated after scoring is completed, for example, 1= not right, 2= hardly real or sometimes, 3= true a lot of the time, always 4= true or almost always. It appears to be a sound device and the authors reported sound reliability scores.

Reliability. The reliability of the Family Relations Cohesion scale was tested using the Chronbach's Alpha from a sample of families with a target child in 1st Grade (n = 393) BAF – 0.596, COH – 0.936 and ORG – 0.797. Also the reliability was tested using the Chronbach's Alpha, from a sample of families with a target child in 11th/12th Grade (n = 318), BAF – 0.845, COH – 0.935 and ORG – 0.816. So far the reliability is tested and consistent with each other. Two is therefore, considered appropriate for this research (Tolan, Gorman-Smith & Henry, 2001).

Validity. The family relations cohesion scale was validated on two independent samples, one sample consisted of parents of inner city and poor urban elementary school children and the other consisted of adolescent male inner city youth and their parents (Tolan, Gorman-Smith & Henry, 2001). The internal consistency of the final

sales produced this result: views about family =.87; cohesion =.72; shared deviant beliefs =.68; support=.65; organization=.66 and communication=.54 (Tolan, Gorman-Smith & Henry). So far the analysis is validated and considered appropriate for this study.

Operationalization of Variables

The INSPIRIT measures individual's perceptions and behaviors reflecting a high degree of internalized spirituality. It was also used to assess areas of an individual's spirituality that may benefit from further examination and internalization (Kass, 1981). Although the scale has been tested on Caucasian population, it is still applicable to the current study, because the test items are general and not specific to a particular ethnic group (Lewis 2008). The hope scale (Snyder, 1986), measures individual's confidence in being successful at life and in coping with problems faced (Snyder, 1995). The family relation cohesion scale (Olson, 1987) measures various aspects of the family relationship. The INSPIRIT is a 7- item scale each question is scored 1-4. Each score uses a Likert scale range, where score *1= 1point, 2=2points, etc.* The lowest score for the INSPIRIT is 7 points while the highest is 28 points. One of the sample items is: have you ever have an experience that convince you that God exist?

The hope scale is comprised of 8 items, which are categorized into two subscales namely, agency, and pathways. The original measurement scale was used on undergraduates, to test their feelings of hope. Scores can range from a low of 8 to a high of 64. Items are scored using an 8-points Likert scale where, *1=definitely false, 2=somewhat wrong, 3=somewhat real, and 4=definitely true.* By summing the scores of all the items of

the agency and the pathway's groups, we get a score for the hope scale. The pathway's subscale score is the sum of items 1, 3, 4 & 5; the agency subscale score is the sum of items 2, 6, 7 & 8. Hope is the sum of the four pathways and four agency items. Scores can range from a low of 8 to a high of 64. An example item: I can think of many ways to get out of a jam. The family cohesion scale (Olson, 1987) is a measurement scale used to assess various aspects of the family. Family cohesion scale is a 13-items scale which was used to measure family cohesion. The family relation cohesion scale was tested using the Chronbach's Alpha from a sample of families with a target child in 1st Grade. A numeric score will be yielded after scoring is completed, for example, 1= not right, 2= hardly real or sometimes, 3= true a lot of the time, always 4= true or almost always. An example item: family members feel connected to each other.

Data Analysis Plan.

Three surveys, the INSPIRIT (Kass, 1981), hope scale (Snyder, 1986), and the family relation cohesion scales (Olson, 1987), were used to test the hypotheses for the study. The SPSS 20.0 was used to analyze the quantitative research, using the multiple linear regression tests, to record participants' response to the three above mentioned scales. Multiple regression is considered the best method to use to interpret data when there are more than two variables, and since there are three variables in this study, the method is readily accepted by the researcher. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), there are three major types of multiple regression, namely standard, sequential, and statistical

regression. The use of sequential or hierarchical regression to control variables and to choose the value of each variable was utilized (Tabachnick&Fidell).

The methods for cleaning and screening are that a check be done to ascertain that all the areas on the forms are clearly and appropriately filled in, so that when the analysis of data occur, it will a good representation of the data collected from the population sample. There are two methods in cleaning procedures namely, detection and correction (Pallant, 2010). In the cleaning procedures once there is any detection of errors, it will be corrected immediately. In screening for outliers and out-of-range data, the researcher will examine the data to verify that all the necessary information is present before moving forward with the study. The researcher will follow the cleaning and screening procedures of examining the data to make sure that everything is within the perimeter of the study. Data were reentered for verification, so that data was within range and that data were entered accurately. The researcher inspected the survey questionnaires to see if they are filled out and if they are not they were not used.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research question 1. Does spirituality, measured by the index of core spiritual experience, significantly predict influences on family cohesion among African American men as measured by the family relation cohesion scale?

Alternative hypothesis 1. Spirituality, measured by the index of core spiritual experience will significantly predict influences on family cohesion among African American men, as measured by the family relation cohesion scale?

Null hypothesis 1. Spirituality measured by the index of core spiritual experience will not significantly predict influences of family cohesion among African American men, as measured by the family relation cohesion scale?

Research question 2. Does hope measured by the hope scale significantly predict influence of family cohesion among African American men as measured by the family relation cohesion scale?"

Alternative hypothesis 2. Hope measured by the hope scale will significantly predict influences of family cohesion among African American men as measured by the family relation cohesion scale.

Null hypothesis 2. Hope measured by the hope scale will not significantly predict influence of family cohesion among African American men as measured by the family relation cohesion scale.

Research question 3. Is there a relationship between spirituality and family cohesion and if so, can this relationship be mediated by hope?

Alternative hypothesis 3. There is a relationship between spirituality and family cohesion, and this relationship can be mediated by hope.

Null hypothesis 3. There is no relationship between spirituality and family cohesion, and the relationship cannot be mediated by hope.

The statistical tests that were used to test the hypotheses are the multiple linear regressions. Since this study examined three variables, the need for the multiple linear regressions seems appropriate. This topic includes the use of the mediation model which

has a few regression procedures was recommended. Covariates variables are variables when measured, they can confound the initial findings of the study. Sometimes they are added because they are important in the study. The interpretations can be a bit misleading and can change the entire findings from the study. The results of the findings were interpreted by the researcher, using the SPSS 20.0 for analysis of the data, using the hierarchical regressions.

Measurement of individual's spirituality and hope, also family cohesion were calculated in the form of the multiple regression analyses, using the SPSS version 20.0 was used to calculate the total score to determine the mean score for each member. Once the scores for each participants were calculated, then the total scores were added, the different scores were used to get the mean, standard deviation and whatever final scores were needed to make sound judgments or interpretations about the use of spirituality, and hope in impacting family cohesion in African American males.

Threats to Validity

Validity indicates whether or not the research is thorough and substantive. Various factors can cause a research finding to be invalidated, therefore, much effort and concerns are used up when writing a research paper (Seliger&Shohamy, 1995). Therefore, the researcher tried to control all possible factors that would threaten the validity of the study (Creswell, 1994).

Threats to External Validity

External validity is the extent to which researcher can generalize their research findings to a large group or for use in a different context. Findings can be classified as external invalid because the results cannot be used outside the sample and setting in which it was conducted (Seliger&Shohamy, 1989). In order to prevent one's findings from being considered invalid, the specifications for each factor, such as the testing reactivity, interaction effects of selection and experimental variables, etc. were closely watched so that the processes were ethical.

Threats to Internal Validity

Internal validity is compromised when flaws within the research cause problems for the study itself. These factors are problems with the design or problems with the data collection. Internal validity can be caused from lack of correct interpretation of findings (Seliger&Shohamy, 1995). Some factors that affect internal validity are; subject variability, sample size, time provided for data collection or experimental treatment, history, erosion, maturation and instrument sensitivity (Seliger&Shohamy, 1989).

In order to be sure that there were no threats to internal validity, the researcher put a lot of effort in safeguarding against the factors that were noted in the paragraph. Only those that were authorized in the research were addressed.

Threats to Statistical Conclusion Validity

This research is a non-experimental study therefore threats to statistical conclusion validity are of interest to the researcher. Threats to statistical conclusion validity are

conditions that rejected the null hypothesis even though it is true, by inflating the type 1 error rate. Three conditions observed, are (a) reliability of the instrument, (b) data assumptions, and (c) sample size.

Reliability of the Instruments

Reliability of the instrument is critical when using it in a research, because if the instrument is reliable it is more likely that the results from the findings were valid (Kimberin&Winterstein, 2008). Reliability coefficients range from 0.00 to 1.00, with higher coefficients indicating higher levels of reliability (Kimberin&Winterstein) for any tools that were used in studies conducted.

Data Assumptions

Data assumption according to Osborne, and Walters (2002) entails four assumptions that should be tested in a multi regression are listed below.

Linearity.An equation relating the conditional mean of the dependent variable to each one of the independent variables under the assumption that this relationship is linear; for the multivariate, standard distribution linearity always exists.

Reliability of measurement.This refers to the consistency, and dependability of a measurement. This measure is then considered reliable.

Homoscedasticity.This is an assumption that means the variance around the regression line is the same for all values of the predictor variable.

Normality.This is a random error in the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable in a regression model. Multiple linear regressions will

be used to interpret the data gathered from this study because it is recommended for the use of two or more variables. Considering that there are three variables (spirituality, hope, and family cohesion) it is best to use the method that facilitated the research. The SPSS 20.0 was used to analyze the findings that were presented.

Sample Size

A power analysis, using the GPower3 software was conducted and determined the appropriate sample size for this study (Faulstich et al., 2007). A prior power analysis, assuming a medium effect size ($f=.10$), $\alpha=.05$, indicated a minimum sample size of 100 participants is required to achieve a power of .80, however for attrition purposes a 10% increase was added, making it 110. The use of a medium effect size ($f=.10$) is the appropriate effect size for this proposed study. The selected sample size of 110 that were determined from the GPower3, was used in this study

Ethical Procedures

It is said that researchers need to anticipate the ethical issues that may arise during their studies (Hesse-Biber & Leavey, 2006), therefore, the researcher ensured that moral factors were considered so as to reduce the risk of harm to participants. Each group of participants were affirmed that their information were kept in strictest confidence and be securely stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office

Since research involves collecting data from people, about people (Punch, 2005) researchers needed to protect their research participants, this was done by the researcher, who protected as best as possible all the information collected from participants. Ways that

the researcher used to protect the members are to: cultivate a trustworthy working relationship with the participants; promote the honesty of research; guard against misbehavior and abuse that might reflect on their organizations or institutions; and deal with new, challenging problems (Isreal& Hay, 2006), are all means by which participants were protected. Members need not feel pressured, if they wanted to withdraw from the study, they could do so, their information was protected. All information gathered was anonymous. The researcher was the sole person to have access to the data. The data was kept in a secured storage file cabinet for a period of seven years before safely discarded. If a respondent becomes upset for any unforeseen reasons, that individual is able to contact the researcher or the researching department at Walden, via email or telephone. This contact information was presented at the initial meeting of the members.

There were no concerns about mental health contact because the research did not cater to mental health patient (to the researcher's knowledge). However for the safety of participants contacts for the mental health organization and other agencies within the area were provided once requested. Members volunteered to be a part of this study therefore, there are no major concerns if they want to terminate the survey. They could discontinue without any problems.

The participants are African American men 18 years and older. The owners, pastors or directors of the barbershops, churches and theaters were approached and given a brief summary on the research that would ensue. Once permission was granted to use the facilities (barbershops, churches and theaters), permission was sought from the Walden

institutional review boards (IRBs), to survey the sampled population (*approval #02-18-14-0111698*). There were no concerns about conducting a survey within the researcher's workplace because it was not listed as one of the locations.

Summary

The chapter discussed the methods that were used in collecting, analyzing and interpreting the data so that the research questions were answered. It was mentioned that a quantitative method was most appropriate for this research study based on the fact that it was more logical and positive. A non-experimental design was chosen and paper-based questionnaires were given to participants. It was also supposed to use the SPSS 20.0 version, and the GPower3 software to analyze and interpret the data collected. Hempstead, New York was selected for the study, based on the fact that it has the largest African American population in the United States. The INSPIRIT was the measurement used to measure one's spirituality, while the hope scale measured hope, and the family relation cohesion scale measured family cohesion. Emphasis was placed on protecting the members and mention was made on whether or not they would be given a token of appreciation for their participation in the survey.

In this chapter, the focus was on the methods and how they were utilized in the research study. The approach that was used in the data collection and its appropriateness were discussed. The validity and reliability of the measurement scales were examined to determine how effective they were when presenting the findings. Ethical considerations were reviewed and how best the members would be protected was put in place.

Documentations for the scales and permission for use and informed consent are attached. Finally, the researchers hope that the study presented information that was useful to the group that was interviewed and that the community on a whole be benefited immensely. Chapter 3 presented information on the sample that was surveyed and reported the findings from the surveys that were conducted. Areas presented in chapter 4 are: the introduction, data collection, treatment or intervention fidelity, results and a summary for the chapter was given.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Previous studies related to spirituality, hope, and family cohesion addressed women (Chapman & Steger, 2010; Harvey & Cook, 2010; Jesse, Schoneboom, & Blanchard, 2007) and other ethnicities (Aarons, McDonald, Connelly, & Newton, 2007; (Diddle & Denham, 2010; Walton & Takeuchi, 2010)); however, there is a lack of literature about African American men (Chang & Banks, 2007; Ciarrocchi, et al., 2008; Cutrona, et al., 2011; Taylor & Chatters, 2010; Utsey et al., 2008). This research focused on African-American men and how spirituality and hope helped them address their problems with family cohesion.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative and nonexperimental inquiry was to examine the relationships between the independent variable, spirituality, and the mediating variable, hope, with the dependent variable, family cohesion. This study examined whether or not the independent (spirituality) and the mediating (hope) variables impacted African-American men's family cohesion. The study contributed to the existing literature, bringing added empirical data that provided added information to the current concerns of African American men as they seek to better family cohesion.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research question 1. Does spirituality, measured by the index of core spiritual experience, significantly predict influences on family cohesion among African American men?

Alternative hypothesis 1. Spirituality, measured by the index of core spiritual experience will significantly predict influences on family cohesion among African American men?

Null hypothesis 1. Spirituality measured by the index of core spiritual experience will not significantly predict influences of family cohesion among African American men, as measured by the family relation cohesion scale?

Research question 2. Does hope measured by the hope scale significantly predict influence of family cohesion among African American men as measured by the family relation cohesion scale?"

Alternative hypothesis 2. Hope measured by the hope scale will significantly predict influences of family cohesion among African American men as measured by the family relation cohesion scale.

Null hypothesis 2. Hope measured by the hope scale will not significantly predict influence of family cohesion among African American men as measured by the family relation cohesion scale

Research question 3. Is there a relationship between spirituality and family cohesion and if so, can this relationship be mediated by hope?

Alternative hypothesis 3. There is a relationship between spirituality and family cohesion, and this relationship can be mediated by hope.

Null hypothesis 3. There is no relationship between spirituality and family cohesion, and the relationship cannot be mediated by hope

Research tools. There were three measurement instruments used, namely the INSPIRIT (Kass, 1986), hope scale (Snyder, 1986), and family cohesion scale (Tolan, 1997). These were used with the demographic questionnaire to collect information to be used to answer the research questions. The mediation model was used to test whether or not hope could be the mediator between spirituality and family cohesion.

The INSPIRIT (Kass, 1986) screened the spirituality of the participants, and the hope scale screened how hopeful the participants are, while the family cohesion scale screened the type of relationship that participants have with family members. These measurement tools were instrumental in obtaining information for this study. There were 110 African American men studied, using the three above mentioned measurement scales along with the demographic survey featuring their age, marital status, parental status, educational level, and their religious affiliation. The mediation model was also used in this study to examine whether or not hope would be a mediator between spirituality and family cohesion.

Research packages were available to volunteers after the initial meeting where an explanation of the research topic was given, and I addressed questions and concerns. I estimated a 3-week timeframe for the collection of data considering that the packets would have to be returned via mail. I also estimated that the recruitment of volunteers could take up to 2 weeks. If the right group of volunteers received packages, it was more likely that they would follow through and complete and mail packets back to me. Therefore, the

process could take up to 4 weeks or less. No anticipated discrepancy was foreseen or surfaced.

African American men are faced with family cohesion problems globally (Chaney, 2011; Johnson, 2012; Perry, 2009), and because the problem is so great, I discussed the problem, thus highlighting ways to help remedy the situation. This study used the demographic information of age, parental and marital status, educational level, and religious affiliation to gather information pertaining to African American men's family cohesion. The age group 18 years and older were surveyed, along with the parental and marital status of the African American men, and their educational level and spiritual affiliation were taken into consideration when collecting and reporting the results from the data collected. Making generalizations based on the findings were given once the data had been reported. My sample was $n=110$.

In Chapter 4 there is an introduction to the data process, the data collection, results of the data collected, and a summary of the overall chapter.

Data Collection

The data were collected from February 18, 2014 through March 12, 2014. It took approximately 4 weeks to get the required number of participants. A total of 250 surveys were distributed to volunteers, and a total of 112 amounting to 45% were returned to me via mail. Although 112 research packets were returned, for these research purposes, only 110 were used to fulfill the requirements per GPower3 software, which calculated the sample size (Faul, et al., 2009). Recruitment for participants was done by placing flyers at

locations (gymnasiums, churches, and barber shops), where permission was given. The research packages were picked up by volunteers on their way out of the meeting. The expected return time frame was 1 week; however, this did not happen as planned. It took almost 4 weeks for the necessary number of completed surveys to be received. If the required number was not met, then the process of putting more flyers and research packages in the permitted areas was required until the required number were received. There were no discrepancies in the data collection process.

Demographic Results

The demographic questionnaire centered on five distinct areas of age, marital status, parental status, educational level, and religious affiliation. From the perspectives of the descriptive statistics, the results showed that of the 110 African American men studied, 22 of them amounting to 20.1% were 18 to 27 years old; 26 of them totaling 23.6% were 28 to 37 years old; 16 of these African American men resulting to 14.5% were 38 to 47 years old; 23 of the 110 sample with 20.9% were 48 to 57 years old; 23 of the total sample resulting in an 11.8% were 58 to 67 years old, and 10 of the total amount resulting in 9.1% were 68 years old and over. The 28 to 37 years old age group was more dominant in the study, with the highest rate of 26, followed by, 48 to 57 age group with a percentage of 23%. This shows that African American men both young adults and seniors are interested in improving their family relationships. Marital statuses of the members showed that 61 of the 110 African American men studied amounted to 55.5% were married; while 37 of them amounting to 33.6% were single, and the remaining 12 of them 10.9% were divorced.

Based on this result, it showed that African American men are interested in developing better family cohesion within their families and is the reason they have decided to participate in the survey. It was also noted that 62 of the 110 African American men, 56.4%, were parents while the 48 remaining, 43.6%, were not parents. Results on the religious associations showed that of the 110 African American men who completed the surveys, 26 were Catholic, 23.6%, 21 amounting to 19.1% were Baptist, 12 were Muslim, 10.9%, only one was Greek Orthodox, .9%, 12 were Episcopal, 10.9%, two were Evangelical Lutheran, 1.8%, while 16 were Seventh Day Adventist, 14.5%, and 20 were classified as other, 18.2%. Indications of their religious associations from the questionnaire revealed that African American men see the need for better family cohesion. With regards to their educational level, it was found that of the 110 African American men studied, 44 completed high school, 40%, 29 completed some college, 26.4%, while 19 earned an undergraduate degree, 17.2%, and 18 received a graduate degree, 16.4%. An indication from these results is that African American men are interested in seeking help in improving family cohesion, and the use of spirituality and hope will be the means by which relief will be introduced to them. Below Tables 1 through 5 with raw scores ($n=110$) and their percentages are shown.

Table 1
Age of Participants

Age of participants	Raw score	Percentage (%)
18-27	22	20.1
28-37	26	23.6
38-47	16	14.5
48-57	23	20.9
58-67	13	11.8
68 and over	10	09.1
Total	110	100

Table 2-
Marital Status

Marital status	Raw score	Percentage (%)
Married	61	55
Single	37	33.6
Divorced	12	10.9
Total	110	100

Table 3
Parental Status

Parental status	Raw score	Percentage (%)
Parent	62	56.4
Not a parent	48	43.6
Total	110	100

Table 4-
Spiritual Affiliations

Spiritual affiliations	Raw score	Percentage (%)
Catholic	26	23.6
Baptist	21	19.1
Muslim	12	10.9
Greek Orthodox	01	0.9
Episcopal	12	10.9
Evangelical	02	1.8
Lutheran		
Seventh day Adventist	16	14.5
Other	20	18.2
Total	100	100

Table 5
Educational Levels

Educational levels	Raw score	Percentage (%)
Completed high school	44	40.0
Some college	29	26.4
Undergraduate	19	17.3
Graduate	18	16.4
Total	110	100

The African American male population suffers from family cohesion issues (Boyras&Sayger, 2012; Johnson, 2012; Lightsey& Sweeney, 2008; Williams, et al., 2000); therefore, it is of dire necessity that the situation is addressed so that this tested population can get the necessary help they need in correcting the situation. While this sample size does not adequately represent the entire African American men's population, it was used to show the effects that spirituality and hope have on family cohesion within the sample population.

Results

There were 110 African American men surveyed in this research. The descriptive statistic that characterized the sampled population of African American men are their age (18 years and over), parental status (father or not), marital status (single, married, divorced), religious affiliations (any denomination), and educational level (graduate or no graduate from high school or college). The dominant age group in the sample was 28 to 37 years old at 23.6%. There was a 54.6% being a parent, which is a dominant group. There were 55.5% of married African American men surveyed; this was the highest percentage in that group. Catholics were the leading religious affiliation with 23.6% ,and 40% of those surveyed completed high school while 16.4% received a graduate degree. All participants had at least African Americans as their biological parent(s).

Assumptions

A lack of homoscedasticity, according to Berry and Hansen (1996), can lead to bias in the measures of variance. However based on the assumptions testing, variables of this study and their results were considered within their scope and did not exceed data findings.

An assumption was testing identified slight skewness in the variables. However, 5% trimmed means the procedure showed negligible mean differences when removing the outliers. Therefore, all data weremaintained, as the respondent scores were considered an accurate reflection of the population from which the sample was drawn.

Multicollinearity was assessed by examining the bivariate correlations among the predictor values; no violations were noted. Table 1 represents the relationships between the variables for the full model predicting family cohesion.

Normality data plots and skewness was tested to ensure that the distribution of variables was standard. Further, none of the variables exceeded the skewnessthat supported the notion that the distribution in this analysis was standard.

A mediation model (Figure 1) tested the hypotheses and found that there was a statistically significant relationship between spirituality and family cohesion and the relationship was significantly mediated by hope. This result is significant because it answered Research Questions 1, 2, and 3, and likewise, confirmed the Alternative Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3.

A mediation model (Figure 1) tested the hypothesis that there was a statistically significant relationship between spirituality and family cohesion and the relationship was

significantly mediated by hope. Assumption was testing identified slight skewness in the variables. However, 5% trimmed means the procedure showed negligible mean differences when removing the outliers. Therefore, all data were employed, as the respondent scores were considered an accurate reflection of the population from which the sample was drawn. Multicollinearity was assessed by examining bivariate correlations among the predictor values; no violations were noted. Figure 4 as shown below depicts the paths of the variables in the mediation model.

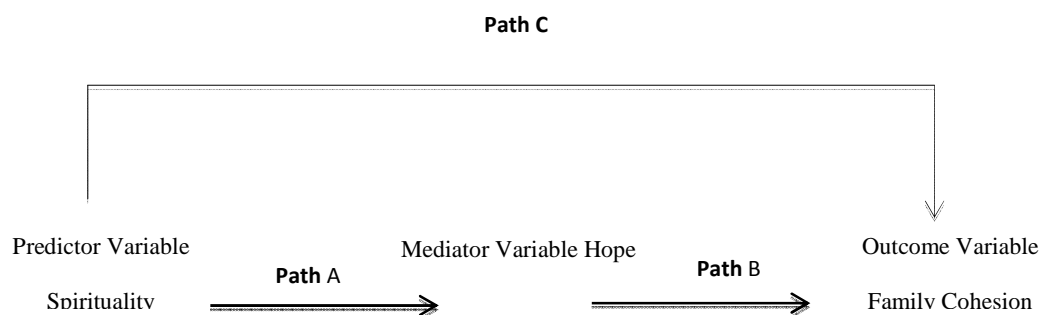


Figure 4. Diagram of paths in the mediation model.

Table 6

Correlations Between Variables

Variable	Spirituality	Hope
Spirituality	-	.270
Hope	.270	-

Note. $N = 110$.

The Kenny, Kashy, and Bolger (1988) method was used to evaluate the three equations: First, the dependent variable, family cohesion, was regressed on the predictor

variable, spirituality (Path C) to assess whether spirituality was significantly related to family cohesion. Second, the mediator variable, hope, was regressed on the predictor variable, spirituality (Path A) to assess whether spirituality was significantly related to hope. Third, the dependent variable, family cohesion, was simultaneously regressed on the mediator variable, hope, and the predictor variable, spirituality (Path B). Multiple regressions were used to determine the relationship of the predictor variable spirituality to the outcome variables of family cohesion. Hope functioned as a mediating variable. The test results patterned significant relationships for all hypotheses as follows:

Alternative hypothesis 1. Spirituality was significantly related to family cohesion, $F(1, 108) = 4.54, p = .037$. Thus, the requirement for path C was met, and the hypothesis: Spirituality measured by the INSPIRIT will significantly influence family cohesion, as measured by the family relation/cohesion scale, for African American men, was established by this equation.

Alternative hypothesis 2. Spirituality was significantly related to hope, $F(1, 108) = 8.49, p = .004$. Thus, the second condition was met. The hypothesis: Hope measured by the hope scale will significantly mediate spirituality as measured by the INSPIRIT scale, for African American men, was also established.

Alternative hypothesis 3. Hope and spirituality, simultaneously, formed a significant influential model for family cohesion, $F(2, 107) = 4.75, p = .011$. Both variables contributed significantly to the model with spirituality ($B = .498, p < .05$, providing higher degree of predictability than hope, ($B = -.150, p < .05$). Thus, the condition for step 3 (Path

B) was met. Thus, hope does provide much mediating effect between spirituality and family cohesion.

The exact statistics of 110 African American men was mentioned however the associated probability value could be less or higher. The higher the exact statistics, the greater is the probability value, MacKinnon, Warsi, & Dwyer (1995), warned against this point estimate formula for sample sizes less than 500.

The confidence interval of .80 was used to acquire the sample size. 95% confidence interval, was obtained as 1.96 standard error, on either side of the view. The GPower3 software conducted a power analysis, to determine the appropriate sample size for this study (Faul, et al., 2007). An a priori power analysis, assuming a medium effect size ($f=.10$), $\alpha=.05$, showed a minimum sample size of 100 participants was required to achieve a power of .80, however for attrition purposes a 10% of the sample size was added to make 110. The use of a medium effect size ($f=.10$) is the appropriate effect size for this proposed research.

Post hoc tests are not done for multiple linear regressions as was used in this study. There were also no additional statistical tests of hypotheses emerging from the analysis of the main hypotheses of the study. Table 2 describes the descriptive statistics for the study variables. Table 3 describes the results of the three regression equations. Table 7 as shown below presented the descriptive statistics for the study variables: Spirituality, Hope, and family cohesion.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Spirituality	22.35	3.52
Hope	9.70	
Family Cohesion	36.25	6.83

Note:(*N* = 110)

Table 8

Regression Analysis Summary Testing Mediator Effects

Testing steps	<i>B</i>	<i>SD</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Step 1 (Path C)					
Outcome					
Predictor	.386	.183	.199	2.110	.037
Step 2 (Path A)					
Outcome					
Predictor	.744	.255	.270	2.913	.004
Step 3 (Path B)					
Outcome					
Mediator	-.150	.068	-.213	-2.12	.029
Spirituality	.498	.187	.256	2.666	.009

Note. Step 1: Dependent: family cohesion, predictor = spirituality; Step 2: Dependent: hope, predictor = spirituality; Step 3: Dependent = family cohesion, mediator = hope, predictor = spirituality.

Note:(*N* = 110).

Summary

The current study addressed the gap in the literature that implied that there was a lacking of empirical data and lack of current information on African American men and family cohesion. The use of spirituality and hope were used to address the concerns, to use a quantitative non-experimental inquiry to examine the variables. The study contributed to existing literature by adding empirical data thus providing current information on the topic.

Data was collected in an approximate four weeks period then tabulated and analyzed, the information was then recorded, for present and future use in the community at large, to help with the problem of family cohesion. 110 African American men were studied. The demographics used in this study are age, marital and parental statuses, religious associations and educational levels. In order to participate the African American men had to be 18 years and over, marital and parental statuses did not matter, neither their spiritual affiliations nor educational levels. Most important were their age and ethnicity. The age group most dominant were the 28 to 37 years old, 26%, followed by the 48 to 57 years old with a 23%. This suggests that both young and old are interested in improving family cohesion. There was an indication that 61 of the 110 African American men surveyed were married, 55.5% and 10.9% were divorced. 62 of the 110 are parent(s) a 56.4%. A significant amount of the surveyed African American, are affiliated with a religious group. The highest religious group amounted for 23% classified themselves as Catholics, followed by the Baptist with a 19.1%. The important thing is that African American men value spirituality because it has been a center of their life. Then finally, the

educational level section showed that 44, (40%) of the 110 African American who were surveyed graduated from high school, 29, (26.4%) completed some college, 19, (17.2%) achieved an undergraduate degree and 18, (16.4%) gained a graduate degree. The results from the demographics showed that African American men are well rounded, and in whatever scope of life they are, they are interested in having positive family cohesion.

A mediation model tested the hypothesis suggesting that there was a statistically significant relationship between spirituality and family cohesion. The result found that the relationship was significantly mediated by hope. This is positive news because it provided the answers to the research questions which are very essential to this study. Spirituality, measured by INSPIRIT significantly predict family cohesion, as measured by the family relation/cohesion scale, for African American men, $F(1, 108) = 4.54, p = .037$. Therefore, spirituality was effective in impacting family cohesion as the data confirmed such a hypothesis. Hope measured by the hope scale can significantly mediate spirituality as measured by the INSPIRIT scale for African American men, $F(1, 108) = 8.49, p = .004$. Since there is a significant relationship between spirituality and hope, it proved useful in helping to bring about changes as it provided mediation between spirituality and family cohesion.

There is a relationship between spirituality and family cohesion, and this relationship was mediated by hope. The mediation model reported that hope and spirituality, simultaneously, developed a significant predictive model for family cohesion, $F(2, 107) = 4.75, p = .011$. Results from Kenny, Kashy and Bolger (1988) Baron and

Kenny (1986), and Preachers and Hayes (2008) found that the relationship between spirituality and family cohesion was significantly mediated by hope. It is very crucial to the study that all three questions were answered affirmatively, making its results very significant to the researcher and hopefully to the readers also.

While Chapter 4 reported the results, Chapter 5 focused on the discussion and analysis of the data collected. Also, it highlighted the limitations of the study, made recommendations and gave the implications of the study and finally, the conclusion of the study was given.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter is organized in a manner that enables readers to revisit what was written in previous chapters and also to review the findings in relation to the peer-reviewed literature. The section deals specifically with the introduction, interpretations of the findings, limitations of the findings, recommendations, implications of the study, and the conclusion.

The purpose of this quantitative and nonexperimental inquiry examined the relationship between spirituality, the independent variable, and hope, the mediating variable, with family cohesion, the dependent variable, on whether or not the variables impacted African American men's family cohesion. The study examined and contributed to the existing literature, bringing added empirical data that provided added information on the current concerns of African American men as they battle with family cohesion concerns.

Given the nature of this research, a quantitative design used to test objective theories by examining the relationship among variables Creswell (2008) was used. This quantitative method was chosen because it was the most appropriate one for this type of study, due to its objectivity in gathering information and for reporting the data collected (Creswell, 2008). The three variables are spirituality (independent), hope (mediation), and family cohesion (dependent variable). The use of spirituality and hope and their impact African American men's family cohesion was examined.

The data were collected from African American men 18 years and over, using questionnaire surveys. Then the data were analyzed as multiple linear regressions using the

SPSS 20.0 software. This study was conducted because there is a lack of information on African American men, spirituality and hope, and their perception of family cohesion. Much needed empirical data are needed to help clinicians and those who relate to African Americans in remedying the family cohesion situation that is ruining family relationships.

A mediation model tested the hypotheses, and the key finding was a statistically significant relationship between spirituality and family cohesion; this relationship was significantly mediated by hope. Spirituality was significantly related to family cohesion and was significantly related to hope. Hope and spirituality, simultaneously, created a significant predictive model for family cohesion. Both variables are significant contributors to the design; however, spirituality provided a higher predictability than hope even though hope did provide some mediating effect. Those were the findings based on the mediation model.

Interpretation of the Findings

The three research questions and alternative hypotheses were significantly confirmed by the results from the mediation model, which presented empirical data to support their findings. The null hypotheses were all disconfirmed, from the use of the same mediation model, due to the lack of empirical support for any of them. However, from the findings, extended knowledge was brought to light and was available to be used currently and in the future by anyone who is interested or working with families or anyone with family cohesion concerns.

Research Question 1

The question on whether or not spirituality measured by INSPIRIT could predict influences on family cohesion as measured by the family cohesion scale was answered in an affirmative manner, based on the mediation model that tested the hypothesis. However based on peer reviewed literature, there is a lack of literature on the topic of spirituality and hope influencing family cohesion among African American men (Ciarrocchi, et al., 2008; Cutrona, et al., 2011; Taylor & Chatters, 2010; Utsey et al., 2008). On the other hand, much research has been done with African American women using spirituality and hope to address many situations, including the family. Based on the literature, research done with women as it related to spirituality and hope indicated that there is a positive impact on African American women in relation to family cohesion. The current study also showed that spirituality and hope have a positive impact of African American men's family cohesion. Spirituality and religion are the heart of African American culture as was disclosed in Chapters 1 and 2. It is therefore, logical to assume that since both genders are influenced with similar core beliefs, if this works for the women, it is most likely to work for the men. The concept of generalizations was used here, by assuming that if African American women benefited from the use of spirituality and hope, it is likely that African American men can also benefit because of shared core values in the African American family structure. Extensive studies conducted by Chatters et al., 2009; Taylor and Chatters, 2010; Taylor, Chatters, and Jackson, 2007 used religion and spirituality with both genders; however, the combination of variables along with the mediation model were not used.

Therefore, the current study opens the way for more research to be done with the sampled population and other areas of interest.

Research Question 2

Hope measured by the hope scale significantly predicts spirituality as measured by the INSPIRIT scale for African American men. This question was also answered affirmatively, based on the results and analysis from the data. Moreover, numerous studies were conducted using hope (Chang & Banks 2007; Davidson, et al., 2010; Riina & McHale 2010, 2012). Other variables (spirituality and family cohesion) and the sample population (African American men) of this current research were not combined in any research. Chang and Banks (2007) conducted their research with a mixed sample population, while this current study focused on one gender, different age groups, different marital and parental statuses, different religious affiliations, and different educational levels. The current study provided new information to existing information, thus opening the way for knowledge to increase on the topic, and also for added research to commence. Chang and Banks (2007) mentioned that there were more similarities than dissimilarities with hope, but it is best not to generalize the findings because of the sample size of the study.

Stoddard, McMorris, and Sieving (2011) researched a similar theme as I did, using hope as a mediator between family and school connectedness. It was found that the family connectedness was very essential in keeping adolescents focused on academic success. I would ask that more research be done with the sample population and specific variables and demographics such as specific age groups, and marital and parental status. Doing so

would somewhat eradicate the wide generalization that exists in the research findings. While hope is highly studied, the current research has a hypothesis that spirituality was significantly related to hope. Therefore, for African American men who claim to be spiritual, hope been a part of spirituality that has proven very useful in helping with family cohesion. The current research was very critical to the discipline because it focused on a particular gender along with a defining demographic and a distinct ethnicity, wherein it was much easier to make generalizations about the study.

Research Question 3

There is a relationship between spirituality and family cohesion, and that this relationship can be mediated by hope was the result from the mediation model. The findings confirm that there is a statistically significant relationship between spirituality and family cohesion and that the relationship can be mediated by hope. The finding from the current research confirms what Stoddard et al. (2011) found in their study on how social connections and hope matter in the prediction of early adolescent violence. Both studies concluded that hope is a significant mediator and that hope played an important role in family and social connectedness as well as between spirituality and family cohesion in the current study. Looking at the similarities and differences of both studies are astounding yet very intriguing to see a great difference in age group and the marginal similarities in the findings. These findings can be shared with the public agencies, anyone who works with groups, and also with pastors and counselors to bring a heightened sense of responsibility to those who care about family cohesion.

In one peer reviewed article written by Walton and Takeuchi (2010), findings have proven that hope and spirituality formed a significant predictive role for family cohesion. These authors also examined family structure and processes and well-being among Asian-Americans and found that family cohesion affects gender and nativity, protecting the psychological well-being of women and American born workers but not men and foreign born individuals. Therefore, family cohesion forms a predictive role for women and American born workers.

Findings also confirm that spirituality and hope provide a significant predictive role for family cohesion, which supports the findings from the literature review section. Brelsford (2011), in her quantitative study on divine alliances to handle family conflict, concluded from data that the better relationship functioning was evident because of father-child spirituality. According to Brelsford, the father and children who reported better family relationships showed the importance of spirituality in their lives. The findings about spirituality and family cohesion are significantly related and can be mediated by hope and supports existing data. This extends the knowledge in the discipline by its addition to what is already present.

There were no supportive data that were collected and interpreted for the null hypotheses. The findings were shared with the public, especially those who work alongside African American men and any organization working with individuals wanting to have better family cohesion.

Result Based on Peer Reviewed Literature

Review of the current literature indicates that there was a lack of information on spirituality, hope, and family cohesion and their impact on African American men (Chang & Banks, 2007; Ciarrocchi, et al., 2008; Cutrona, et al., 2008). However, this study provided added and current information to be used in providing the necessary help through group or individual learning sessions for African American men during counseling sessions. Not only can this study be used for the purpose of educating African American men on how to develop more cohesive family, but any gender and any ethnicity could also benefit. The results from this study extended knowledge in the discipline by joining with the already present information to make a more informative and educational premise for individuals to work with.

Based on peer-reviewed literature, the lack of empirical data were considered the primary contributor to the absence of intervention and may have barred individuals and companies from addressing the family cohesion problem among African American men (Chang & Banks, 2007; Ciarrocchi, et al., 2008; Hook, et al., 2008; Mattis & Jager, 2001; Taylor & Chatters, 2010; Utsey, et al., 2006). Consequently, this study provided empirical data that can be presented to individuals, families, and agencies who are working to provide answers to those in need of help for better family cohesion. Findings were made available for all to use in improving family cohesion. The fact that the findings are current and up-to-date should prove that they are more readily accepted in any area where family counseling is addressed.

The mediation model, which tested the hypotheses from the study, confirmed that there was a statistically significant relationship between spirituality and family cohesion, and that the relationship was significantly mediated by hope. Similar to the methods used there are connections moving from level to level to achieve required goals, the findings from the hypotheses that were tested showed that the variables were all related and that together they can achieve the desired outcome. This result is closely aligned with the stages of faith, rainbows in the mind, and the circumplex model of marital and family systems theories, supporting the developmental operations and the relationship between these methods and the variables. Spirituality and family cohesion with the use of hope proved very significant in this research, and the findings attested to this. Spirituality, according to the findings, is imperative to family cohesion, and with the mediated use of hope, more impact can be made on African American men who are seeking improved family cohesion. The results confirmed the alternative hypothesis that proposed that there is a relationship between spirituality and family cohesion and that the relationship can be mediated by hope.

The mediation also indicated that spirituality was significantly related to hope, making a stronger argument for the use of spirituality and hope in influencing family cohesion among African American men. Assumptions were tested, and this identified a slight skewness in the variables. All data were retained, as the respondent's scores were assumed to be an accurate representation of the sample population. From the multicollinearity assessment, which examined bivariate correlations among the predictor values, no violations were noted.

The results were based on the fact that actual mediation occurred according to Preacher and Hayes (2004) and Kenny, Kashy, and Bolger (1988). The research questions were answered, and the mediation process was established to be useful in playing a part in providing mediation between spirituality and family cohesion through the use of hope as the mediator.

Findings and the Theoretical Framework

The stages of faith theory (Fowler, 1981) cater to the development of one's faith or spirituality for its clients. The stages of faith posited that spirituality is not instantaneous, but something that is developed over a period of time. In previous studies done with African American women, spirituality was found to be very a positive factor, similar to the current study that African American men are positively impacted by spirituality as they seek to improve family cohesion. Once the concepts are absorbed and fully grasped, then the client moves from one stage of their spirituality growth to the next, until they are spiritually matured. This use of the stages of faith theory is supported in this study in that the principles of the theory are used by African American men who learn the concepts of spirituality and hope by using the principles in improving family cohesion concerns. Like the stages of faith theory, the principles of spirituality and hope are discovered in order for changes to occur within the family. It is important to note that since spirituality is the core of African American family circle, it is most likely that African American men benefited from it and thus an increase in family cohesion was evident. The importance of this study was that the stages of faith theory was reincorporated in African American men's lives to

help them make the progress they needed in order to obtain better family cohesion. The principles of the theory are a developmental process as is the process for African American men as they seek to improve family cohesion. The demographics showed that in every age group, parental and marital statuses, and educational and spiritual levels, there is a must for family cohesion, and individuals' search for this continues. This idea is tied in with the stages of faith theory, which centered on different levels of development required to achieve maximum spiritual benefits, and so for family cohesion, the continuation of spirituality must ensue.

The rainbows in the mind theory purports that there is hope in every situation in life. Like the colors of the rainbow are bright giving a ray of hope, so it is with hope and spirituality when introduced to African American men who seek help with their family cohesion concerns. The rainbows in the mind theory posit that the use of the principles of the colors of the rainbow can help foster hope in an individual. The whole concept of the rainbow is the promise of hope. The findings illustrated that there is a relationship between spirituality and family cohesion and that it can be mediated by hope. The hope theory posits that hope is present in every sphere in life; with that in mind, there is hope for positive changes in family cohesion for African American. The importance of the hope theory is that hope is always present to be used in any situation, therefore for the African American men, hope is present to be used to help them improve family cohesion. There is no particular time frame to use hope and it is available for all age groups, whether a parent or not, whether married or not, educated or not, whether you are from a religious affiliation

or not, hope is always present to be used anytime, anywhere and by everyone. African American men in this study were introduced to the principles of hope, reassuring them that hope is always present to be used anytime it is needed. Therefore, as African American men try to make positive changes to their family as it relates to cohesion, they should remember that there is hope that can help to make positive changes. They need to hold on to hope in their quest to make advance because it is only as hope is present that there are any opportunity to make these changes. This hope theory support this research by providing the principles of hope that change can be made as long as there is a positive outlook.

The circumplex theory of marital and family systems (Olson, 1989), purport that that, more cohesive families tend to be more functional in society and that there is a better chance for balance, with family cohesion. Its main emphasis is on family togetherness and separation. This current study focused on the cohesion within the African American family. The findings stated that together hope and spirituality formed a significant predictive model for family cohesion. Considering that better family cohesion is what this study is aiming for, the method is considered significant for its usage. With the use of the circumplex theory of marital and family system in place African American men found it useful in their quest to improve family cohesion. The demographics tied in with this theory in that these African American men 18 years and older, parents and non- parents, married single or divorced, from any religious affiliations and of any educational levels are all interested in

family and how best cohesion within could be improved. This approach was helpful in providing clues on how to improve family cohesion that is the essence of the study.

Limitations of the Study

Although the research data has highlighted some great results, there remain limitations of the study. There are numerous limitations that could affect internal and external validity, construct validity, and confounder variables in this study. While some of the findings from the study indicate that there can be changes in African American men's family cohesion through the use of spirituality mediated by hope, it should be noted that only 110 men were studied, and they cannot effectively represent or reflect the thoughts of thousands of African American in the New York, Hempstead area, useless to say the United States. One such limitation of the study could be reflected in the sample size where the views of the general population of African American men will not be generally represented with the view from the sample size 110, calculated using the GPower3 software (Faul, et al., 2009). It is, therefore a safe thing to say that this study is likely to represent some African American men who are spiritual; others who do embrace spirituality would have a harder time accepting the results of the study. Another limitation is that the result of the study is somewhat limited to those who are engaged in clinical, counseling or educational duties.

Another limitation is that this study exempted and females are limited to only African American men, ages 18 and over, therefore, the views might not be readily braced by African American women. One of the potential threats of the current study to internal

validity is instrumentation. The limitation is that participants all have different experiences, therefore this will be reflected on the surveys. Then the threat to external validity is that the results of the current study cannot be generalized to individuals who were excluded. This stands true that what might be considered valid in the current study might not be for others. This study as it relates to construct validity has a limitation in that the instrument used to measure spirituality although widely used in other studies was not reliable (Kass, 1993), and was not used on the African American population before. A confounder variable is the presence of a variable that is overlooked in the study. A limitation in this study is that there could be confounder variables that are ignored and could change the variables being studied, thwarting the results so that they do not show the actual relationship between the variables. With the discussion on the limitations of the study, it is suggested that the use of the findings from the study be used as carefully as possible so that no misconception is implied.

Recommendations

Further research on this topic is recommended for other ethnicities and particular age groups. Also, there is a strong recommendation for further research with the under 18 years old African American men. It would be interesting to examine how they think and relate to their parents, since they were not surveyed in this current research. Based on the favorable responses from participants of this study, similar research on African American men and other areas of interest could be researched. Similar studies could be done with the female gender, but using different measurement scales since the scales were not initially

tested on the African American's population. Researchers urged clinicians, group therapists, pastors, and counselors to use the findings of this study to develop educational programs to be used in the different communities to improve the well-being of those who seek to have better family cohesion. This current study serves as a springboard for further research on other ethnicities.

Implications

This study has provided much needed information and empirical data to the limited amount that existed already. Thus, the implications for positive social change will likely provided more planned interventions so that activities can be implemented for the use of helping African American men improve family cohesion. Implication for social changes should result in the fact that theoretical, practical, and educational information for use in improving family cohesion will be introduced to African American men during group and individual counseling sessions. This can motivate African American men to make the better choices to improve the relationship and foster better family cohesion. This study provided data on spirituality and hope, impacting African American men's family cohesion. No previous research has combined these three variables using the three measurement instruments that were used in this study. Consequently getting a deeper knowledge on how these three variables will be used in a more comprehensive way and giving more insight on understanding the problem that exists will be one of the implications of this study. There is a strong possibility that this study will change individuals, families and society on

thewhole. Society will benefit by having more African American men seeking to change their families through better family cohesion.

Methodological Implications

The non-experimental quantitative method was used because it allowed for more members to be involved in the study, it allowed generalization to be made, and it helped to form the foundation for the subject and future research using other, such as the qualitative and mixed methods. Although this non-experimental quantitative, research method is not new, for this research it is the first time been used with the sampled population, with all three variables; thus, it provided essential information used in the current and future settings.

There lies the possibility of using different methodologies (qualitative and mixed methods) to research the topic currently and in the future. The qualitative method would give the readers an insight on how one sees a topic of interest. This would be done through case study, individual and group interviews. The mixed method is a combination of a case study, individual and group interviews and surveys. The qualitative method would add individual's knowledge of any given subject, the way one feels or perceive an issue would be presented using a qualitative method. The mixed method would present both, feelings and how one understands an issue along with empirical data that was collected from the surveys. Together these two methods would add knowledge of and empirical data to support the issue under review.

Theoretical Implications

This research utilized three principles namely the stages of faith (Fowler, 1981) rainbows in the mind (Snyder, 1986), and the circumplex model of marital and family systems (Olson, 1989). From the results of these approaches we see the success in using them in the study to address the problem with family cohesion faced by African American men. Other studies addressed some of these variables and however this is the first study with these three variables, and the sampled population. The study's findings coincide with the ideas used as a framework, in that the three theories focused on developmental process, moving from lower to higher levels. African American men are improving or developing their family cohesion skills which allow them to move in a positive way. The findings from this study will now add to the theories and supports the scope of literature by providing current data. The findings will add to the theory by stating that the theories have promoted positive results from its usage in this study. However, further studies can be conducted using the stages of faith, Fowler, 1981; rainbows in the mind, Snyder, 1986 and circumplex model of marital Olson, 1989) with different variables to find out whether or not they would support findings from this research.

Empirical Implication

Careful analysis of the history indicated a lack of practical information on spirituality, hope, and family cohesion and their impact on African American men, (Chang & Banks, 2007; Ciarrocchi, Dy-Liacco&Deneke, 2008; Cutrona, Russell, Burzette, Wesner&Byrant, 2011; Taylor & Chatters, 2010; Utsey, et al., 2008). Consequently, the

current study examined spirituality and hope and how they will affect African American men's family cohesion, and provide empirical data to be added to existing data, so that much more support can be given to the problem. In doing such support can be made to the existing and future literature, giving a stronger support when providing evidences to support the issue.

Educating African American men and the general populace about the importance of spirituality and hope within the family, through teachings within spiritual groups will help the community. Improved families will lead to positive changing communities where there will be more united family members coming together enhancing family cohesiveness within respective communities. Through research and measurement of spirituality, hope and family cohesion, this study will be crucial for the greater benefit of the community, the field of clinical psychology and counseling, or any areas where family life is addressed. This study provided much needed empirical data and therefore, it can be used to present current data to those who need that as supportive arguments. The use of the data for each of the demographic along with the results from the studies presented compellingly and current information which can be used to illustrate to individuals and groups their impact, based on the results.

Evidence based studies are readily used by clinicians, in most cases to give information and even to be used in group and individual therapy. In clinical practice, the challenge goes out for a trial of any feasible study so that findings can be substantiated. There are always surveys been done because in order for one to be effective in presenting

correct information, there has to be empirical data and information that can effectively endorse the findings. Research is also very helpful in giving patients a hand on experience in their recovery from any maladaptive behavior. Replicating a study to see how effective it can be on different groups and gender is another way clinicians can use the research to help in their clinical work.

The current information will provide useful resources for the African American communities and also other communities will likely benefit from the findings of this research. When African American men are enabled through the learning process, there will be more family oriented and cohesive men, more stable working and cooperative employees and ultimately great fathers and spouses in individual and collective families, which should likely result in better men, better homes and better communities. The implications for positive social change include the potential to understand family dynamics better, then practicing them: by taking care of family members by helping with responsibilities thus improving the family, which would be very imperative in facilitating changes, in the homes and the community. African American men will be empowered with knowledge on how to address and cope with family cohesion conflicts, through seminars and workshops given by various groups within the communities, consequently leading to better overall quality of family life and family cohesion.

Recommendations for Practice

The findings will be shared with clinicians, policy makers, agencies and educators. It is hoped that clinicians and other educators will incorporate the findings in their

interventions, counseling sessions and their therapeutic groups, which will provide educational resources for the African American men and other ethnicities who can benefit as well. Policy makers will use the empirical data to create the valuable document that can be shared with a wider range of individuals who are interested in family cohesion.

Conclusion

The current study focused on African American men and how spirituality and hope can influence family cohesion. After witnessing the effects of family cohesion in the lives of African American men, with much intensity the research was done to bring awareness about the struggles they face and about what could be done to help remedy the situation. Spirituality and hope and family cohesion were studied because these are elements that were part of the African American family upbringing. Spirituality and hope are core essentials of the African American culture, and they have used spirituality and hope as a means of support and comfort over the years to buffet discrimination and abuse; therefore, it was significant that they were used in the study. African American men are very resilient, but they face many obstacles in life (Perry, 2009), however, with strong determination they overcame many barriers and began to live lives that are focused and fulfilling.

This researcher understands the struggles African American men face daily, their downfall and also their victories. Spirituality is rooted in the heart of the African American culture (Taylor & Chatters, 2010), and so it was the best choice when spirituality and hope were chosen as the variables to help African American to cope with the problems of cohesion that they face within their families. The findings show the importance of the

variables: spirituality and hope, and their impact on African American men's family cohesion. Years of discrimination and abuse have led the African American race to find a stronghold as a means of refuge and solace. Since spirituality and hope have been the core of their upbringing, it was natural to choose those variable to help African American men who were having family cohesion concerns, because there was already an association established with the variables. Without a doubt in mind, it is clear that these variables played an important role in the education and will re-ignite powerful lessons that African American men leaned in life.

It is the hope of the researcher that anyone who will reads this study will benefit immensely from it and that they can practice some of the suggestions that were mentioned in the recommendation section. Consequently their lives shouldbecome family oriented and cohesive thus opening the way for improved family cohesion for African American men who will most likely be impacted positively.

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Appendix A: Invitation Letter

Dear Participants,

My name is Jennifer DeSouza a doctoral student at Walden University. I am writing a research to examine African American men and how spirituality and hope can be used to impact their perception of family cohesion.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to better understand the impact that spirituality and hope have on African American men and to see whether or not it can help them to have better family cohesion.

Participation

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and the answers to the surveys will only be used for my dissertation. You may decline to participate at any point in time without any penalty.

Confidentiality

Any other information gathered during the study will be kept confidential for seven years and will be kept in a secured vault by the researcher. Following the seven years period, all protocols and information gathered during the study will be destroyed. There are no known or anticipated risks associated with participating in this study; however the possibility exist that there can be negative impact. Consequently, a list with free and low-cost counseling services is provided for your use, should that become necessary.

Your participation in this study will be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions about the surveys, please feel free to contact my supervisor Marlon. Sukal, PhD.

Consent needed

You are invited to take part in this research study on African American men and how spirituality and hope can be used to impact family cohesion. This study will seek to examine spirituality and hope and find out whether or not they can help enhance family cohesion. The researcher is inviting African American men ages of 18 and over to participate. This sample will include individuals from any spiritual group, African Americans with any educational background and career, from any socio-economic group, any marital status, and fathers/non fathers to be in the study. Participants should have biological parent(s) who are African American. This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether or not to take part.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to better understand the impact that spirituality and hope have on African American men and to see whether or not it can help them to have better family cohesion.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to complete three short questionnaires and a demographic questionnaire. This will be done on a one time bases.

- INSPIRIT scale will take about 15 minutes to complete
- Hope Scale will take about 8 minutes to complete
- Family Cohesion Scale will take about 10 minutes to complete

Here are some sample questions:

I can think of many ways to get out of a jam.

I'm available when others in the family want to talk with me.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at any hospitals, churches, schools or any agencies or organizations will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time. (Informed consent letter shows proof that participants volunteer to be a part of the study. Each participant can keep a copy for personal file).

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves risk of minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life. However being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing to you and others.

The results of the study will provide added and current information to existing information about how spirituality and hope may impact African American men's perception of family cohesion. This information will then be available to be used by pastors, counselors or others who work with families.

Payment:

There will be no payment involved in this study. However participants will be given key rings as token of appreciation. The key rings will be in the research packet.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be used solely for this research project. Data will be kept secure by being lock up in a filing cabinet in the researcher's office. No else one will have access to the file. Data will be kept for a period of at least seven years, as required by the

university. In order to protect your privacy no signatures are being collected and your completion of the survey would indicate your consent, if you choose to participate.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 02-18-14-0111698 and it expires on 02-18-15.

Statement of Consent

In order to protect your privacy no signatures are being collected and your completion of the survey would indicate your consent, if you choose to participate.

Appendix B: Flyer

Seeking African American men's participation

Research Topic: "Spirituality and hope, impacting African American men's perception of family cohesion".

- *Must be African American male*
- *Must be 18 years or over*
- *Can be a member of any spiritual denomination.*
- *Must have biological African American parent(s)*

Please join me at: Macedonia SDA Church

(Day, time and date to be announced)

Appendix C- Demographic Questionnaire

Please complete the following questionnaire by placing a check mark at the most applicable option for each item that applies to you.

1. Age:
 - 18 – 27
 - 28 – 37
 - 38 – 47
 - 48 – 57
 - 58 – 67
 - 68 and over

2. Marital Status:
 - Married
 - Single
 - Divorce

3. Do you have children?
 - Yes
 - No

4. Spiritual Affiliation:
 - Catholic
 - Baptist
 - Muslim
 - Greek Orthodox
 - Episcopal
 - Evangelical Lutheran
 - Seventh Day Adventist
 - Other

5. Educational Level:
 - Complete High School
 - Some college
 - Undergraduate Degree
 - Graduate Degree

6. Ethnicity/race

I am an African American man with Biological African American parent(s)

Appendix D: Counseling Services

- Thompson Counseling Services 516-485-3537
- Macedonia mentoring, tutoring and counseling service- 516-483-8532
- Compeer-516-489-2322
- Abundant Life Education Ministries 516-519-6540
- North Shore Medical& HelpCenter-516-538-4213
- Mercy Medical Center-516-626-3729
- Nassau University Medical Service Center-516-572-0123
- Franklin Hospital Medical Service Center-516-256-6000
- Nassau Mental Health Association-516-485-4314
- Desire Helpline 516-538-4213

Appendix E- Seeking Permission to Use the INSPIRIT**From:** Jennifer DeSouza**Sent:** Tuesday, February 05, 2013 9:23 PM**To:** Kass, Jared**Subject:** SEEKING PERMISSION

Dear Dr. Kass,

I spoke with you briefly yesterday, thanks very much for responding.

My name is Jennifer DeSouza, a student at Walden University. I am currently writing my proposal and I am seeking permission to use your INSPIRIT scale. The topic I am researching is "Spirituality and hope as Influences of Family Cohesion among African Americanmen" The research study will be exploring the spirituality and hope and how they can be used to produce positive relationship in African American males.

My Dissertation Chair is Dr. Marlon Sukal. I look forward to hearing from you soon and thanks in advance.

Jennifer DeSouza

Appendix F- Letter FromtheDeveloper of INSPIRIT

Jennifer DeSouza

-

To: [Desouza, Jennifer](#)

Attachments:

(6)[Download all attachments](#)

[INSP-REV.DOC \(37 KB\)\[Open as Web Page\]](#); [INSP-SCR.DOC \(33 KB\)\[Open as Web Page\]](#); [.Health Outcomes and a New ~1.pdf \(2 MB\)\[Open as Web Page\]](#); [.Spiritual Maturation, Jour~1.doc \(113 KB\)\[Open as Web Page\]](#); [.God Images -- Kass.pdf \(6 MB\)\[Open as Web Page\]](#); [.Emerging Models of Spiritu~1.pdf \(901 KB\)\[Open as Web Page\]](#)

From: "Kass, Jared"

Date: February 5, 2013, 4:54:42 PM EST

To: Jennifer DeSouza

Subject:RE: Seeking permission

Dear Ms. DeSouza,

Thank you for the description of your proposed doctoral research project, and your interest in using the INSPIRIT.

Your project addresses an important set of issues, and I am happy to grant you permission for its use.

When your project is complete, please send me an abstract of your findings.

I am attaching relevant material.

Good luck in your work.

Jared Kass
Jared D. Kass, Ph.D., Professor
Division of Counseling and Psychology
Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences

Appendix G- Web Permission to Use the Hope Scale

The scale can be used for research or clinical purposes without contacting the author.]



C. R. Snyder is Wright Distinguished Professor of Clinical Psychology at the University of Kansas, Lawrence. His book The Psychology of Hope: You Can Get There from Here is published by Free Press. He also has written five other books on hope.

Appendix H- Letter Requesting Permission to Use the Family Cohesion Scale**From:** Jennifer DeSouza**Date:** Fri, 2 Mar 2012 19:02:51 -0500**To:** Patrick Tolan**Subject:** FAMILY RELATION COHESION SCALE

Dear Dr.Tolan,

My name is Jennifer DeSouza. I am a PhD candidate, at Walden University. I am currently in the Proposal stage of my dissertation “Spirituality and hope impacting African American men’s perception of family cohesion.

In reviewing the literature I came across your work on the family. I am interested in using your Family relation/cohesion scale to gather some information. I am hereby requesting permission to use your scale.

I am hereby requesting a copy of the manual which would explain how the scale should be used also the validity and reliability. I would appreciate if you would email me any other information regarding the survey.

Thanks in advance for your assistance. If any additional is needed, please feel free to contact me.

Jennifer DeSouza

Appendix I- Permission to use the Family Cohesion scale

Subject :Permission granted

Date : Mon, Mar 05, 2012 10:56 AM CST

Dear Ms. DeSouza,

It is fine with us if you want to use it. I am copying my colleague Mike Schoeny who can attach/forward the document that summarizes the scale and includes all the material you should need.

Patrick

Patrick H. Tolan Ph.D.
Director, **Youth-Nex** | **The UVA Center to Promote Effective Youth Development**
and Professor, Curry School of Education and
Department of Psychiatry and Neurobehavioral Sciences

 Please consider the environment before printing this email.

Appendix J: INSPIRIT

How spiritual or religious do you consider yourself to be?

- Not at all spiritual
- Not very spiritual
- Somewhat spiritual
- Very spiritual

How often do you spend time on spiritual or religious practices?

- Once per year or less
- Once per month to several times per year
- Once per week to several times per month
- Several times per day to several times per week

How often have you felt close to a powerful spiritual force that seemed to lift you outside yourself?

- Never
- Once or twice
- Several times
- Often

Use your own definition and image of God when answering the following questions.

How close do you feel to God?

- I don't believe in God
- Not very close
- Somewhat close
- Extremely close

Have you ever had an experience that has convinced you that God exists?

- No
- I don't know
- Maybe
- Yes

Indicate if you have had any of these experiences and the extent to which each of them has affected you.

Spiritual Experiences:	Never had this experience	Had this experience and it:		
		Did not strengthen conviction that God exists	Strengthened conviction that God exists	Convinced me of God's existence
An experience of God's energy or presence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An experience of a great spiritual figure (e.g. Jesus, Mary, Elijah, Buddha)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An experience of angels or guiding spirits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An experience of communication with someone who has died	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting or listening to a spiritual teacher or master	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An overwhelming experience of love	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An experience of profound inner peace	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An experience of complete joy and ecstasy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A miraculous (or not normally occurring) event	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A healing of your body or mind (or witnessed such a healing)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A feeling of unity with the earth and all living beings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An experience with near death or life after death	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

|

Appendix L: Family Cohesion Scale

Directions: Read each item carefully. Using the scale shown below, please select the number that is appropriate and put that number in the blank space provided.

Scale: 1-Not true 2-Hardly true or sometimes 3-True a lot of the time
4-Always true or almost always

- Family members feel connected to each other -----
- Family members depend on each other -----
- Family members express affection to each other -----
- Family members ask each other for help -----
- Family members help each other with problems and needs -----
- We get along well together -----
- Family members are involved in each other's' lives -----
- We confide in each other -----
- Family members try to understand each other's' feelings -----
- . We trust each other -----
- . Family members feel very close to each other -----
- . We take care of each other -----
- . Family members like to spend time with each other -----

Curriculum Vitae

To secure a position within an organization, wherein, my personal aptitudes, experiences, interests and educational background can be utilized for the benefit of self and others.

Work Experiences:

Nassau Mental Health Organization, January 2011-Present

Practicum & Internship-Kingsboro Psychiatric Center Sept 2009-March 2011

Caribbean- worked in Jamaica teaching English, History and Social Studies. 1991-1994,

Central America- worked in Costa Rica and Panama teaching English (ESL) 1989-1991

United States- worked here as a Substitute Teacher, Logistic specialist and Supervisor.

1998-2000

Employment History:

August 1997-Present, **American Airlines Inc**, John F. Kennedy International Airport, NY.
Logistic Analyst, specializing in audits of all materials within the company

May 1995-June 1997, **Junior House Collectibles**, Secaucus, NJ

Supervisor: Supervised and coordinated employees in the department. Planning the utilization of manpower and monitor quality of work performance as scheduled.

Sept. 1991-1994, **Harrison Memorial High School**, Montego Bay, Jamaica W.I.

Teacher/Head of Language Department. Supervised the overall performance of teachers also did assessment on both teachers and students alike.

Education:

1. Walden University, Psychology major, Expected graduation, January 2015

2. University of Phoenix, M.A.Ed., Adult Education and Distance Learning, July 2005

3. Rutgers the State University of NJ, Bachelor of Arts, May 2000

Personal Development

APA convention 2008, 2011 (CE courses-credits attained)

CASAC-T Training sessions (Awarded Trainee Counselor Certification)

ESL Eligibility Certification

Technology

Proficient in Microsoft Word, Outlook, Project, and PowerPoint

Membership

American Counseling Association

American Psychological Association

Psi Chi National Honor Society, Walden Chapter

Voluntary Work

1. Macedonia Tutoring/Counseling Service assisting students complete assignments and work through their concerns.
2. Volunteer in community outreach program that distributes food and clothing to the homeless and counsel with young people in need of that.
3. Secretary of the Caribbean Resource Employee Group -John F. Kennedy Airport.
4. Nassau Mental Health Association
5. Lutheran Hospital Mental Health Clinic

References furnished upon request