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The Effect of Early Childhood Abuse on Educational Attainment

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

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Walden University
2019

Abstract

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by

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MS, University of Kentucky, 2005

BS, Miami University, 2003

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to fill a gap in the literature regarding survivors of child abuse and their capacity to continue their educational pursuits beyond high school. Thus, this study explored the lived experience of self-identified abuse survivors who were enrolled in higher education. The theoretical bases for this study included Bandura's social cognitive theory, Rotter's theory of locus of control and Heider's and Weiner's theory of attribution. Open-ended interviews were conducted with 15 survivors of child abuse enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate degree program at an online or brick and mortar university. The interviews were then transcribed and analyzed for relevant codes and themes. Results of this phenomenological qualitative study revealed that external supports played a major role in motivation for survivors of abuse to pursue higher education and that middle school was a pivotal point for child abuse survivors. This study contributes to social change by providing information to survivors of child abuse, educators, family members, and counselors that may lead to better understanding the needs of the survivors of child abuse and increase training effectiveness for interventions useful in meeting the unique needs of child abuse survivors.

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Dedication

I dedicate this research to all survivors of child abuse. There may be obstacles, but nothing is too hard.

Acknowledgments

Above all else, I must thank God for strength and wisdom to persevere through all things in life.

I would also like to acknowledge my son, Jaiden for dealing with “mommy” during the tough times, and long nights.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

This study explored connections between child abuse and educational attainment. Adult survivors of childhood abuse may suffer from effects that carry long into adulthood (Chartier, Walker, & Naimark, 2009). These survivors tend to suffer from both physical health and mental health issues (Chartier et al., 2009). Some examples that can result from child abuse are drug use, suicide attempts, sexually transmitted diseases, and risky sexual behavior (Norman, 2012). Child abuse can lead to increased incidences of major depressive disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, and other anxiety disorders (Neigh, Gillespie, & Nemeroff, 2009). Examples of increased risk for physical health issues that can result from child abuse include obesity, heart disease, chronic lung disease, skeletal fractures, and cancer (Gilbert et al., 2009). Fuller-Thomson, Brennenstuhl, and Frank (2010) found that those survivors who experienced childhood abuse are less likely to graduate from high school. Research has indicated that the adult survivors of childhood abuse tend to have lower socioeconomic statuses, higher rates of unemployment, and Medicaid usage (Zielinski, 2009). These factors are part of what one might presume contributes to lower education achievement

The research is broad on the topic of child abuse survivors from multiple types of abuse and higher education. A search on Google Scholar of child abuse and education yielded results on sexual abuse and education. Educational attainment was a small portion of a study on adolescent risk factors for maltreatment by Thornberry et al. (2014). These authors found that students who were disengaged from school and had lower expectations for college (Thornberry et al., 2014). Many studies that focused on higher

education and survivors of child abuse concentrated on the negative factors such as posttraumatic stress disorder, and alcohol use (Goldstein, Flett, & Wekerle, 2010; Read, Oiumette, White, Colder, & Farrow, 2011). A multitude of studies focused on resilience and protective factors, yet few studies focus directly on school factors as a central mediator (Smith, Park, Ireland, Elwyn, & Thornberry, 2013).

A considerable body of literature use the terms child abuse and child maltreatment interchangeably. Fang, Brown, Florence, and Mercy (2012) defined child maltreatment by stating there are four major types of maltreatment: physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, and neglect. Acharya et al. (2014) used a more expansive definition of child abuse to include the four major types identified by Fang et al. with the addition of negligent treatment, or other exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development, or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power. For this study, child abuse was defined as physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, and neglect (see Fang et al., 2012). A more detailed discussion on the definition of child abuse for this study is provided in Chapter 2.

The succeeding section, background, describes the foundation for this study. Subsequent sections include the problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, theoretical foundation, nature of study, definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, significance, and a summary.

Background

An estimated 686,000 children in the United States were victims of abuse in 2012 (United States Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 2013). This

estimate comes from abuse that was reported to Child Protective Services (USDHHS, 2013). Adult survivors of child abuse can suffer from numerous physical and mental health complications, such as smoking, alcohol abuse, sexual promiscuity, obesity, anxiety, and depression (Chartier et al., 2009). These physical and mental health complications can negatively affect academic performance (Keiling et al., 2011).

Survivors of child abuse may have difficulty when it comes to academic success (Mills et al., 2011; Nikulina, Widom, & Czaja, 2011; Spann et al., 2010). A study by Mills et al. (2011) suggested there is an association between child abuse and neglect and cognitive functioning. Spann et al. (2010) detailed how child maltreatment can cause disruption and dysfunction in various life domains, including education. Consequently, the individuals are more likely to drop out of school before graduation (Fuller-Thomson et al., 2010). Zieliski (2009) outlined the economic strain and tendency for survivors of childhood abuse to live in poverty as adults.

Some research has focused on academic achievement despite being a survivor of child abuse (Coohey, Renner, Hua, Zhang, & Whitney 2011). However, many of these studies lumped several types of childhood trauma, rather than child abuse exclusively. For example, Porche, Fortuna, Lin, & Alegria. (2011) combined several types of childhood trauma together in their discussion of graduation success. These categories included (a) life threatening car crash; (b) natural disaster; (c) manmade disaster; (d) child physical abuse; (e) being beaten; (f) being raped; (g) being molested; (h) witnessing domestic violence; (i) witnessing murder (Porche et al., 2011). To date there has been limited research to focus specifically on child abuse and academic success.

The research has mainly suggested that resiliency factors such as the child's intelligence level and engagement in school play a role in academic achievement (Coohey et al., 2011). Emotional regulation is also noted as a possible factor in resilience for academic achievement in survivors of child abuse (Schelble, Franks, & Miller, 2010). Romano, Babchishin, Marqus, and Fréchette (2014) highlighted the link between child abuse and poor educational outcomes. The authors suggested that people (teachers, caregivers, etc.) may play a role in successful educational outcomes for students (Romano et al., 2014).

A literature review by Pence (2011) found that most of the research on child abuse has focused on ways to help reduce the rates of child abuse and maltreatment. There is much less research on the personal perspectives of those who have survived child abuse and what these survivors view as the factors that contributed to their academic success. In a study on outcomes of child abuse, Currie and Widom (2010) noted that future research needed to focus on other mediating variables that help survivors of abuse stay in school. Gutman and Midgely (2000) conducted a study on school success and in their conclusion noted that more research was needed in the area of examining other indices of school success, such as motivation. Hayenga and Corpus (2010) conducted a study on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and in their recommendations for further research noted that more attention should be paid to measuring motivation. Herrenkohl, Herrenkohl, and Egolf (1994) mention the importance of focusing on positive outcomes for childhood abuse survivors, while noting the limited amount of research available. These authors compared those who completed high school

with those who did not, exploring their current life situations as adults (Herrenkohl et al., 1994). They did not however, ask about factors that contributed to the survivors' graduation and decision to pursue posthigh school education (Herrenkohl et al., 1994). Much of the current research on child abuse indicates that more research is needed in the area of school success for survivors of child abuse (Currie & Widom, 2010; Gutman & Midgely, 2000; Hayenga & Corpus, 2010).

Problem Statement

Research on motivation factors contributing to posthigh school education in survivors of child abuse is scarce. To date, much of the research focuses on high school dropout rates, and family and school factors (Porche et al., 2011). There is little research on childhood abuse and how this abuse relates to graduation success and higher education (Porche et al., 2011). Much research that focuses on school success uses measures of teacher evaluations and standardized scores, rather than qualitative lived experience (Walsh, Dawson, & Mattingly 2010). In my research, I found no studies that have been conducted to determine what factors the survivors would personally say contributed to their graduation and aspiration to continue their education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to address the gap in the research for abuse survivors' qualitative experience of factors relative to their successful completion of high school or other continued education. Walsh et al. (2010) noted as of completion of their research, there was only one study, Kaufman et al. (1994), to discuss the number of maltreated children to obtain academic success. My phenomenological study sought to

discover what high school graduates who are survivors of abuse and seeking to continue their education, described as influential in their educational accomplishment.

Research Questions

The main research question of this study was derived from the review of the literature on child abuse and education attainment. Currie and Widom (2010) suggested future studies should focus on mediating variables that influence adult outcomes of child abuse survivors. Hayegna and Corpus (2010) and Jordan, Kostandini, and Mykerezi (2012) suggested that future studies of child abuse survivors should focus on intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors as variables for educational success.

The central research question was as follows: How do high school graduates with an aspiration to continue education, who self-identify as having suffered child abuse, explain their academic achievement? The interview guide for this qualitative study is further discussed in Chapter 3.

Theoretical Foundation

Bandura's (2001) social cognitive theory supported this research. Concepts of attribution theory and locus of control, as well as self-efficacy, and their relation to academic motivation provided focused grounding for the premise that is further explained below.

One assumption of social cognitive theory is that people learn and interpret messages from their environment, including messages received from others (Martin & Dowson, 2009). Attribution theory is a facet of social cognitive theory that focuses on how individuals assign causality to events that impact their future behavior and thoughts

(Martin & Dowson, 2009). Attribution theorists assert that students can learn to be successful from messages of significant others and how the significant others relate to them (Martin & Dowson, 2009). Thus, success can be attributed to the encouragement of a teacher, friend, or another significant person.

Another assumption theorists of social cognitive theory emphasize is that people can influence their own behavior (Bandura, 2001). Locus of control theory focuses on one's belief of how much they control what happens to them (Kormanik & Rocco, 2009). Internal locus of control results from a person believing they have control over what happens to them (Kormanik & Rocco, 2009). External locus of control results from a person believing outside forces control what happens to them and what happens to them is beyond their control (Kormanik & Rocco, 2009). In terms of education, those with an internal locus of control believe academic success is directly related to their effort, and academic failure is related to a lack of personal effort (Tella, Tella, & Adeniyi, 2009). Thus, individuals with an internal locus of control are more likely to achieve academic success than those with an external locus of control (Tella et al., 2009).

Social cognitive theory with attribution theory and locus of control provided a framework to understand potential external and internal factors that may contribute to posthigh school education in survivors of child abuse. A more detailed explanation of social cognitive therapy, attribution theory, and locus of control is provided in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

The nature of the study was a qualitative phenomenological inquiry. The focus of the study was to explore the factors that contribute to a person's success in terms of

graduating from high school and pursuing a higher degree after suffering from child abuse. In-depth interviews were conducted of adult survivors of childhood abuse who graduated from high school and were in pursuit of a higher degree to better understanding factors of academic success. This research approach has precedent for use in this topic area. Tas, Selvitopu, Bora, and Demirkaya (2013) used a qualitative study to investigate factors that contributed to dropping out of high school. While the focus of this study was opposite, the concerns of investigation (factors from a personal perspective) were similar.

Definitions

Academic Success: Completion of high school by satisfying grade requirements necessary to graduate (Finn & Rock, 1997). This also includes satisfying other criteria needed for completion of a high school diploma to include testing and attendance requirements (Finn & Rock, 1997).

Child abuse: Child abuse (also referred to as child maltreatment) encompasses all methods physical, sexual or emotional harsh treatment, or any form of neglect that causes actual or prospective harm to the child's health, development, or self-worth. (Al Odhayani, Watson, & Watson, 2013).

Emotionally harsh treatment: The failure to provide a supportive environment for the child (Norman et al., 2012). This can include, but is not limited to verbally threatening or humiliating the child (Norman et al., 2012).

Motivation: The way persons think, including their perceptions, interpretations, and patterns of self-regulation (Ames & Ames, 1984). These cognitions, in turn,

influence how people approach a task, and interpret their performance (Ames & Ames, 1984).

Neglect: The failure to provide for all aspects of the child's well-being (Norman et al., 2012). This can include but is not limited to not meeting the child's nutrition or medical needs.

Physical abuse: The use of physical force that puts at risk the child's health, survival, development, or dignity (Norman et al., 2012). This can include slapping, punching or any other form of physical assaults meant to harm the child (Norman et al., 2012).

Resilience: The ability to positively adapt, or the ability to maintain or regain mental wellness, despite adverse experiences (Herman et al., 2011).

Sexual abuse: The involvement of a child in sexual acts that the child does not understand, is unable to give consent to, or for which he or she is not developmentally ready (Norman et al., 2012). This can include exposing genitalia or engaging a child in oral or sex with penetration or any other forms of sexual acts deliberately done for pleasure of the perpetrator (Pereda, Guilera, Forns, & Gómez-Benito, 2009).

Assumptions

It was assumed that the willingness of the participants to contribute to this study did not bias the results, and that each participant answered all interview questions truthfully to the best of their ability and understanding. It was assumed that the interview questions were appropriate to answer the central question of the study.

Scope and Delimitations

All participants were enrolled in post high school education. The participant pool was derived from an online university and from one brick and mortar university. The results of this study may only be generalized to persons in higher educational settings who choose an online learning program or to persons enrolled at one particular university. All participants were English speaking and came from diverse backgrounds, thus the results of this study are not able to be generalized to non-English speaking populations.

Limitations

The generalizability of this study may be limited to students who chose online learning or enrollment at Virginia Commonwealth University. The study included only those who were willing to talk by telephone or through a web-based program about their abuse, thus those who are uncomfortable with speaking about the abuse by these means were not identified. The study also only included those who self-identified as being a survivor of abuse. Qualitative studies are based on purposeful strategies rather than methodological rules (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013). There is no definitive sample size for qualitative studies (Marshall et al., 2013).

Significance

This qualitative study was designed to address the gap in the literature focusing on self-identified factors that contribute to a person completing high school and continuing to post-high school education. The study was designed to contribute to positive social change by providing insight into intrinsic and extrinsic motivational

factors that contribute to educational success. With this knowledge, researchers may be able to hone in on motivational factors that encourage childhood survivors of abuse to continue to post high school education, and in turn develop quantitative research to further study motivational factors for survivors. The research may also serve to assist professionals in the counseling and education field to create programs that focus on motivational factors in hopes of increasing the number of survivors who continue to post-high school education.

Summary

This project was unique in that it serves to increase our knowledge of factors that promote academic resilience in children who suffer abuse at an early age. For the past 30 years, researchers have investigated the effects of abuse on children (Anda et al., 2006; Briere & Runtz, 1990; Gould et al., 2012). However, much of the research focuses on the negative effects of abuse (Coohey et al., 2011). There is little research to focus on factors that contribute to the success of individuals despite being abused. The results of the study may offer further information for mental health providers and educators regarding effective interventions and support programs that can be implemented to assist children who have been victims of child abuse, and to increase the rate of high school completion. A review of the literature of current research follows in the next chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the literature base underlying the proposed research. This chapter begins with a discussion of child abuse and defines terms of child abuse. The discussion continues by highlighting negative long-term effects and consequences of child abuse. Several themes related to child abuse and education are identified throughout the chapter. I have also focused on concepts from social cognitive theory and its relation to educational attainment. In what follows, I have discussed relevant articles from peer-reviewed journals, and I highlighted their research limitations to identify the gap in the literature that becomes the focus of this study.

The research served to address the gap in the research related to abuse survivors' experience with their successful completion of high school and enrollment in post-high school education. Child abuse has been shown to be linked with poor academic performance and achievement (Berlin, Vinnerljung, & Hjern, 2011). As of March 2016, little research focused on academic success to extend beyond high school for survivors of child abuse.

Numerous studies address the long-term effects of child abuse (Burns, Fischer, Jackson, & Harding, 2012; Gold, Sullivan, & Lewis, 2011; Sektnan, McClelland, Acock, & Morrison; Young & Widom, 2014). In 2013, nearly 700,000 children were victims of abuse and/ or neglect in the United States (USDHHS, 2014). Fifty percent of children who are abused have school-related problems (USDHHS, 2014). This research was a step in potential social change for child abuse survivors and academic success.

The literature review examined education, its importance, and how child abuse relates to educational attainment. The literature review explored social cognitive theory in terms of motivation and locus of control. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how locus of control relates to the current study.

Literature Search Strategy

Search engines for this research included Google Scholar, Walden University's research library, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost, Proquest, and PsycInfo databases. Specific refined search parameters included peer-reviewed articles, and articles published within five years at the time of the search. Significant search terms used included but were not limited to the following: *child abuse, child maltreatment, education attainment, child maltreatment and education attainment, academic achievement, academic achievement and maladaptive environments, academic locus of control, and motivation and academics, social cognitive theory,* and *Albert Bandura*. Combinations of the above search terms were used to narrow results. Much of the literature gathered came from peer-reviewed journals. I also conducted brief general internet searches to locate government agency published statistics and to determine if additional peer-reviewed articles could be located. I determined that these other means of data collection were necessary because of the limited amount of research present at the time of this review regarding child abuse survivors and continuing education beyond high school.

Theoretical Foundation

In this section, I present the theories of attribution and locus of control, and self-efficacy, that I used as the theoretical foundation for this study, focusing on Bandura's social cognitive theory. This section concludes with a discussion of academic motivation.

Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory developed from the work of Bandura (Tudge &Winterhoff, 1993). Beginning in 1961, Bandura began to study aggression in children (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961). The purpose of the research conducted by Bandura was to study how children imitate aggression seen by adults (Bandura et al., 1961, 1963).

In the Bandura et al. (1961, 1963) studies, children were either exposed to an adult model who displayed aggression towards a Bobo doll or exposed to a nonaggressive adult model. The children who were exposed to the aggressive adult model displayed more aggression to the Bobo doll. These studies became known as the Bobo Doll experiments. Bandura et al. (1961, 1963) concluded that children model their behavior according to what they are exposed to. From there, Bandura's theory grew into a broad theoretical framework that can be used to analyze and understand human thought, behavior, emotions, and motivation (Brawley & Culos-Reed, 2000).

The central assumption behind social cognitive theory is the notion that personal factors, behavior, and environment, play mutual roles in determining causality (Brawley & Culos-Reed, 2000). This notion was coined *triadic reciprocal causation*. Research prior to Bandura's triadic reciprocal causation theory indicated that environmental factors

or internal factors caused behavior (Bandura, 1999). Bandura's (1999) research supported that internal factors, behavior, and the environment, all influence each other bidirectionally.

In social cognitive theory, people are proactive mechanisms in their lives, rather than by-standers (Bandura, 1999). According to Bandura (2001), people are agents, meaning they can intentionally make things happen based on their actions. People can make decisions and exercise personal agency over their lives as time and situations change, rather than having behavior be determined by their environment (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). A person can cognitively regulate their actions based on how they choose to think about events (Bandura, 2001). A human agent is a planner and can think ahead (Bandura, 2001). The human agent can also self-regulate and be a motivator (Bandura, 2001). Being an agent not only gives a person the ability to intentionally make choices, the person also must be motivated to execute those choices (Bandura, 2001). My study sought to understand the motivation behind the choice to pursue education beyond high school. The choices a person makes do not execute themselves, simply because a person thought of them. This process of linking thought to action is a part of self-regulation (Bandura, 2001). People not only have the capability of self-regulation, but also the ability to self-examine their own functioning by way of self-reflection (Bandura, 2001). Through self-reflection, people can evaluate their motivation, values, and the meaning of things that happen in life (Bandura, 2001). It is through self-reflection that people can judge and assign meaning to their predictive and operative thinking based on the outcome of their actions (Bandura, 2001).

Lent et al. (1994) noted that social cognitive theory highlights several cognitive, vicarious, self-regulatory, and self-reflective processes. Lent et al. (1994) narrowed their focus to self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goal representations for their research on career development and academic achievement. The focus of this research study focuses on similar concepts through attempting to understand how people view ideas that influence self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goal representations.

Human agency in terms of behavioral intent can be linked to outcome expectations and goal representations based on a person's belief that they have some measure of control over their functioning and environmental events (Bandura, 2001). The components of social cognitive theory that serve as the focus for this research are locus of control and attribution theory and self-efficacy. These theories are described in the ensuing sections.

Locus of Control and Attribution. Locus of control developed from the work of Rotter. Events that occur are perceived differently by different people, thus people's reaction to the same event can be very different, and people possess the ability to influence their own behavior (Denler et al., 2013). When a person views an outcome or reinforcement that follows an action they executed as being contingent on luck, fate, chance, or some other factor outside of their control it is considered external control (Rotter, 1966). When a person views an outcome or reinforcement that follows as action they executed as being contingent on their own behavior it is considered internal control (Rotter, 1966).

Regarding education, those with an internal locus of control believe academic success is directly related to their ability, and academic failure is related to a lack of personal effort (Tella, Tella, & Adeniyi, 2009). Thus, individuals with an internal locus of control are more likely to achieve academic success than those with an external locus of control (Tella et al., 2009). According to Tella et al. (2009) individuals with an internal locus of control view their success in terms of what they contribute to their education.

Individuals with an internal locus of control tend to put forth more effort than those with an external locus of control because they feel can control the outcome (Akin, 2011). Individuals with internal locus of control feel proud when they achieve something and disappointed with failure (Akin, 2011). Those with an external locus of control tend to lack emotional changes in these situations (Akin, 2011). An individual is more likely to feel they have in some way attributed to an outcome, when they feel they have personal control over the situation (Zaidi & Mohsin 2013).

Attribution is related to locus of control in that attribution influences one's behavior, emotions, and expectations based on how they assign causality (Weiner, 2000). Attribution theory derived from the work of Heider (Weiner, 2000). Heider (1944) began to explore social perception and causality and noted that when a person sees an object moving, they can attribute the movement to the object itself, or some other force. Heider linked this attribution to perception in people by stating people perceive experiences as having origin within themselves or in fate. Weiner (1985, 2000) extended attribution to consider that once causality it assigned, it influences future decision making and behaviors. Attribution theory is a facet of social cognitive theory that focuses on how

individuals assign causality to events that impact their future behavior and thoughts (Martin & Dowson, 2009). The assumption is that people learn and interpret messages from their environment, including messages received from others (Martin & Dowson, 2009). The individuals attribute causality to either internal or external factors (Demetriou, 2011). These attributions define how people assign causality to their own behavior as well as the behavior of others. My research sought to understand how survivors of child abuse interpreted messages from their environment and how the messages influenced their behavior.

Weiner conducted a series of studies between 1960 and 1970 that became the foundation for the attribution theory of academics (Demetriou, 2011). In a study conducted by Weiner and Kukla (1970), students in grades three through high school were given the Intellectual Achievement Responsibility scale and a measure of resultant achievement motivation. Students that scored high in resultant achievement motivation were more likely to attribute their success in academic situations to themselves than the students that scored low in resultant achievement motivation (Weiner & Kukla, 1970). This theory details how people interpret events and how that interpretation influences their motivation for learning and learning behaviors. There are several themes affixed to attributions in relation to academic success or failure. The most common themes are ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck (Demetriou, 2011). Attribution theory asserts students can learn to be successful from messages of significant others and how the significant others relate to them (Martin & Dowson, 2009). Thus, success can be attributed to the encouragement of a teacher, friend, or another significant person.

Messages from others and how an individual attributes causality can shape a person's expectancy for future success and beliefs about their own ability to perform a task, or self-efficacy (Hsieh & Kang, 2010).

Self-efficacy. Self-efficacy, coined by Bandura, is the foundation of human agency (Bandura, 2001). Self-efficacy refers to thoughts that people have pertaining to their ability to successfully perform a task (Bandura, 2001). Self-efficacy influences whether a person thinks optimistically or pessimistically (Bandura, 2001). Self-efficacy is a self-appraisal of whether one is capable of the activities required to achieve a specific outcome (Hsieh & Shallert, 2008). Self-efficacy is a key element in learning because it affects motivation for learning (van Dinther, Dochy, & Segers, 2011). Self-efficacy affects the choices people make, the way people act, the effort they exert, how they persevere, as well as their resilience (van Dinther et al., 2011). Bandura (2001) asserted that people have little incentive to act or persevere in difficult situations if they do not believe they will produce positive outcomes (2001). van Dinther et al. (2011) remarked that people choose to engage in activities that they think they will be successful at and avoid those that they think they will not be able accomplish. van Dinther et al. (2011) asserted that self-efficacy plays a part in how hard a person will work to achieve a task, and how long they will persevere when they are faced with difficulties with the task. Self-efficacy also influences how people think and feel. People with a low sense of self-efficacy tend to think that the task at hand is more difficult than what it is (vam Dinther et al. 2011). This can lead to feelings of failure and depression (van Dinther et al., 2011). Self-efficacy has been found to play a role in how people feel they will fare in future

performances. For this reason, van Dinther et al. (2011) recommended that future research pay attention to how self- efficacy develops in individuals.

Joo, Lim, and Kim (2013) argued that internal locus of control and self-efficacy play major roles in learner satisfaction, achievement, and persistence in academic settings. These authors conducted a study of online students to determine the effect of internal locus of control and self-efficacy on learner satisfaction, achievement, and persistence in an online university setting and found that locus of control and self-efficacy played a significant role in learner satisfaction (Joo et al., 2013). The authors noted in their study that self-efficacy and locus of control played a significant indirect role on persistence (Joo et al., 2013). In addition, self- efficacy had a significant effect on achievement, while locus of control did not (Joo et al., 2013). The authors noted that future studies should focus on the persistence of students (Joo et al., 2013). Persistence has been found to be linked to academic motivation when a person believes they can achieve the academic goal at hand (Holder, 2007).

Academic Motivation. The self- system model of motivation encompasses self-efficacy, attribution, and locus of control (Green et al., 2012). Schunk (1991) discussed the concept of personal expectancy being explained by the psychological theory of human motivation based on the research of Bandura, Weiner, and Rotter. Schunk (1991) noted that the research conducted by Bandura, Rotter and Weiner, supports the idea that personal expectancy can influence behavioral effort and persistence. This current research study sought to understand how personal expectancy influenced persistence and motivation with education in survivors of child abuse.

Vallerand et al. (1992) held that one of the most important psychological concepts of education is motivation. Academic motivation is the term given to the amount of motivation within an academic setting (Young, Johnson, Hawthorne, & Pugh, 2011). Academic motivation can boost value of education, as well as increase one's confidence with achieving academically (Young et al., 2011). Motivation can be intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is referred to as doing an activity for the enjoyment or satisfaction one gets from involvement in the activity (Vallerand et al., 1992). Vallerand et al. (1992) further explained that intrinsic motivation can be motivation to accomplish something. The authors gave the example of a student reaching beyond the requirements of a term paper because of the satisfaction they get from completing it and the attempt at surpassing expectations (Vallerand et al., 1992). Extrinsic motivation refers to doing an activity as a means to an end or to avoid a consequence (Vallerand et al., 1992). The authors gave the example of a student studying for a test because they feel their parents force them to (Vallerand et al., 1992). Young et al. (2011) asserted that motivation occurs on a continuum, however, intrinsic motivation is what mostly leads to self-determination to accomplish a goal. The aim of the current study was to get a better understanding of how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation played a role in academic success for survivors of child abuse. The current study focused on motivation specifically for those who experienced a shared phenomenon.

Summary of Theory to Support Current Study. There are several methods to study a scientific concept. One way to survey persons who experience a phenomenon is through interview. A study by Tas et al. (2013), aimed to discover the reasons people

drop out of vocational high school. The researchers noted information in the specific area they were examining was vague. To answer their questions, the authors used the qualitative method of interviewing (Tas et al., 2013). The study was able to focus individualized perspectives for reasons for drop-out and give recommendations for psychologists, teachers, and parents to support students and potentially prevent dropouts (Tas et al., 2013). One way to potentially prevent dropouts is to better meet the needs of the students through collaboration of school officials, parents, and psychologists (Tas et al., 2013). Meeting the needs of students leads to better opportunities for individuals to succeed and can make the ability for success equal (Lynch & Baker, 2005).

Educational psychologists have spent many years attempting to find strategies to provide more equality in education for all students (Lynch & Baker, 2005). Several educational psychologists have tuned in on motivation as a factor for academic success in children that come from less than ideal situations (Kennedy, 2010). Research indicates that students with high intrinsic and low extrinsic motivation have the highest levels of achievement (Hayenga & Corpus, 2010). This is a note in a positive direction since many students from challenging homes may not have extrinsic motivation. Self-efficacy, which is an internal notion, is also positively correlated with academic success (Gutman & Midgley, 2000).

The research from Hayenga and Corpus (2010) highlighted the need for future studies to focus on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for academic achievement in a number of content domains. One domain where there is a gap between content and motivation is child abuse and academic success.

Literature Review

The following sections provide an overview of the literature surrounding child abuse, education, and resiliency. Previous studies that address the role of child abuse on education are reviewed.

Child Abuse

History and Definitive Terms. Child abuse (also referred to as child maltreatment) is a social construct that has had different meanings over different times (Vopat, 2013). The initial concern for the welfare and treatment of children derived from the exploitation of children in the workplace and the first laws for child maltreatment were to protect children in the work environment (Vopat, 2013). Today, in the United States, and for the purposes of this paper, childhood maltreatment includes sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse, emotional neglect, and/or physical neglect during the first 18 years of life (Al Odhayani, Watson, & Watson, 2013).

Physical abuse is described as the use of physical force that harms a child's overall well-being (Norman et al., 2012). Sexual abuse is defined as involving a child in sexual acts for which he or she is not legally able to give consent. Emotional abuse is failing to provide a supportive environment through the means of threatening or other mentally draining actions. Neglect is failing to meet the needs considered necessary for the well-being of the child (Norman et al., 2012).

There is research to suggest that typically the more severe the abuse, the poorer the outcomes tend to be (Heim, Shugart, Craighead, & Nemeroff, 2010; Norman et al., 2012). Abuse can be deemed as mild, moderate, or severe. Mild physical abuse can be described

as being kicked, hit with something, bitten, or punched once (Rich-Edwards et al., 2010). Moderate physical abuse can be defined as being physically attacked once or being hit with something more than once (Rich-Edwards et al., 2010). Severe physical abuse can be defined as being physically attacked, kicked, punched, or bitten more than once, or ever being choked or burned (Rich-Edwards et al., 2010). Mild to moderate sexual abuse can be deemed as being touched in a sexual way (Riley, Wright, Jun, Hibert, & Rich-Edwards, 2010). Severe sexual abuse can be described as being forced to engage in a sexual activity (Riley et al., 2010). Mild emotional abuse can be described as a form of "bad parenting" that does not carry malicious intent and does not cause lasting emotional harm (Jellinek, Hamaran, & Bernet, 2000). Moderate emotional abuse, according to Jellinek et al. (2000) is either failing to provide a supportive environment through malicious intent or causing the probability of lasting emotional harm, but not both circumstances. Jellinek et al. (2000) define severe emotional abuse as failing to provide a supportive environment through both malicious intent and causing lasting emotional harm. Mild to moderate neglect occurs when a child's needs are not met, however there is no physical harm to the child (Mennen, Kim, Sang, & Trickett, 2010). Severe neglect occurs when the child's health is endangered (Mennen et al., 2010).

This study had its focus on child abuse perpetrated by a parent or other primary caregiver. Parents or other primary caregivers inflict the majority of child abuse (Norman et al., 2012). There is research to suggests that abuse from a parent or primary caregiver leaves a greater negative impact than abuse inflicted by other adults (Annerbäck, Sahlqvist, Svedin, Wingren, & Gustafsson, 2012). This study included adult

survivors who self-identify as having been abused by a parent or other person they considered to have played a role in their development as a child.

Resilience

Fortunately, there are some individuals who experience abuse as a child, who do not experience negative consequences when it comes to education. Research on resiliency mostly focuses on factors that protect a person from impairment connected to being maltreated (Afifi & MacMillan, 2011). These factors are called protective factors. Protective factors can be categorized into individual-level, family-level, and community-level (Afifi & MacMillan, 2011).

Individual-level protective factors include personal characteristics and resources (Afifi & MacMillan, 2011). Personality traits, self-efficacy, and view of the abuse are considered individual- level protective factors (Afifi & MacMillan, 2011). Family-level protective factors include supportive familial relationships, stable caregiving, and parental relationships (Afifi & MacMillan, 2011). Peer relationships, social supports, and participation in religious/faith communities are amongst the community-level protective factors (Afifi & MacMillan, 2011). The current study focused on individual-level, family-level, and community-level protective factors that may have promoted resiliency in survivors of child abuse.

Research around child maltreatment has only begun to focus on resiliency in the past few decades (Walsh, Dawson, & Mattingly, 2010). Walsh et al. (2010) state that little attention has been paid to the variability in the breadth and depth of measurements of resilience for survivors of child abuse. Very few studies focus on academic

achievement despite childhood maltreatment, and as of the study completed by Walsh et al. (2010), there was only one study that focused on academic competence in survivors of child abuse.

Education

Research indicates that those survivors who experienced childhood abuse are less likely to graduate from high school (Fuller-Thomson, Brennenstuhl, & Frank, 2010). Child abuse can adversely affect a person's ability to learn (Lowenthal, 1999). Children who suffer from maltreatment tend to score lower on cognitive measures and have poorer academic achievement (Lowenthal, 1999). These students are inclined to have a lower sense of self-esteem and a lower sense of motivation to achieve academically (Lowenthal, 1999).

Much of the research surrounding high school dropout rates, focuses on family and school factors (Porche, Fortuna, Lin, & Alegria, 2011). The purpose of this study was to address the gap in the research for abuse survivors' qualitative experience of factors related to their successful completion of high school.

Importance of Education. Education can be foundational to becoming a successful, productive adult (Ross & Mirowsky, 2010). Education tends to be viewed as one of the most important necessities in life (Bano, 2015). Education is often at the forefront and plays a role in employment and financial earnings, and influences where a person fits into the world (Ross & Mirowsky, 2010). Test scores achieved at age 16 are positively correlated with wages and employment at age 33 (Currie & Thomas, 2012).

Education provides an opportunity to learn essential skills besides reading, writing, and arithmetic. Formal education provides people with knowledge of specific topics such as math and science. Beyond this, formal education supports the development of skills and abilities of overall worth that can be used in everyday situations (Ross & Mirowsky, 2010). Education helps to build the basis of life-long habits such as dependability, decision-making, motivation, effort, and confidence (Ross & Mirowsky, 2010). Education also assists people learn how to think and teaches work ethics (Bano, 2015). There are several additional benefits of education.

Benefits of Education. Educated persons tend to be healthier than those who are not (Ross & Mirowsky, 2010). Educated individuals tend to have less physical impairments as they age (Ross & Mirowsky, 2010). Those who possess education tend to live longer (Brown et al., 2012). Research indicates that those who are educated live ten years longer than those who are not (Şahin, Arseven, & Kılıç, 2016). Those who are educated are less likely to smoke, drink excessive alcohol, and are more physically active (Brown et al., 2012).

Educated persons are less likely to participate in criminal activity (Machin, Marie, & Vujić, 2011). Education may contribute to crime reduction through increased wages, limiting the amount of time available to participate in criminal activity, and raising risk aversion (Machin et al., 2011). Education encourages the learning of patience and decision-making skills, thus bringing further protection from engagement in criminal activity (Hjalmarsson & Lochner, 2012).

Research has indicated positive correlations between child abuse and later delinquency, aggression, and violence (Sousa et al., 2011). Gold, Sullivan, and Lewis (2011) argued that violent delinquency can be considered a pathological response to trauma. In their research, they found that some juveniles tended to direct their behavior and focus away from self and blamed others for their negative feelings (Gold et al., 2011). This was called converted shame and found to be more prominent in individuals who were maltreated by caregivers.

Gold et al. (2011) expressed that children who experienced physical abuse are more likely to be involved in criminal behavior as an adolescent and an adult. Gold et al. (2011) suggested that children who encountered abuse are nine times more likely to engage in criminal activities and continue these activities through adulthood. This includes serious and violent criminal acts, arrests for activity, and higher recidivism rates.

One important outcome of educational achievement is the ability to have a higher socioeconomic status. Those with higher socioeconomic status are more likely to use their provided resources to make better decisions about health and tend to have access to better health care (Brown et al., 2012). Having a lower socioeconomic status tends to expose individuals to higher levels of stress (Brown et al., 2012). Higher levels of stress can lead to illness, and a higher rate of mortality (Brown et al., 2012). Having a lower socioeconomic status can also influence a person's involvement in crime (Machin et al., 2011). A person is also more likely to have a lower socioeconomic status if they do not complete high school (Campbell, 2015).

Effects of Dropping Out. To drop out of school means to leave school without a diploma (Tas, Selvitopu, Bora, & Demirkaya, 2013). The number of high school dropouts in the United States is alarming. An estimated 25% of public school students fail to earn a high school diploma (Casillas et al., 2012). Nearly one-third of public school students between grades 6 and 12, drop out of school each year (Fall & Roberts, 2012). Dropping out of school before completing high school can have detrimental consequences (Campbell, 2015).

Failure to complete high school can result in lower earnings over a life period, poorer health, more reliance on public assistance, higher crime rates, higher incarceration rates (Campbell, 2015). High school drop-outs are at an increased risk of experiencing economic hardship (Campbell, 2015). In 2009, the median income of a person without a high school diploma was $25,000 per year, compared to $43,000 for those who had completed a high school equivalent degree (Chapman, Laird, Ifill, & KewalRamani, 2011). The potential job market for those who do not complete high school is sparse. Individuals who do not graduate from high school are more likely to be unemployed (Jordan, Kostandini, & Mykerezi, 2012).

Campbell (2015) used siblings in a study to compare the effects of dropping out of school versus completing high school for siblings with the same background. Campbell (2015) found the siblings who completed school were in a better economic state than their siblings that did not finish school. Campbell (2015) concluded that economic hardship in adulthood cannot be solely the result of early life social and

economic factors. Dropping out of school plays a key role in adulthood economic hardship (Campbell, 2015).

The consequence of dropping out of school extends to the society, contributing to the strain of economic resources. Research by Chapman et al. (2011) predicts the average high school dropout costs the economy approximately $240,000 over their lifetime in terms of tax revenue, higher reliance on government-funded medical aid, higher rates of criminal activity, and more reliance on government financial assistance. Jordan et al. (2012) researched how rates of dropout contribute to lost tax revenue, increased expenditures for health care, corrections, food and cash assistance, subsidized housing, and public assistance.

Physical health tends to be poorer for those who have not graduated from high school (De Ridder et al., 2012). A study conducted in Virginia revealed students who do not graduate from high school are more at risk of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and obesity (Rahbari, Hajnaghizadeh, Damari, & Adhami, 2014). Poor health has a significantly negative effect on society from lost production to medical costs (Wang, McPherson, Marsh, Gortmaker, & Brown, 2011; Zhang, Bansbak, & Anis, 2011). Overall, dropping out of high school can lead to a significant strain on society (Jordan et al., 2012).

Educational achievement seems almost a requirement to be successful in life (Lewis, Huebner, Malone, & Valois, 2011). Excelling at education is not as easy as it appears. For many people, there are uncontrollable obstacles that must be overcome to succeed academically. Students with socio-demographic risk factors are more likely to

have poor education and developmental outcomes (Sektnan, McClelland, Acock, & Morrison, 2010). Some of these risk factors include minority status, low income, and parent education level (Sektnan et al., 2010). An alarming number of adolescents who experience emotional distress are at greater risk for school failure and dropout (Quiroga, Janosz, Bisset, & Morin, 2013).

Other factors that contribute to poor educational outcomes are a poor home environment, and parenting strategies to include parental involvement (Sektnan et al., 2010). Children in these maladaptive environments may be less likely to receive stimulating resources and interactions that contribute to long-term academic achievement (Sektnan et al., 2010). These children are more inclined to begin school unprepared, which may pave the way for academic failure (Sektnan et al., 2010). The risk for academic failure increases with children who experience multiple risks and those who experience risks for an extended period (Sektnan et al., 2010). Child abuse is one of these risks.

Strøm, Thoresen, Wentzel-Larsen, and Dyb (2013) conducted a study on how violence and bullying affect academic achievement. The participants were 8th graders enrolled in a Norwegian school during the years 1999-2001. In the study, the authors measured sexual abuse, physical violence, and bullying. The authors also measured social supports from teachers and classmates.

The first goal of the study was to determine how violence and bullying affect grades. The authors found that the students who reported being exposed to violence or

sexual abuse had lower grades than those not exposed to violence or sexual abuse (Strøm et al., 2013).

One limitation of the study was that the students were asked if they had been exposed to violence or sexual abuse in the past 12 months, and the students were between the ages of 15 and 16. The study did not account for violence and sexual abuse that may have taken place prior to the 12 months before the study. The study also only accounted for physical violence and sexual abuse. The authors noted more research is needed in the area of violence and the impact on academic achievement. The authors also noted there is a need for more research that incorporates other types of abuse and the impact on academic achievement (Strøm et al., 2013).

Coohey et al. (2011) conducted a study of 702 children between the ages of 6 -10. The authors measured different types of maltreatment to see the effects on math and reading grades. Academic achievement was measured at three intervals, baseline, 18 months after baseline, and three years after baseline. The authors found that children who experienced more than one type of abuse and greater severity had poorer academic achievement. The authors also discovered that in children who also had behavioral problems, the behavioral problems served as a protective factor for a reason unknown to the researchers. The authors noted the study did not look at the child's motivation to learn (Coohey et al., 2011). The authors also only looked at students for three years, thus graduation rates were not included in this study.

Nikulina, Widom, and Czaja (2011) conducted a study to determine if childhood neglect played a role in academic achievement. The study consisted of 1,004

participants. Five hundred seven of the participants had documented histories of abuse, while 497 were in the control group. The participants were young adults with a mean age of 29. Academic achievement was measured by IQ scores, reading ability, and reports of highest grade completed. Survivors of child neglect were found to have lower academic achievement compared to those in the control group.

Nikulina et al. (2011) only included White and Black participants in the study. Individuals from other races were not included. The authors noted that the results of the study cannot be generalized to middle or upper-class individuals, because the study only focused on those in poverty. The study only consisted of those who suffered from neglect as children and did not include other forms of abuse. Also, the authors gave no insight to protective factors.

Summary

Child abuse can have long-term effects on survivors (Young & Widom, 2014). One possible effect is lack educational achievement (Sektnan et al., 2010). The research presented shows what is currently known and displays a gap in the research in the area of resilience in survivors of child abuse. Much of the current research focuses on the lack of academic success. Few studies focus on academic achievement in spite of surviving child abuse. Furthermore, no studies examine the lived perspective of survivors of child abuse who graduate from high school, and continue to higher levels of education, and what motivated them to achieve academically. This study served to address the gap in the research and discover what motivation lies behind those who continue to higher levels of education.

This literature review provided an extensive overview of the current literature with respect to attribution and locus of control, and self-efficacy in terms of academic motivation. The research from Bandura, Rotter, and Weiner formed the basic tenants of the focus of this study through the concepts of social cognitive theory. Chapter 3 discusses pertinent components of the research design, as well as a detailed discussion of the study rationale.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain perspectives about abuse survivors and factors related to their successful completion of high school and continued education. This chapter discusses the research design and provides rationale as to why phenomenology was chosen for this study. Also to be discussed is the role of the researcher, issues of trustworthiness, and ethical procedures used.

This study consisted of interviews of adults who self-identify as being abused in some way as a child and have or are currently engaged in some sort of posthigh school education. Particularly, the study was aimed at understanding what internal and external factors the participants identified as aiding their journey. The target population of the study, a description of the sampling method, and criteria for sample selection are identified in the proceeding sections of this chapter.

Research Design and Rationale

Choy (2014) discussed the advantages of qualitative design. For the purposes of this study, I decided that qualitative method would be the most appropriate. The data collected was in the form of interviews that were designed to explore participants, specific ideas and thoughts. This type of personal, explicit exploration is not suitable for quantitative research.

Qualitative research is used to study complex phenomena (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). Qualitative methods seek to acquire an understanding of a particular phenomenon from the perspective of those who experienced it (Vaismoradi et al., 2013).

This study was an attempt to discover what high school graduates who are survivors of abuse and seeking to continue their education, describe as influential in their educational accomplishment. The central research question was as follows:

1. How do high school graduates with an aspiration to continue education, who self-identify as having suffered child abuse, explain their academic achievement?

The interview guide is as follows (also see Appendix A):

1. How do you think the maltreatment you suffered affected your academic achievement, such as grades and school behavior?
2. What messages did you receive from others about your academic achievement (parents, teachers, principals, friends, family, etc.)?
3. What messages did you tell yourself about your academic achievement?
4. How did you view the messages you received from others?
5. How did you view the messages you told yourself, or thought to yourself about your abilities, positive or negative?
6. What did you tell yourself (or do) to help to continue through school?
7. What did others tell you (or do) that helped to continue through school?

There has been very little research on the experiences of survivors of child abuse who graduate high school and continue to postsecondary education (Walsh et al., 2010). The aim of this study was to capture the lived experience of individuals; thus, I chose phenomenology as the research method.

Phenomenological research serves to develop understanding of the unique lived experience of individuals by exploring the significance associated with a phenomenon (Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012). The results from the descriptive data allow the researcher to provide interpretation and analysis that reveals a more concise meaning to the phenomenon (Petty et al., 2012). Phenomenological researchers tend to choose interviews as the method of collecting data due to the interest in the meaning of a lived experience (Englander, 2012). The goal of the interviews is to identify, analyze, and outline patterns or themes that are found within the data (KiseLemtly & Kendall, 2011).

Role of the Researcher

My role as the researcher in this study was to serve as a research instrument (see Chenail, 2011). I served as the key person in obtaining data from the participants. My role was to personally conduct interviews and retrieve information from the respondents.

I had no personal or working professional relationships with any of the participants. Any relationship with a potential participant is considered an ethical conflict of interest (National Ethics Advisory Committee [NEAC], 2012). Any type of dual relationship with the participants may have jeopardized the results and reliability of the study (NEAC, 2012).

Researcher bias is important to take into consideration. Burghardt et al. (2012) indicated researcher bias often exists and suggests there are ways to minimize the effects of the biases. One way to minimize biases is to be reflexive. In terms of research, being reflexive means always being aware of personal biases at each stage of the research process (Kolb, 2012). For the purpose of this study, I worked to set aside my biases by

always being aware that my experience was much different than that of the participants. In attempt to bring biases to light, I used a reflective journal to track my personal thoughts and reactions. Audio recording the interviews was another way to minimize biases by having an accurate record of what each participant said (Burghardt et al., 2012).

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

Population. The participant pool consisted of adults, aged 18 and older, who self-identified as being abused as a child and having engaged in higher education. Criteria for participation included adults who (a) were engaged in or have engaged in higher learning education, (b) self-identified as having a history of child abuse, and (c) were willing and able to participate in an interview to talk about their experience. For the purpose of this study, higher learning included any posthigh school education. Child abuse was referred to as the physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and/ or neglect received from a primary care giver. The participant pool consisted of a convenience sample. Participants were volunteers responding to an information page about research being conducted within a university setting.

Sampling strategy. The sample comprised of 15 individuals solicited through the Walden University online research pool and at the Virginia Commonwealth University. The research pool solicitation gave the eligibility criteria. I sent enquirers a letter of invitation which restated the eligibility criteria and included my email address to set up an interview appointment.

Criteria of participant selection. All participants met the criteria of participating in posthigh school education. Participants had a minimum of a high school diploma. Participants also self-identified as having experienced some type of abuse or maltreatment as a child. As the researcher, I assumed that all participants were honest in reporting their qualifications for the study.

Saturation and sample size. Guidelines for determining sample size for interview studies are scarce (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). One recommendation for phenomenology studies, is it recommends that the researcher use a sample size between five and 25 (Francis et al, 2010). In qualitative interview studies, sample size is often based on how much data is needed to reach data saturation (Francis et al., 2010). Data saturation is defined as the point in data collection where no new information is obtained that can be placed into a new conceptual category (Francis et al., 2010). Francis et al. (2010) used the example of conducting a small number of initial interviews and setting a criterion stopping point of three additional interviews where no new information or themes are obtained. The sample size of this study was relatively small because of the qualitative nature of the study. Guest et al. (2006) conducted a study and found that data saturation was reached with 12 interviews. The sample size for this study was 15. If, after 15 interviews, new information had continued to arise, I would have continued to interview participants until reaching a point where three consecutive interviews had been conducted where no new concepts were added.

Procedures for participant selection. Following approval from Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB), I obtained approval from Walden University to post

my study to the research pool. In addition, I obtained permission from Virginia Commonwealth University to post an ad for the research in the student union. Once granted permission, I posted the study to the Walden participant pool and the Virginia Commonwealth University student union. The postings remained until participant data reached saturation.

Instrumentation

Primary instrumentation. The researcher served as the primary mode of instrumentation for this study (Chenail, 2011). I had 8 years of experience with interviewing persons who have survived some type of trauma about their lived experiences. Interviews I conducted with respondents were audio-taped and transcribed for analysis. The researcher collected and disseminated the data.

Demographic questionnaire and interview guide. Demographic information was collected at the beginning interview. The demographic information was collected at the initiation of the interview as an additional way to build rapport, ease initial anxiety about participating in the study, and gave the participants additional time to ask questions about the study at that time. Demographic data included age, gender, locality, level of education, and ethnicity (Gonzalez, Alegría, Prihoda, Copeland, & Zeber, 2011). The descriptive demographic information is presented with the findings of the research. The demographics and interview guide are available in Appendix A.

A set of seven questions was used in each interview. These questions were used to answer the central research question in this study. A description of each question and the rationale behind each question follows.

How do you think the maltreatment you suffered affected your academic ability, such as grades and school behavior? This question served to gauge how the interviewee felt the maltreatment affected their academic achievement such as grades and behavior problems. Coohey et al. (2011) stated that survivors of abuse tend to have poorer academic achievement, as far as grades, although behavior problems serve as a protective factor. The purpose of this question was to begin to differentiate between internal and external factors as the interviewee was able to give a live account of how they felt they were affected by the maltreatment.

What messages did you receive from others about your academic ability (parents, teachers, principals, friends, family, etc.)? The rationale for this question was to determine the messages that the participants received from others. Martin and Dawson (2009) asserted that people learn and interpret messages about themselves from others. In terms of education, a student can learn to be successful based on messages received from others (Martin & Dawson, 2009). This question related to external factors.

What messages did you tell yourself about your academic ability? An assumption of social cognitive theory is that individuals can influence their own behavior (Lent, Brown, & Hacket, 1994). The rationale behind this question was to determine what messages people told themselves to influence their decisions to continue their education. This question related to self-efficacy.

How did you view the messages you received from others about your abilities, positive or negative? The rationale behind this question was to determine how the participant interpreted the messages they received from others. Messages received from

others can have a high impact on the individual (Martin & Dawson, 2009). This question related to attribution.

How did you view the messages you told yourself, or thought to yourself about your abilities, positive or negative? The rationale behind this question was to explore how much a person believes they control what happens to them. Locus of control theory focuses on one's belief of how much they control what happens to them (Kormanik & Rocco, 2009). Internal locus of control results from a person believing they have control over what happens to them (Kormanik & Rocco, 2009). External locus of control results from a person believing outside forces control what happens to them and what happens to them is beyond their control (Kormanik & Rocco, 2009).

What did you tell yourself (or do) to help to continue through school? Lent et al. (1994) asserted encouragement to complete a task can come from within the individual. The rationale behind this question was to determine whether internal forces played a role in the individual's success.

What did others tell you (or do) that helped to continue through school? Martin and Dawson (2009) asserted the encouragement to continue through school can come from a significant person in the individual's life. The rationale behind this question was to determine whether outside forces played a role in the individual's success.

Procedures

Procedures for recruitment and participation. I posted the study on the Walden University Research pool, and to the Virginia Commonwealth University student union where I outlined the participant criteria. When a potential participant showed

interest, and gave consent through supplying contact details, the researcher contacted the participant via phone or email. I sent the potential participant an informed consent form to review and sign that was returned prior to the interview taking place. Research participants verified they met eligibility criteria through the consent form. Once the consent form was received, I contacted the participant to set up an interview through GoToMeeting and sent the sign on information to the potential participant.

Procedures for data collection. An interview was scheduled at the convenience of the participants through communication with the researcher to determine an appropriate date and time. Rescheduling was allowed if the participant was unable to make the initial appointment. The interviews consisted of a one-time, 90-minute, video chat session through GoToMeeting. The interviews were audio-recorded. After the interviews, I debriefed each study participant. Due to the potential for the development of distress in response to discussion of personal history, I provided each participant with a list of resources where they could get further assistance if needed. I asked each participant if they would like to receive the findings after the study was completed. I also gave each participant a method of contact if they changed their mind about their interview being used in the study, or if they had additional information or wanted to revise their interview responses. I asked each participant at the end of the interview if they still gave consent for their interview to be used. I sent the transcript to each participant via email before analyzing it as a way of member checking and to ensure information was heard correctly. Lastly, each participant was thanked for their participation.

Data Analysis Plan

Each interview was digitally recorded through GoToMeeting. Sound files were saved using a code assigned to each interviewee (see Hilal & Alabri, 2013). The interviews were transcribed by GoToMeeting and by me and stored as a Microsoft Word document. Each transcript was reviewed and first impression notes were made. Each transcript was then reviewed again, ensuring that each transcript was read line by line. Data was organized according to each individual participant and each individual research question. Relevant words, phrases, sentences or sections were highlighted and labeled. I determined relevant by repeated phrases or words, the interviewee making note that the factor was important, and/or factors that had been identified in other research related to education and motivation. Data analysis occurred by my hand coding of the data. Coding was completed by searching through the transcripts to identify concepts presented in the text. The researcher used the texts to analyze and code the data according to similar concepts, categories, and themes. Categories were created by joining several similar codes together. Once the data was compiled and coded, significant findings were selected, through describing the connection between the categories.

Procedures for discrepant cases. Discrepant cases were not excluded from the data, as discrepant cases can provide relevant information. In qualitative research, discrepant case analysis involves finding outliers of data and comparing to other data (Morrow, 2005). This is done in order to better understand the complexity of the phenomenon (Morrow, 2005).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Conducting research using a human instrument, such as an interviewer, can have a significant impact on the quality of data collected and the results that are reported (Goodell, Stage, & Cooke, 2016). Bhattacharya (2013) noted 10 skills that are required for effective interviewing. These skills are as follows:

- Listen more than talk
- Be polite to keep the interview comfortable
- Use appropriate manners
- Make sure each question has a purpose
- Remember that interviewees are also evaluating the process
- Remember to be cheerful
- Create a welcoming environment
- It is okay if the interviewee cannot answer the question
- Cover all important material
- Remember the interviewee is the expert on their experience.

Credibility

Establishing credibility in qualitative research allows for others to understand the experience of the participants through interpretation (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Looking for similarities within and across study participants is one way to establish credibility in a study (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). The interview transcripts were reviewed for similarities.

Two forms of internal validity were used. Member checking is referred to reflecting the information back to the participant to ensure the information was heard and interpreted correctly (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). I used member checking to ensure I captured the data as the participant intended it to be captured.

Data saturation was also used to ensure no new themes emerged that were not previously identified. Data saturation is obtained when the study can be replicated, there is no new data, and no new coding (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Data saturation is more about the depth of the data rather than the number of participants (Fusch & Ness, 2015). There is no distinct number of participants identified to reach data saturation in interview studies. Fusch and Ness (2015) asserted that data saturation is enhanced when different participants are asked the same questions, such as outlined in an interview guide.

Transferability

The ability to transfer research methods and results from one group to another is called transferability (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Detailed descriptions are provided concerning the research methods and the findings, so readers can assess the data and consider the potential relationships and intersections with other populations.

Dependability

Detailed procedures along with the rationale for each step are presented. This enables readers to follow and understand the steps taken by the researcher. Dependability is established when a reader can clearly follow the decision trail of the researcher (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

Confirmability

Confirmability is the extent to which the findings reflect the focus of the study and are not compromised by human bias (Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012). Human bias is a threat to any research study. Confirmability refers to objectivity in research (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Obtaining objectivity is done by being open as the researcher and aware of own biases (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Interpretations, implications, and conclusions that the researcher makes are clearly depicted through an audit trail (Petty et al., 2012). As the researcher, I engaged in member checking to insure accuracy and decrease human bias. I engaged in member checking by validating the participants responses to ensure I perceived what they were trying to portray (Harper & Cole, 2012).

Reflexivity was used to promote objectivity on the part of the researcher. As the researcher, I wrote down personal feelings, biases, and insights after each interview (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). During each interview, I asked the participants to clarify what they meant by slang terminology or metaphors used, rather than assuming what they meant (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

Ethical Procedures

IRB Considerations, Treatment of Human Participants

The participants constituted a vulnerable population, thus special care was given to protect their welfare. The provisions taken are outlined below. At the time of data collection, all participants were enrolled in a higher education program. Human participants provided the study data, and as such were treated fairly and with dignity (Patwary, O'Hare, & Sarker, 2011). Due to the nature of the study in asking about the

participants' private lives, I was always be respectful, compassionate, and reliable to the participants (Patwary et al., 2011). No face-to-face contact occurred with the participants due to geographical locations and as another method to protect identity. I was granted approval from Walden University's IRB department, and Virginia Commonwealth University's research department before beginning data collection.

Ethical Concerns Related to Recruitment

Recruitment for this study was done through the Walden University Participant Pool and Virginia Commonwealth University student union. The Walden Participant Pool is an online bulletin board, where prospective participants could learn more about the study and could decide without prompting from me if they would like to participate in the study or know more about the study. The University Participant Pool was a way for potential participants to view the study and make a clear decision to participate without perceived pressure from me. Posting the study on the Walden University Participant Pool required permission from the IRB and the University before the study could be posted.

Virginia Commonwealth University student union is a common area were students could see an invitation for the study on a bulletin board. The location provided a safe space where prospective participants could learn more about the study and could decide without prompting from me if they would like to participate in the study or know more about the study. This safe space also provided a way for potential participants to view the study and make a clear decision to participate without perceived pressure from me. Posting the study on the Virginia Commonwealth University student union required

permission from the Walden University IRB and the Virginia Commonwealth University research department before study participants could be recruited there.

The interviews were conducted through GoToMeeting. GoToMeeting is an online web meeting for conducting interviews (Perron & Ruffolo, 2010). Interviews conducted on GoToMeeting are protected by the Privacy Shield Framework through the U.S Department of Commerce. GoToMeeting provided a transcript and the researcher transcribed text from the audio recording of the interviews. Both forms of transcription were compared to ensure the correct information was captured. The transcribed text was placed in an encrypted folder on the researcher's computer.

A numbering system was created to protect the privacy of the participants. After data collection from the participant interview, raw data was be stored, and the participant's name was replaced with a number. This number was used for each participant during data coding and dissemination, rather than using the participants' name. This method protected the privacy of the participants. For confidentiality purposes, only I had access to the participants' names.

Ethical Concerns Related to Data

Participants were volunteers able to choose to end their participation at any time during the study without judgement, and were notified of their ability to do so. Any participant who wished to end their participation would have had their data removed from the study and disposed of by me. Participants who wished to end their participation were able to directly email me and would receive a confirmation email that their data had been excluded from the study and properly disposed of.

Data related to the study remains my personal property and will remain confidential. The information contained in the consent form is and will remain confidential and separate from the data, keeping the participants' identities confidential and the data anonymous. Data will be held in an encrypted file on my computer for 5 years. Destruction of data will occur at the end of 5 years from completion of the study.

Summary

This chapter outlined the research method of this study, including the study's qualitative nature, and ethical concerns. The chapter also outlined the research design and rationale, as well as the interview guide that was used for the study. Matters of trustworthiness were also addressed, along with the role of the researcher.

Data analysis followed the conclusion of data collection and is addressed in Chapter 4. The details of the data collection process as well as the results are presented in Chapter 4, along with significant findings. Chapter 5 will contain interpretations, conclusions, and recommendations of the study, and implications for social change.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The USDHHS (2013) estimated that there were 686,000 victims of abuse in the United States in 2012. Research indicated that the negative effects of abuse can be long lasting (Chartier et al, 2009). Poor academic performance is one of the negative effects that survivors may endure (Keiling et al., 2011). Walsh et al. (2010) noted as of completion of their research, though there were several studies to discuss poor academic performance among survivors of abuse, only one study explored maltreated children obtaining academic success.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to shed light on what high school graduates who were survivors of abuse and furthering their education described as influential in their educational accomplishments. The study incorporated a qualitative approach that focused on the lived experience of survivors of abuse who had achieved academic success. The principal research question was as follows: How do high school graduates with an aspiration to continue education, who self-identify as having suffered child abuse, explain their academic achievement?

The following chapter discusses the setting and demographic information of the participants of the study. Data collection and data analysis are discussed along with evidence of trustworthiness. The chapter concludes with the results of this study.

Setting

Participants for this study were recruited from a distance-learning university participant pool and advertisements at a brick-and-mortar university. There were five

participants from the distance-learning university and 10 participants from the brick-and-mortar university. Participants conveyed their interest in partaking in the study via email from the brick-and-mortar university or by signing up for a time slot through the online university participant pool. I emailed a consent form to the participants along with the questions that would be asked during the interview. Participants were asked to respond with "I consent" to express their consent to participate in the study. Interviews were conducted and recorded through GoToMeeting, a web-based teleconferencing program. After conveying consent, participants were emailed a link with a meeting ID to log-in to GoToMeeting at the specified interview time. Once the interviews were completed, participants were emailed a transcript of the interview so they could review and approve the data. No participants proposed changes to the transcribed data. The participants were not personally known to me. There were no personal or organizational conditions that influenced the participants or their experience at the time of the study of which I was aware.

Demographics

Fifteen individuals participated in the study. All the participants were survivors of maltreatment as a child, and all the participants were enrolled in higher education at the time of the study. While the study was designed to collect data from individuals with a shared experience, participants represented a variety of demographic categories. Participants were both male (n = 2), and female (n = 13), and multiethnic, including self-identification as White (n = 6), Black (n = *4),* Biracial (n =2), Hispanic (n = 1), African (n =1), and Jamaican (n = 1). Participants ranged in age between 19 and 64 with the

following groupings: 18 and 29 (n = 5), 30 - 39 (n = 3), 40 - 49 (n = 4), 50 - 59 (n = 2), and 60 - 69 (n = 1). Participants also varied in their highest level of education completed past high school, with (n =4), associate degree (n = 1), bachelor's degree (n = 5), and master's degree (n = 5). There were six participants located in the state of Virginia. Other participants varied in locations throughout the United States. This information is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

	Gender	Race	Age	Current State of Residence	Highest level of education completed
Participant 1	Female	White	64	Arizona	Master's
Participant 2	Female	Black	44	Louisiana	Bachelor's
Participant 3	Female	Biracial	20	Virginia	High school
Participant 4	Male	Black	37	Ohio	Bachelor's
Participant 5	Female	White	35	N. Carolina	Master's
Participant 6	Female	Jamaican	26	Florida	Bachelor's
Participant 7	Female	White	54	Virginia	High school
Participant 8	Female	White	34	New York	Bachelor's
Participant 9	Female	White	59	Ohio	Master's
Participant	Female	Black	21	Virginia	Associate
Participant	Female	Black	19	Virginia	High school
Participant	Male	White	26	Pennsylvania	Master's
Participant	Female	Hispanic	47	Virginia	Master's
Participant	Female	Biracial	41	Texas	Bachelor's
Participant	Female	African	44	Virginia	High school

Data Collection

A total of 15 participants completed the study. Data was collected through interviews. Each interview was conducted and recorded through the GoToMeeting web-based program. GoToMeeting software also provided the transcription for each interview.

Interviews were conducted over a 5-month period beginning in June of 2018 and ending in November of the same year. Each interview began with a description of the study, brief rapport building, and the participants were thanked for partaking in the study. The participants were then asked for the demographic information, followed by the questions in the interview guide.

After each interview was completed, the transcription was downloaded into the GoToMeeting program. The transcription and recording were saved to my password protected GoToMeeting account. The average time of each interview was approximately 45 minutes, though one interview lasted over 60 minutes.

There was no variation in data collection from the plan presented in Chapter 3. There were, however, two unusual circumstances encountered in the data collection. The first was confusion on the time zone of the scheduled interview considering there was no time zone information offered to participants who initially signed up through the online university participant pool. This issue was rectified through email initially and by adding "EST" for eastern standard time to subsequent time slots. The other unusual circumstance was some of the participants' difficulty with connecting to GoToMeeting. I sent each participant a link that would allow them to connect directly to the meeting and allowed for extra time participants may have required to navigate the site. The participants were also given the option to call into the meeting on a secure line through the GoToMeeting program if they could not connect electronically. A total of two participants elected to call in to the interview. Those interviews were recorded and transcribed in the same manner as were those that connected electronically.

Data Analysis

Thomas (2006) described the outcome of an inductive analysis as the development of categories that condense raw data into themes and processes. For this study, I listened to each interview, while reading the GoToMeeting-generated transcription to ensure accuracy of the transcript. Each transcript was emailed to the respective participant to ensure accuracy of the transcript for conveying the intended communication.

Hand coding was used for the analytic process. Upon verification of transcript by the participant, I began coding the data. Data was analyzed and categorized based on the model outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Braun and Clarke's (2006) model consisted of reviewing the data thoroughly and taking notes. Thus, each interview was listened to a second time while reading the transcript. During this review, I took notes of impressions, commonly discussed topics, and notions that the participants deemed as important.

Braun and Clarke's (2006) model involved searching for interesting responses that stand out in the interviews and assigning a code. This process was repeated for each of the interviews. These interviews are labeled with codes for identifying and organizing the responses as data. The codes and resulting themes that emerged from the data are discussed below and lists of each with their respective interviews can be found in Appendix B and Appendix C.

Two global themes arose from the data. The first was that having a positive motivator was essential to progressing through school, with 13 of the participants naming

a positive motivator. Several participants named a specific teacher as the positive motivator. Participant # 8 stated, "Teacher's don't know their power. A teacher can make or break you." Several participants mentioned their mother as being a positive motivator. Participant # 11 stated, "My mom always tells me that I am going to get through it no matter how long it takes me." Many participants mentioned having more than one positive motivator.

The second global theme that emerged from the data was that middle school is a pivotal time period for survivors of abuse. Of the participants who mentioned middle school, all indicated a negative change with grades and/or behavior. Two of the participants specifically mentioned being bullied. Participant # 4 stated, "Middle school was rough. I had bad grades." Participant # 12 stated, "I got in trouble in middle school. I was depressed. I was bullied because I did not fit in." Participant #15 stated, "I started to act out in middle school. I ran away a lot. My grades were poor, and I did not listen to the teachers." Several of the participants spoke of middle school during their interviews.

Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested using visual representation to organize and separate different codes into themes. For this purpose, I created web charts of quotations from the participants surrounding the codes to begin to pull themes from the data. A sample of this webbing approach for organizing themes deriving from participant quotes is shown below in Figure 1.

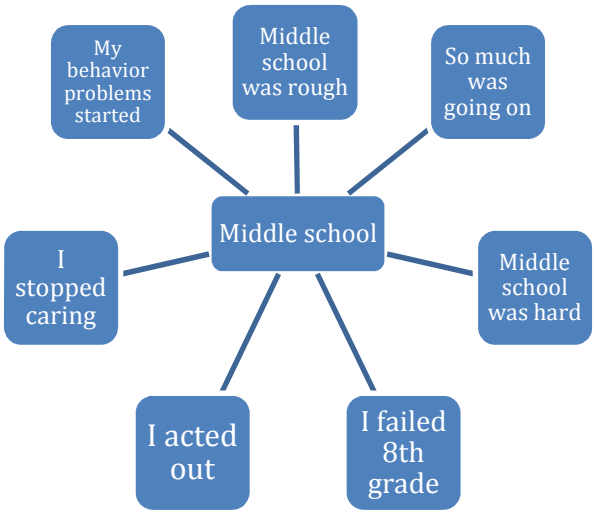

Figure 1. Sample Web Chart of Themed Quotations

Discrepant cases

Of the 15 participants, one participant recalled a very different experience than the others in relation to support from teachers and family. Participant # 2 stated,

> Nobody helped me. Everyone tried to discourage me. Only a few teachers supported me, and that was only after I said I was determined to go to college. When I told my mom I wanted to go to college she told me she was not filling out any paperwork or helping me.

Participant # 2 was the only participant who reported experiencing no support from teachers and/or family.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility for qualitative research is comparable to internal validity for quantitative research (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). In qualitative research, credibility is

established by reviewing individual transcripts and looking for similarities within and across the accounts of the participants (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). For this study, I reviewed each transcript multiple times in examination for similarities. I used member checking to ensure I captured the data as the participants anticipated it to be captured, sending the transcripts to each participant for them to review for accuracy. Enough data was collected to ensure saturation, or the point at which no new themes emerged from the data (see Fusch & Ness, 2015). At 15 interviews, there were no additional codes or themes emerging.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the ability to transfer the results of a study to other contexts or situations (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). Detailed descriptions are provided in this chapter concerning the research methods, data analysis, and the findings, so readers can assess the research process and data and consider the potential relationships with other studies.

Dependability

Dependability is established when a reader can clearly follow the decision trail of the researcher (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Detailed procedures along with rationale for each step are presented in this chapter to enable readers to follow and understand the steps taken.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the objectivity of the research (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Confirmability is the extent to which the findings reflect the focus of the study and

are not compromised by human bias (Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012). Obtaining objectivity occurs through the researcher's care in maintaining an open attitude and remaining aware of his or her own biases (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). During each interview, I asked the participant for clarification of terms or meaning rather than assuming what was meant. Reflexivity was used to promote my objectivity as researcher, with journaled personal feelings, biases, and insights after each interview. I also reviewed these notations when listening to the interviews again.

For this study, I engaged in member checking to ensure accuracy. To facilitate member checking, I sent the interview transcripts to each participant to review for accuracy.

To further reduce human bias, I used Braun and Clarke's (2006) model of reviewing the data thoroughly and taking notes. I listened to each interview, taking notes of impressions, commonly discussed topics, and notions that the participants deemed as important.

Results

The central research question for this study is as follows: How do high school graduates with an aspiration to continue education, who self-identify as having suffered child abuse, explain their academic achievement? Interview questions were analyzed independently and collectively as a whole. This section outlines each interview question individually. The summary of the chapter will discuss overall findings.

Interview Question 1

The first interview question was, "How do you think the maltreatment you suffered affected your academic ability, such as grades and school behavior?" For this question, eight of 15 participants referenced middle school. These references are noted in Appendix B.

In relation to academic ability, eight of the participants reported the maltreatment had no effect on their academic ability. Participant # 12 stated, *"*My grades never really changed, I always had As and Bs." Participant # 9 stated, "I always was a good student when it came to grades, I could miss time and catch up." Other participants shared similar experiences.

In contrast, six participants reported the maltreatment had a negative effect in such statements as follows. Participant # 2 stated, "I failed 8th grade, and my mom sent me away for high school*."* Participant # 6 stated, "My grades were horrible, I had to go to private school for a year to get more individualized attention." Other participants also shared about having negative academic experiences.

Most of the participants indicated they did not have behavioral problems in school with 11 expressing this explicitly. Participant # 1 stated*,* "I hated school, but I never got into trouble*."* Participant # 3 stated, "School was my get-away, I never got in trouble." Participant # 14 also said, "I made sure I was a stellar student, so I could get away. School was my outlet." Many participants reported having no behavioral issues in school whether they enjoyed school or not.

However, four of the participants did note having behavioral issues. Participant # 9 stated, “My behavior was poor, I was suspended a lot.” Participant # 12 stated, “I got in trouble in middle school, but had no behavior problems in high school.” Middle school was mentioned again with the participants that spoke of having behavioral issues.

Middle school began to emerge as a theme with the first question, as it was repeated in several interviews and attached to the various codes that emerged from the data. The codes and theme deriving from Question 1 are found below in Table 2.

Table 2

Codes and Theme from Question 1

Question	Code	Theme
• Academic ability	• Good grades • Poor grades	• Middle school was a difficult period
• Behavior	• Good behavior • Excelled • Troubled behavior	
• Other	• Middle school • Counselor • Individualized attention • Get away • School was outlet • Withdrawn • Depressed • Bullied • Outcast • Teacher • Extracurricular activities	

Interview Question 2

The second interview question was, "What messages did you receive from others about your academic ability (parents, teachers, principals, friends, family, etc.)?" This question raised various responses from participants. Of the 15 participants, eight focused on messages from teachers. Participant # 12 expressed, "Teachers were encouraging. The thing I heard most was that I was a good writer." Participant # 7 stated, "My teachers were very understanding. I remember one teacher telling me I could do anything I set my mind to." Many participants talked about having positive support from teachers.

Of the 15 participants, four mentioned their mothers in a positive manner. Participant # 13 noted, "My mother told me to never give up or settle." Some participants noted they received positive messages from family members and felt no support from school. Participant # 9 affirmed, "My family was very supportive and always pushed for me to keep going. The teachers seemed not to care. They didn't pay attention."

Participant # 6 stated, "Teachers said nothing. If my mom wasn't so involved, I would have had no support." Participants noted various family members that supported them.

Three participants had the opposite experience where they felt support from school and not from family. Participant # 14 quoted, "Teachers said I was doing well and would succeed. My mother would tell me I would never be anything." Participant # 5 asserted, "One teacher made sure I had good grades and helped me to apply to college. She always told me I was going to be somebody. My mother never said anything, even

when I asked." These participants noted teachers and other school officials as being positive supports.

One participant mentioned a person outside of teachers and parents, however in the school setting. Participant # 4 specifically spoke of coaches and affirmed, "Coaches told me I was great at swimming and basketball. They pushed me to get good grades and go to college through sports." This participant shared having the support of other community members.

Participant # 2 was the only participant who noted not receiving positive messages from anyone. The participant declared, "Getting married was more important that finishing school and going to college. I was only encouraged to get married." Participant # 2 spoke of an experience of not feeling supported by anyone.

Codes from question 2 were grouped in positive versus negative messages. The theme that began to emerge from question 2 was that external support appeared to be of importance. Codes and theme from question 2 can be found in Table 3.

Table 3

Codes and Theme from Question 2

Question	Codes	Theme
• Positive messages	• Teachers • Mother • family • coaches • guidance counselor • principal	• external support
• Negative messages	• mother • teacher • get married • go to work	

Interview Question 3

The third interview question was, "What messages did you tell yourself about your academic ability?" Most of the participants (13) told themselves positive messages about their academic ability. Participant # 14 specifically stated, "I told myself to only listen to the positive messages. I said if I pass everything, I will get out." Participant # 11 asserted, "I knew I was a good student and capable of getting good grades." Other participants shared similar experiences with telling themselves positive messages.

Two participants reported they initially had negative attitudes about their ability and later changed once they began to believe the positive messages from others. Participant # 6 quoted

> I had a negative attitude. I always told myself just do enough to pass. In high school classes were smaller and I saw a difference, so I started telling myself to get good grades because I wanted to go to college.

Participant # 8 stated, "I told myself that it didn't matter. I said what was the purpose. It took me a while to accept what I was hearing." These participants voiced telling themselves negative messages about their abilities initially.

Participant # 1 was the only participant that did not report telling themselves anything. Participant # 1 stated, "I didn't really tell myself anything. I just went along and did the work." All other participants noted telling themselves messages whether they were positive or negative.

The theme that arose from this question was that messages that people receive are important and play a role in what they tell themselves. This message is related to the overall theme of external support. Codes and themes from question 3 are below in Table 4.

Table 4

Codes and Theme from Question 3

Question	Codes	Themes
• What messages did you tell yourself?	• get good grades • go to college • school important • finish • pass • good student • didn't care • do the work	• Messages that people hear play a role in what they think or believe about themselves • External support

Interview Question 4

Interview question 4 asked, "How did you view the messages you received from others about your abilities, positive or negative?" For this question, nine participants noted believing both the positive and negative messages. Participant # 3 stated, "I believed my teachers when they said I was smart. I also believed I wasn't good enough because I never heard anything good from my mother." Participant # 15 asserted, "I believed I could do some things, because people said I could. I also believed I was not as good as my sister because people said that too." Other participants mentioned similar experiences with believing both the positive and negative messages they received from others.

Two participants noted never believing the negative messages. Participant # 14 stated, "I viewed the negative messages as irrelevant. I viewed the positive messages as fuel, a boost of confidence." Participant # 2 expressed, "I did not want to get married right away. I was the first in my family to go to college. I was confident in what I wanted." Participant # 6 mentioned feeling as if they did not have a chance to view messages any type of way because they only felt pressure to perform. Participant # 6 stated, "I only felt pressure. I made the grades to please her." The theme that arose was question 4. This question centered around believing messages they heard from others. Codes and theme from question 4 are in Table 5.

Table 5

Codes and Theme from Question 4

Question	Code	Theme
• How did you review the messages you received from others?	• negative messages irrelevant • boost of confidence • college • go into the workforce • marriage • pressure • believed positive and negative • positive felt good	• Messages that people hear play a role in what they think or believe about themselves • External support is important

Interview Question 5

Question 5 asked, "How did you view the messages you told yourself, or thought to yourself about your abilities, positive or negative? For this question, participants had varying answers. Some participants shared about leaving school and returning. Participant #1 quoted, "I knew I was capable and did not want my children to think I was a failure or that education was not important." Participant # 9 mentioned, "I should have pushed for a different setting. I was upset for just going along and taking a vocational track. I knew I could go to college." Participant # 15 stated, "I was hard on myself for not going to college right away because I knew I could do it." Other participants shared having conflicts within themselves based on the positive and negative messages they told themselves.

Participants # 6 and # 8 alike shared about when their views about their abilities changed for the positive. Participant # 6 stated, "I knew the messages were not uplifting.

I was depressed, so it all just went together. In high school, I got more involved in things and I actually liked the stuff and my self-esteem went up." Participant # 8 asserted,

> At first, I honestly believed that I couldn't do it. I started using school as an outlet to get away. I decided not to let the situation define me, and I wanted to do something to get away from the situation. I started talking more and I started to care more. I kept telling myself that the situation did not have to define who I was. The teacher was the first person to tell me that.

These participants discussed telling themselves both negative and positive messages and beginning to rely more on the positive messages.

Other participants focused on both positive and negative messages. Participant # 4 stated, "I knew I was too hard on myself, but I felt that if someone believed in me, I had to make them proud." Participant # 12 stated, "I knew I was being too hard on myself about math. I told myself to focus on drama and writing. It became a coping skill. It was my outlet." Participant # 2 stated, "I felt like an outcast, but I didn't care. I wanted more." Several participants throughout the interview shared similar experiences with telling themselves both positive and negative messages.

In this interview question, participants spoke of both negative and positive messages having an influence. The theme that emerged from this question was messages to the self were both positive and negative. The codes and theme from question 5 are outlined below in Table 6.

Table 6

Codes and Theme from Question 5

Question	Code	Theme
• How did you view the messages you told yourself?	• outcast but didn't care • valuable • hard on self • depressed • coping skill • college • want more • outlet • get away	• messages to self were positive and negative

Interview Question 6

The sixth interview question was," What did you tell yourself (or do) to help to continue through school?" Participants talked specifically about what they personally did to continue through school. Participant # 1 stated, "I got involved with community classes of interest to build confidence and then enrolled in college. I took an art class at a local studio." Other participants, likewise, shared about getting involved in school or community related activities.

Several participants referenced knowing they always wanted to go to college and shared their experience with getting to college, whether it was right after high school or after entering the work force. Participant # 15 stated, "I always wanted to go to college, but did not feel I had the support from my mother, so I waited. When I moved the states, I decided this was my time." Participant # 11 stated, "I asked my guidance counselor for help in applying for college and I kept going back for help when I needed it." Regarding

question 6, the theme that emerged was "I wanted to go to college." Codes and theme for question 6 can be found in Table 7.

Table 7

Codes and Theme from Question 6

Question	Codes	Theme
• What did you do or tell yourself?	• college • wanted different • marriage • children • good grades • get away • study • ask for help	• I wanted to go to college.

Interview Question 7

The last interview question was, "What did others tell you (or do) that helped to continue through school?" Participant # 2 was the only participant that indicated that no one helped them. Participate # 2 stated, "Nobody helped me. Everyone tried to discourage me. A few teachers supported me, only after I said I wanted to go to college." Participant #12 also noted, "People were more positive after I verbalized my decision to go to college." Most participants shared of having positive support throughout their experience.

Other participants spoke of family support, support from those in the academic arena, and other external supports. Participant # 7 stated, "My children told me I should go back to school to do what I really wanted to do." Participant # 5 stated, "I had a teacher that helped me apply for colleges and paid for my application fees."

Participant # 9 quoted, “A co-worker gave me $500 because I needed $500 more. When I thought of quitting, I thought about her. She probably changed my life.” Most participants spoke of external support in some form. Codes and theme from Question 7 are below in Table 8.

Table 8

Codes and Theme from Question 7

Question	Codes	Theme
• What did others do or tell you?	• no one helped • invested teachers • tutors • co-worker • family • children • mother • do what I want to do	• External support

Summary

The following section reviews the findings of this study, focusing on the outcomes and their meanings. The section concludes with a short introduction to the following chapter.

Participants focused on middle school as being a difficult time, sharing experiences with being bullied, having behavioral issues, and having poor grades during middle school. Codes from the data such as depression, being withdrawn, and feelings of being an outcast also supported the theme of middle school being a difficult time.

The presence of external support was another theme that emerged from the data, with all but one participant noting an external support person. Participants varied in their

external support sources. Codes surrounding the theme of external support included mother, teacher, coach, family, co-worker, children, guidance counselor, and principal.

A desire to go to college emerged from the data as a theme. Participants talked about wanting to go to college, their decision to go to college, and their decision to return to school after working. Participants shared about wanting to get away from particular situations. Others shared about wanting to do something different. Additional codes for this theme included getting good grades, studying, and asking for help.

Messages that people heard from others playing a role in what they think about themselves was an additional theme that emerged. Participants shared about believing both the positive and negative messages they were hearing. Only one participant noted they did not listen to or believe the negative messages they received in some way. Positive messages that participants shared included encouragement to get good grades, to go to college, and that they were good students. Negative messages that participants shared included: they should get married, they would not be supported in college, and they should go into the workforce instead of college.

Chapter 5 further analyzes and discusses these findings in the context of the guiding theory and literature. Interpretation, limitations, and recommendations will also be offered based on the outcome data.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to analyze the lived experience of participants who were survivors of abuse and are furthering their education beyond high school, in terms of what they felt motivated them to pursue higher education. Open-ended interviews allowed me to acquire true- to-life data to assess the participants' experiences of what motivated them to seek education beyond the high school level.

The nature of this completed study was qualitative to gain descriptive insight into the factors that contribute to a person's success in terms of graduating from high school and pursuing a higher degree, after suffering from child abuse. The completion of the study gave further understanding into motivation in terms of external and internal factors as it relates to academic success for survivors of child abuse.

There were 15 individuals who participated in the study. The participants were male and female between the ages of 19 and 64. The participants self-identified as being a survivor of childhood maltreatment. All the participants were enrolled in higher education.

The need for this research surfaced from a gap in the literature surrounding abuse survivors' qualitative experience of factors relative to their successful completion of high school or other continued education. As noted by Walsh et al. (2010), as of completion of their research, there was only one other study that discussed the number of maltreated children to obtain academic success (see Kaufman et al., 1994). This completed phenomenological study will provide practitioners and educators with feedback on what

high school graduates who are survivors of abuse and involved in continuing their education saw as influential in their educational accomplishments.

Interpretation of the Findings

Confirm Knowledge

The findings of this study confirmed various aspects of social cognitive theory and resilience that were previously discussed in Chapter 2. Such topics include facets of attribution theory and self-efficacy.

In terms of social cognitive theory, the findings of this study confirm Bandura's notion that people can make decisions and exercise personal control over their life as situations change rather than having their behavior predetermined by their environment (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). Participants in this study spoke of taking personal control over their decision to further their education rather than allowing their childhood maltreatment to determine their fate.

Attribution theory is a component of social cognitive theory that focuses on how individuals assign causality to events that impact their future behavior and thoughts (Martin & Dowson, 2009). According to attribution theory, students can learn to be successful from the messages they hear from others that play a significant role in their lives (Martin & Dowson, 2009). Messages from others can shape a person's expectancy for success and beliefs about their own ability to perform a task (Hsieh & Kang, 2010). This current research sought to understand how messages heard from others played a role in the participant's academic success. In addition to messages, this current study was aimed at getting a better understanding of protective factors for survivors of child abuse.

Afifi and MacMillan (2011) discussed protective factors that promote resilience on an individual-level, a family-level, and a community-level. This completed study confirmed Afifi and MacMillan's knowledge that protective factors can shield a person from impairment connected to being maltreated. Afifi and MacMillan contributed that personality traits, self-efficacy, and view of the maltreatment served as individual-level protective factors. On the individual-level participants shared about personality traits and self-efficacy that shielded them from the negative impacts of child maltreatment. Supportive familial relationships, stable caregiving, and parental relationships were identified as family-level protective factors by Afifi and MacMillan. On a family-level, participants commented on support from specifically mothers and other family members. According to Afifi and MacMillan, community-level protective factors include positive peer relationships and social supports. On the community-level participants remarked about positive teachers, principals, coaches, and other social supports. Several participants shared about experiencing protective factors on a number of levels, as well has having more than protective factor within levels.

Disconfirm Knowledge

There are some findings of this study that do not support previous research regarding survivors of child maltreatment. In terms of motivation for education, Young et al. (2011) contended that intrinsic motivation is what mostly leads to self-motivation to accomplish a goal. The participants in this study mostly gave account of extrinsic motivation for education. Many of the participants mentioned having external support systems that motivated them to continue with their education.

Extend Knowledge

The research from Hayenga and Corpus (2010) emphasized a need for research to focus on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for academic achievement in several content domains. One such domain was child abuse and academic success. This completed study further explored the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in terms of academic achievement.

Vallerand et al. (1992) considered motivation to be one of the most important psychological concepts of education. Vallerand el at. asserted that motivation could be intrinsic or extrinsic. Young et al. (2011) credited motivation as occurring on a continuum between intrinsic and extrinsic. Through the interviews conducted in this study, the research supports the notion that motivation occurs on a continuum; participants mentioned having both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation that occurred on a continuum. Some participants discussed believing in themselves and having others to support them. Other participants discussed initially lacking intrinsic motivation until having others believe in them and support them. Only two participants noted concepts related to intrinsic motivation as the most influential.

In terms of social cognitive theory, this completed study supports Bandura's (1999) research and notion of triadic reciprocal causation. Participants discussed ideas related to internal factors, behavior, and the environment influencing each other bidirectionally. Participants shared about how the factors in their environment, internal factors, and personal behaviors motivated them to continue through school. The two

participants that quoted intrinsic factors as being the most influential also shared that they wanted to be different from their environment.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations to trustworthiness that occurred from execution of this study included the research being conducted by a human instrument. Human instruments can have an impact on the quality of data collected and presentation of the results (Goodell et al., 2016). Another limitation to trustworthiness was that the study included only those who were willing to talk by telephone or through a web-based program about their abuse. I worked with each participant to build rapport, however the rapport that can be built from having a face-to-face interview may not have been present. In addition, potential participants who may have been uncomfortable with speaking about the abuse by these means were not identified.

The study also only included those who self-identified as being a survivor of abuse, thus cannot be generalized to those that do not self-identify as being a survivor of abuse. In addition, the study only encompassed participants currently enrolled at two universities. Potential participants enrolled at other universities were not included. Furthermore, potential participants that were not currently enrolled in higher education learning were not included. While the participant pool covered both brick-and-mortar students and on-line students, the generalizability of this study may be limited to students who choose those institutions.

This study, like other qualitative studies, was based on purposeful strategies rather than methodological rules (Marshall et al., 2013). Thus, the participants had to meet a

certain criterion to participate, rather than being randomly selected. This study focused on collecting data from participants who shared a lived experience. In addition, there is no definitive sample size for qualitative studies (Marshall et al., 2013). I stopped collecting data when it appeared that data saturation was achieved. I determined the data reached saturation when there were 3 consecutive interviews where no new codes or themes emerged (see Francis et al., 2010).

Recommendations

Recommendations for further research include obtaining more in-depth research to include and distinguish between different types of abuse and academic achievement based on the different types and varying degree of abuse survived. Current research is broad on the topic of resilience in terms of different types of abuse. This study did not ask participants to identify the type of abuse sustained. There is research to suggest that more severe abuse leads to more severe outcomes (Heim et al., 2010; Norman et al., 2012). Further research can shed light on how varying degrees of abuse affect academic resiliency. Tools such as the Adverse Childhood Experiences Questionnaire identifying types and degree of abuse experienced as a child (Felitti et al., 1998) might be considered for use in future research. Mixed method designs using such quantitative data along with qualitative in formation could be helpful in identifying protective factors to determine the correlation between degrees of abuse and resilience.

While participants in this study were from a diverse group with varying geographic locations, participants were pooled from only two universities. Further research can encompass a wider array of participants from various universities, including

community colleges. Participants were also enrolled in various levels of degree pursuits. Further research can gauge what types of motivation are perceived as important at the varying degree levels.

Participants in this study were from a wide array of age groups, with some of the participants noting they completed high school and did not go to college immediately. One participant noted dropping out of school, returning to finish, and then seeking higher education. Further studies can explore motivational factors for individuals who continue to higher education immediately after college and how they may differ from motivational factors for individuals who complete high school and return to college later. Another factor to consider would be motivation in those students who drop out of school, later complete their high school education and continue to college.

Implications

Positive social change

Societal change implications of this research address three levels: individual, family, and community. This study was designed to contribute to positive social change by providing insight into intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors that contribute to educational success. As discussed earlier, protective factors that promote resilience can be found on an individual-level, a family-level, and a community-level. This study provides information to survivors of child abuse, educators, family members, and counselors that may lead to enhanced programs and services to meet the needs of survivors of child abuse as well as promote training programs that attend to the needs of child abuse survivors.

Individual

Positive social change implications specific to the individual level from the completion of this research include many components. This study supports the notion of resilience in survivors of child abuse. This study indicates to individuals that it is possible to be a survivor of child abuse, complete high school, and continue to pursue higher education. As research has indicated, one important outcome of educational achievement is the ability to have a higher socioeconomic status (Brown et al., 2012) Individuals with higher socioeconomic status are more likely to use their provided resources to make better decisions about health and tend to have access to better health care (Brown et al., 2012). Achievement in education is an important predictor of success in a career (Spengler et al., 2015). More education also leads to better job opportunities, as well as more opportunities to choose from.

Family

Positive social change implications specific to the family-level from the completion of this study align with protective factors indicated by Afifi and MacMillan (2011). Afifi and MacMillan identified supportive familial relationships, stable caregiving, and parental relationships, as family-level protective factors for resilience. The presence of a caregiver who provides understanding and emotionally responsive care has been found to be essential to later adaptive functioning in child abuse survivors (Heller, Larrieu, D'Imperio, & Boris, 1999). This completed study supports the notion of importance of familial relationships with regards to motivating survivors of child abuse to pursue higher education. Domhardt, Münzer, Fegert, and Goldbeck (2015) found

that children depend on support from a non-offending family member. Domhardt et al. (2015) also found that clinical interventions with a non-offending family member have shown to have beneficial effects for the survivors. Domhardt et al. (2015) found that interventions that included the family were more effective than interventions with the survivor alone. The findings of this study may promote the need for additional resources to be provided at the family-level as a means of supporting families with how to assist survivors to become resilient.

Community

The social change implications of this research at the community level align with social-cognitive theory's concepts of attribution theory in that individuals can learn from the messages they receive from others. According to Afifi and MacMillan (2011), community-level protective factors include positive peer relationships and social supports. Domhardt et al. (2015) indicate that social support from various sources buffers against adverse effects of abuse. In terms of this research, social support can include teachers, principals, guidance counselors, coaches, and other social supports. The findings of this study provide an understanding of how community members can serve as positive motivators for survivors of abuse.

Social supports can also come in the form of extracurricular activities. Several of the participants noted middle school as being a difficult time for them. A few of the participants spoke of being engaged in social activities in high school, however none of the participants spoke of being engaged in social activities during the middle school years. Fredericks and Eccles (2008) conducted a study to determine if participation in

extracurricular activities was a benefit for middle school children. They found that being involved in extracurricular activities in middle school was positively correlated with higher grades, self-esteem, resilience, positive peers, and a greater sense of self-efficacy about future academic abilities.

As many of the participants indicated middle school as a troubling time, the findings of this study support the need for children in middle school to be involved in extracurricular activities. In addition it will be important for teachers to be educated on the unique developmental needs of middle school students, with special attention to the needs of students who are survivors of or currently suffering abuse. The findings of this study also promote the need for additional trainings, resources, or materials within educational settings for community members to use and reference.

Methodological/Theoretical/Empirical

Additional implications of this study include providing tools for replication (interview questions and coding analysis) in other educational settings. Larger scale studies could also be conducted based on the provided protocol to gain a broader understanding of participants across multiple communities. Continued attention to differences that might emerge through analysis of descriptive demographic data might also prove of interest.

Recommendations for Practice

Recommendations for practice based on the findings of this study focuses on educators. Feeling valued by others is one way to combat the development of negative core beliefs about self-worth that tend to arise with childhood abuse (Hyman, Gold, &

Cott, 2003). For educators, it is important to increase the awareness of signs and symptoms of a child who is currently being abused or is a survivor of abuse. This can be accomplished through trauma informed care and trainings on how to respond effectively to child abuse survivors. Educators play an intricate role as a social support for survivors of abuse. Individuals can learn from the messages they receive from others. Positive messages can be interpreted into a positive self-image and negative messages can be interpreted into a negative self-image. It is important for educators to understand the potential impact they have on students and in turn a student's future.

Practitioners should be trained in the skills needed to respond effectively to abuse cases (Hyman et al., 2003). Training can come in the form of trauma informed care such as trauma focused cognitive behavioral therapy. In terms of therapists, research has indicated having a family intervention is more beneficial for survivors of abuse than intervening with the individual alone. Therapists can include a non-offending family member in sessions who can serve as a positive support for the individual. Parent education and training and in-home support programs are the two main approaches that have been used to address the ecological level of family and parent (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2000).

In addition, the therapist can work with the school to provide the school officials with more resources and tools to best support the survivor. The therapist can serve as a consultant for the school to educate the school staff on how to work with individual students in ways that will boost the student's self-esteem and self-worth.

Conclusion

The evaluation of gathered data from this research study has been able to shed light on factors related to the successful completion of high school and continued education for abuse survivors. The findings of this study support tenets of social cognitive theory, specifically Bandura's notion of triadic causality, and attribution theory. Afifi and MacMillan's depiction of resilience is also supported by this research.

Recommendations from this completed study encourage further exploration and evaluation of more in-depth research to include and distinguish between different types of abuse and academic achievement based on the different types and varying degree of abuse survived. Further recommendations that can be immediately implemented are increasing educators' awareness of the impacts of abuse on children and how they can play a role in promoting positive outcomes for survivors.

Participants shared how external supports were extremely important in their journey to include family supports and social supports. Several participants shared specific extraordinary experiences with educators and how the support they received from those involved in their education played an important role in their motivation and decision to pursue higher education. One participant's quote in particular summed up the value of support from educators. The participant stated, "Teacher's don't know their power. A teacher can make or break you." This study supports the idea that external supports are pivotal as a motivational factor for survivors of abuse to pursue higher learning.

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Appendix A: Demographics and Interview Guide

Demographics

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Ethnicity
4. Locality (City, State)
5. Highest level of education completed

Interview Guide

1. How do you think the maltreatment you suffered affected your academic ability, such as grades and school behavior?
2. What messages did you receive from others about your academic ability (parents, teachers, principals, friends, family, etc.)?
3. What messages did you tell yourself about your academic ability?
4. How did you view the messages you received from others about your abilities, positive or negative?
5. How did you view the messages you told yourself, or thought to yourself about your abilities, positive or negative?
6. What did you tell yourself (or do) to help to continue through school?
7. What did others tell you (or do) that helped to continue through school?

Appendix B: Codes from Interviews

Code:	Interview where code appeared:
1. Middle School	Interview 1, Interview 2, Interview 3, Interview 6, Interview 8, Interview 10, Interview 12, Interview 15
2. Outlet	Interview 3, Interview 5, Interview 11, Interview 14, Interview 15
3. Depression	Interview 3, Interview 6, Interview 7, Interview 8, Interview 10, Interview 12, Interview 13
4. Marriage	Interview 1, Interview 2, Interview 7, Interview 9, Interview 13, Interview 15
5. Teacher	Interview 2, Interview 4, Interview 6, Interview 7, Interview 8, Interview 9, Interview 12, Interview 13
6. Get Away	Interview 3, Interview 4, Interview 5, Interview 6, Interview 8, Interview 11, Interview 14
7. Parent (mother)	Interview 1, Interview 2, Interview 6, Interview 8, Interview 9, Interview 10, Interview 14, Interview 15
8. Parent (father)	Interview 8, Interview 10
9. Grandparent	Interview 3, Interview 5, Interview 9
10. Counselor/ Therapist	Interview 10, Interview 11, Interview 12
11. Isolated	Interview 2, Interview 12
12. Friends	Interview 6, Interview 7
13. Other persons (unidentified)	Interview 9, Interview 14

Appendix C: Themes from Interviews

Theme:	**Interview where theme appeared:**
1. Middle school was a difficult period	Interview 1, Interview 2, Interview 3, Interview 6, Interview 8, Interview 10, Interview 12, Interview 15
2. External support	Interview 1, Interview 3, Interview 4, Interview 5, Interview 6, Interview 7, Interview 8, Interview 9, Interview 10, Interview 11, Interview 12, Interview 13, Interview 14, Interview 15
3. Messages that people hear play a role in what they think or believe about themselves	Interview 1, Interview 3, Interview 4, Interview 5, Interview 6, Interview 7, Interview 8, Interview 9, Interview 10, Interview 11, Interview 12, Interview 13, Interview 14, Interview 15
4. Messages to self were positive and negative	Interview 1, Interview 2, Interview 3, Interview 4, Interview 5, Interview 6, Interview 7, Interview 8, Interview 9, Interview 10, Interview 11, Interview 12, Interview 13, Interview 14, Interview 15
5. I wanted to go to college	Interview 1, Interview 2, Interview 3, Interview 4, Interview 5, Interview 6, Interview 7, Interview 8, Interview 9, Interview 10, Interview 11, Interview 12, Interview 13, Interview 14, Interview 15