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Governors State University

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The Transformation of Homeless Adolescent Mothers into Adult Leaders:

Adolescent Pregnancy and Adolescent Reform

By

Annie P. Ware

A.A., South Suburban Community College, 1978

A.S., South Suburban Community College, 1979

B.A., Governors State University, 1981

M.A., Governors State University, 1992

M.A., Governors State University, 1997

Ph.D., Walden University, 2012

CAPSTONE PROJECT

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University Park, IL 60484

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Abstract

This phenomenological investigation recruited six female leaders using a convenient sampling method from social media connections and a Midwestern state universities' graduate student distribution email lists to recruit leaders who were once homeless teenage mothers and resided in residential homeless shelters, foster families or without stable living arrangements. The women ranged in ages from 22 to 52. There was no restriction on race, ethnicity, or religion. The study included all women who were once homeless teenage mothers, yet ultimately attained a level of leadership within their chosen profession. Data was uploaded into NVivo 11® from surveys and interviews were transcribed and coded using NVivo 11® software system. The categories and codes collected through this software system were reexamined to see if NVivo 11® software system missed any important words or word phrases. Results indicated that each subject had unresolved issues or missing needs during adolescence. Findings further suggest that despite participants' initial beliefs; early fantasized romance did little to fulfill previously unmet needs. Results also indicated that family issues affected participants' decision to leave home. Four respondents from 6 participants had experienced the divorce of their parents that initiated self-destructive behavior. Findings further showed that teens had to reach a certain maturity level before realizing their leadership ambitions; the majority of subjects expressed being inspired by their babies to pursue leadership ambitions; with one subject who attributed God as the guiding force in her pathway to leadership.

Keywords: adolescent; divorce; homeless; mental illness; teenage mothers; professional female leaders; leaders; at-risk youth; network connection; phenomenon; transformation.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The National Alliance to End Homelessness (2016) estimates that young families, defined as households being headed by a young adult under the age of 25, make up more than 25 percent of the overall number of homeless families sheltered within the homelessness assistance system annually. This equates with approximate 50,000 to 60,000 of homeless households with children being headed by a young adult (The National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2016). These numbers do not account for those living under the radar without permanent shelter. The actual numbers of parenting teens living without permanent shelter is unknown.

The young parents who are not able to reunite with families or other supportive adults are like the large majority of homeless families in general, in that rapid re-housing and relatively small amounts of assistance are often sufficient to end homelessness for this population (The National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2016). For many, this process becomes an infinity loop of supportive dependability, which is often transferred to their offspring. Some parents who leave residential shelters manage to resist this continuous cycle of dependability. The question becomes, why have some among this population managed to transform their lives, when others have not. Related questions are: (1) how do these families fair after being released from shelters or emancipating out of foster care? (2) Do they repeat the same cycle of homelessness or transcend that fate? (3) How do these young parents conform after transitioning out of residential or homeless shelters? And (4) what affects, if any, have these living conditions had on their children?

This study is not intended to endorse teenage pregnancy, but to expel the myth that defines this phenomenon as a life confined to poverty and economic dependency.

The study assumed that providing examples of female leaders who have gone through similar fates as the population of homeless parenting teens, that other similarly situated youth may receive hope and encouragement for change. The study attempted to provide an example of how former homeless teenage mothers have been able to transform their lives into leaders with the anticipation that it might promote the same direction/ambitions in the existing population of homeless teenage mothers.

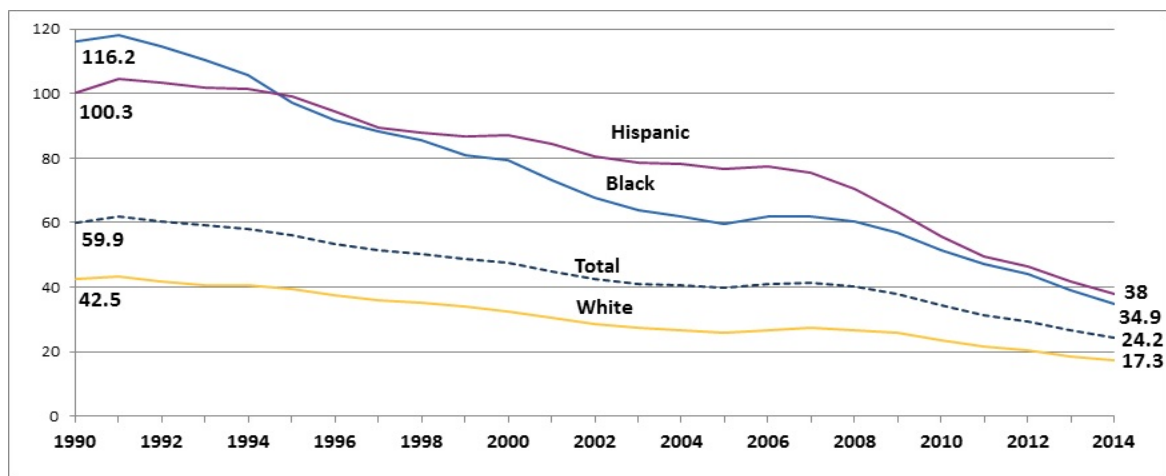
Homeless Pregnant and Parenting Teens in United States: A Historical Analysis

The history of teen pregnancy is not a new phenomenon, nor has it gone without growing public and political apprehensions, controversies, and condemnations (Thompson, Bender, Lewis, & Watkins, 2008). The topic of teen pregnancy has been a growing economic concern as well as a public and political debate throughout our nation's history (Hoffman & Maynard, 2008). The birth rates for adolescents 15 to 19 decreased by 35% between 1991 to 2005, but remain a problem too high in numbers to abandon without first finding a comprehensive solution (Thompson et al., 2008) [See Figure 1]. Negative maternal consequences have been associated with adolescents' childbearing, and have been, and will continue to be scrutinized by society as a social nuisance and financial burden (Hoffman & Maynard, 2008).

Research suggests that an estimated 10% of both street and sheltered female youth are currently pregnant or raising a child (Toro, Dworsky, & Fowler, 2007). The well-being of children having children is a challenge and with homelessness factored into the equation, it will be a major triumph to find enduring solutions to end this social problem. Homelessness is a barrier for this population because, besides the obvious problems, young mothers place both themselves and their children in danger (Toro et al., 2007). It is

a growing social problem of major concern because of the unsafe, unhealthy, and poor economic conditions that affect not only the teen mothers, but their children as well. Being homeless with a child puts these young mothers and their children at risk for sexual abuse, hunger, and criminal acts against them and by them (e.g., stealing from grocery stores and clothing stores), lost education, and very little opportunity for job outlook or to transcend the cycle of homelessness and poverty (Fernandes-Alcantara, 2013). Unless the law apprehends them, they may continue the pattern of living from friend-to-friend and relative-to-relative or doubled-up without any stability or security.

Figure 1. Birth Rate, By Race by Race (Fe males age 15-19) in the United States



Source: Hamilton, B.E., Martin, J. A., & Ventura, S. J. (2015). Births: Final Data for 2014. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. (See Appendix A for Permission)

To some extent, historical research concerning homeless and pregnant teens is woefully lacking. There is little accurate statistical data to confirm the actual numbers of homeless pregnant and parenting teens so, most data collected is from sources that have provided service to the ones who sought shelters or support (Thompson et al., 2008).

Homeless pregnant and parenting teens are categorized with homeless single women with

children, single mother's to be, or youth with children (Choi & Snyder, 1999). One rational explanation for limited data on the population of homeless and parenting teens is because the statistics are drawn from agencies that have direct dealings with this specific homeless population, such as shelters, housing, arrests, or foster placement (Toro et al., 2007). Many of these organizations operate at the federal, state, and local levels creating channels of support for the homeless populations. Organizations such as the Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Children and Family Services, Department of Juvenile Justice, the National Alliance to End Homelessness, Chicago Housing Authority, shelters etc. have formed alliances in support of these populations. The homeless populations that deliberately evade the legal system or homeless support networks because of fear of rules that control or abuse them, remain under the radar and are generally not counted in these statistical data (Boonstra, 2011; Toro et al., 2007). A coherent rationale is that many homeless pregnant and parenting teens have the fear of being sent to foster care where they might be separated from their babies, be exposed to further abuse, or returned to the home they left.

Numerous legitimate explanations exist for why teenage mothers leave a parent's home or safe and secure living arrangements to seek other living accommodations on their own, such as: (a) not willing to follow the rules of the house; (b) asked to leave by their parent(s) for their disobedience or disrespectful attitudes; (c) teens feel they are adults and need to be on their own; (d) abusive living circumstances, physical, psychological, sexual or all three forms of maltreatment; (e) extreme poverty, living in single-female headed home with multiple siblings; (f) alcohol or drug addicted parent(s); (g) no longer feeling like a part of the family; and (h) desire to continue living an adult

role with sexual partner. These are but a few reasons why teen mothers leave home, yet one primary explanation is they want to live an adult life with no rules (Thompson et al., 2008). A major problem with most teenage mother's negotiating their independence is many may be mature physically, but immature emotionally and psychologically. Many are not capable of navigating the complexities of life independently; thus, further complicating their circumstances beyond the obstructive, to the point of endangerment.

Past Research Concerning Homeless Youth

In comparing past homeless (e.g., those homeless since 1975) with present homeless, some researchers have found that by contrast the new homeless population are more visible, younger, and composed of African Americans, Latinos, single-female headed families and families with both parents. The old homeless population had more men who were homeless than the new population of the homeless (Timmer, Eitzen, & Talley, 1994). Homelessness has been inextricably linked with impoverished life styles passed down from one generation to the next, as each successive generation is often cut off from opportunities (e.g., jobs, higher educational attainment, affordable housing or rental units; Choi & Snyder, 1999).

Related to this, research also suggests strong correlation between pregnant and parenting teens and homelessness (Timmer et al., 1994). Young parents, who leave home or run away from home, generally try to avoid the risk of being returned to their homes or placed with the Department of Children and Family Services for foster care, and thus go to great lengths to keep a low profile (Boonstra, 2011). Not dissimilar to many of their peers, this population has generally shown an abhorrence for an existence that they have little-to-no control over, such as abusive, neglecting home environments, or foster care.

Actions taken in Support of Homeless Pregnant and Parenting Teens

Historically, most homeless men and women slept on park benches in alleyways, bus terminals, halfway houses, abandoned buildings, and even hotels if they could scrounge up enough money by panhandling to pay the fare. Homeless parenting teens that were found on the streets were taken into police custody (Boonstra, 2011). Teens whose parents could not be located nor had parents at all, routinely were sent to an orphanage and their children were placed with good families. These youths were released from the orphanage on their eighteenth birthday, but it was impossible to locate the families who their children were placed with after adoption (Boonstra, 2011). These orphanages were replaced with foster care and residential group homes. The problem was and still is that unspoken tragedies have happened to many youths during their stays in orphanages, foster care, and residential group homes. The National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect in 1998 reported that six times as many children died in foster care than in the general public at large, and once removed to official ‘safety,’ many of these children were far more likely to suffer abuse, including sexual molestation than in the general population (Shilhavy, 2016). Thus, for some youths, foster care homes can be just as hard and crippling than the families from which the youth have evacuated.

Homeless shelters in the 21st century are beginning to become available for those in extreme poverty; but still, the number of shelters operating simply cannot keep up with the ostensibly increasing numbers of homeless pregnant and parenting teens living without permanent housing (Boonstra, 2011). Choi and Snyder (1999) stated: “basic human rights require food, shelter, and clothing and are considered necessary for the bare minimum standards of living” (p. 18). Being deprived of one or more of these

basic needs goes against the constitution of our nation; and yet, there are not enough shelters to adequately house all the homeless population in many of the communities where this condition is pre-existing and overwhelming (Hoffman, & Maynard, 2008). However, because of the state of our nation's economy, these types of services are being/have been drastically cut or receiving little or no funding from the state or local government. Many others have been forced to close because of lack of funding opportunities. With little financial support these types of facilities could be on the threshold of extinction.

The Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study is three-folds: First, to fill a gap in the literature that overlook teenage mothers who were once homeless, resided in a residential homeless shelter or without permanent housing and yet, became leaders in their chosen professions, assets to their communities, and exceptional parents. There is little in the literature that follows the success of this population after leaving a shelter or residential group home. Secondly, to dispel the myth that links teenage mothers to a lifetime of failures and poverty that is continued in their offspring. Thirdly, to inspire hope in teenage mothers currently experiencing this homeless state of destitute. If the current homeless pregnant and parenting teens can be encouraged by the resiliency and transformation of former homeless teen mothers who became adult leaders in their chosen professions, it may inspire the leadership potentials in them. Hopefully, through the lived experiences of success from former homeless teen moms (as examples for modifying behaviors of the current population) can serve to help break the repetitive cycle of homelessness, early child bearing, and economic dependency.

Statement of the Problem

Unprecedented numbers of teenage mothers or “mothers-to-be” are homeless and living without permanent housing (The National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2016). These teens and their children are at risk of violence against them, juvenile delinquency, and committing criminal acts for survival (Toro, Dworsky, & Fowler, 2007). Many teen mothers solve their problems by using violence and evasive techniques, which exposes their children to these negative influences. The anger and hopelessness these young mothers are experiencing can only perpetuate their destitute and desperate states even more. Since most children learn by example, anger and violence is ultimately observed and absorbed by their children (Fernandes-Alcantara, 2013). These acts of anger and violence can have long-lasting damaging outcomes for their futures (Eaton, Kann, Kinchen, Shanklin, Flint, Hawkins, & Wechsler, 2012). Long-term effects of transference of violence and anger on their children include: juvenile imprisonment, gang affiliation, early teenage pregnancy, low or poor educational attainment, and continued poverty (Fernades-Alcantara, 2013). Nevertheless, there are many females who have had past experiences that might have negatively affected their lives; however, despite those experiences have managed to become leaders in their chosen professions, assets to their communities, as well as good parents. These select few are exceptions to the rules.

The Central Question that Guides this Study

The central question that guides this study is: What were the processes of adult females, who were once homeless teenage mothers and resided in homeless shelters or without permanent housing, in becoming professional leaders in their chosen fields?

For this study, the following sub questions were addressed:

(1) What was life generally like for these families after being released from shelters, emancipating out of foster care or finding stable living arrangements?

(2) Did they repeat the same cycle of homelessness or transcend that fate?

(3) To what extent, if any, were these young parents able to conform after transitioning out of residential or homeless shelters?

(4) What affects did these living conditions have on their children?

Nine sub-questions included in sequence to the central question are open-ended:

1. What was your childhood like?
2. What interventions, if any, changed your behavior?
3. What made you change what you were doing?
4. What were the challenges in your life?
5. How did you overcome those challenges?
6. What were your strengths?
7. And what were the motivations that moved you towards leadership roles?
8. Did your incentive for leadership originate while you were without permanent living arrangement? During your stay in foster care or homeless residential home or after you left the facilities?
9. What courses of action prepared you for your leadership roles?

These questions, depending on the answers, required further inquiry.

Operational Definitions

The definitions of terms are provided for clarity and understanding of this study:

Adolescent mothers are young females who have undergone puberty but have not reached full maturity and have given birth to a child (Collins English Dictionary, 2014)

Amok is in a frenzy to do violence, or (2) in an uncontrolled state (Collins English Dictionary, 2014).

Cinderella Complex is a term coined by Colette Dowling who believed it was women's fear of independence and her desire to be taken care of by others. In the case of most teenage girls, it's her "knight in shining armor" that comes along, and she will live happily ever after (Dowling, 1982; Medora, Goldstein, & Hellen, 1994).

Doles is pertaining to the distribution of governmental support through housing assistance, food, Medicaid, clothing vouchers, and assistant living programs to accommodate the homeless and the poor. Doles are a source of charitable giving (Collins English Dictionary, 2014).

A Dysfunctional family is a system in which conflict, misbehavior, is consistent parental child neglect or abuse occurs continually and regularly, leading other members to act in the same manner such actions. Children in these family types believe the behavior is normal (Constantine, 1983)

Haves and the Have Nots – The Haves refer to people or families that are financially secure and have valuable possessions. The Have Nots are those families in need who are poor with little or no valuable possessions (i.e., people who are very wealthy and people who are very poor: Collins English Dictionary, 2014).

Hierarchy of Needs Theory was introduced by Abraham Maslow in 1943 as a philosophy of human motivation that emphasizes five interdependent levels of basic

human needs (motivators) that must be satisfied in a strict sequence starting with the lowest level. Physiological needs for survival (to stay alive and reproduce) and security (to feel safe) are the most fundamental and most pressing needs. They are followed by social needs (for love and belonging) and self-esteem needs (to feel worthy, respected, and have status). The final and highest level needs are self-actualization needs (self-fulfillment and achievement). Its underlying theme is that human beings are “wanting” beings: as they satisfy one need the next emerges on its own and demands satisfaction (Maslow, 1949).

Homeless teenage mothers are defined in this study as females 13 to 19 years of age, who have at least one child and do not have permanent housing (The National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2016).

Leadership roles are defined in this study as a philosophy and technique that combines different leadership styles to influence employees to produce creative ideas, products, and services. The key role in the practice of innovation leadership is the creative thinker, thus this role can transpire in any field, nursing, director, legal, education, etc. (Argyris, 1976).

Misregulated affections are those emotional behaviors that are not consistent. The mixed emotional behaviors may be loving and caring in some instances; while in others, neglecting and abusive (e.g., mixed emotions and behaviors: Cavendish, Montague, Enders, & Dietz, 2014).

Moderation role in this study refers to the degree or restraints in which the mother interacts with her daughter (Osofsky, Eberhart-Wright, Ware, Hann, 1992).

Panhandling is a form of begging for money, food, or other needed resource (Collins English Dictionary, 2014).

Theory of Psychosocial Development was coined by Erik Erikson in 1950 and provides a broad framework to view human development throughout the entire lifespan. It emphasizes the social nature of human beings and the important influence that social relationships have on development and the psychological issues that may develop as a result of unsuccessful completion of each stage (Erikson, 1959).

Transitional Housing is supervised living arrangement that allows homeless families to make the transition from homelessness to independent living (The National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2016).

A structured transitional living arrangement provides families with structured skilled programs that are aimed to help them live economically secure and independently (Ware, 2012).

Unstructured Family System is a family structure without any clear boundaries, and it describes a chaotic dysfunctional system (Ware, 2012).

Theoretical Framework Guiding the Research: An Introduction

When the answer to a problem is discovered, everything becomes obvious, but until then everything is based on assumption (Ichiro & Tomio, 2015). O'Toole and Christensen (2013) describe theory as “a comprehensible set of declarations that defines and explains the relationship of underlying principles of some aspects of the world” (p. 33). Ichiro and Tomio (2015) view theory as an “application for complex systems’ social change models” (p. 343). Society is considered as a complex system with massive problems and issues that require intervention (Ichiro and Tomio, 2015). Every movement towards creating a

solution for change is interconnected to one another. For example, if a creative thinker could solve the problem of poverty then there is a high probability that it could wipe out hunger, homelessness, and other social ills. Creating a theory that would either validate or challenge the assumption of eliminating poverty is considered discovery, which would be a step towards social change. A theory is confirmed or tested through a study that is qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method in nature and should provide answers (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2011). On the other hand, if a theory is challenged, yet not validated, then further review or formulation would be in order. It is not one's understanding of what is assumed to be true, but rather proof, fact, and evidence that provides concrete knowledge to know that one has capacity for change.

Theories used as a Foundation for Human Motivation and Behaviors

Connecting theories to different behaviors can serve to rationalize human motivation, whether positive or negative (Worth, 2014). Connecting theories to human motivation also provides a rationale for both constructive and destructive motives that researchers and humanitarian can use to resolve issues. Argyris and Schön (1974) noted "how the theories that people hold shape the way in which they actually behave" (p. 392). Theories thus serve as guiding actions that offer set rules to practice that may lead to desired results. For example, integrating both Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development and Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, one may rationalize and justify many of adolescents' behaviors for an idea of intervention programs for recovery, advancement, or elimination.

Although there are different types of theories, two were pointed out by Argyris and Schön (1974) who identified distinct models; the espoused theory and the theory-in-

use. While espouse theory gives conscious commitment to our concepts, it is the one theory described when people ask what ideas govern our actions (Denhardt et al., 2013). However, the theory that governs our actions is called theory-in-use. It is aptly noted that there are distinctions between these two theories and that is in the way one opts to embrace ideas. In either case, one should desire to learn new strategies that will assist in meeting desired goals. The espoused theory and the theory- in-use are two connecting theories that are not always reinforced by the other. Individuals have control over their lives whether they are aware of this power of self-influence or not. Homeless teenage mothers who think they are in control of their lives are not. This is a backward use of the espouse theory and the theory-in-use. Homeless pregnant and parenting teens put their behaviors to use in lieu of using a rational mind (e.g. mapping out a strategic plan and following through on that plan). A good example of the backward use of these theories is engaging in sex too soon, dropping out of school, the decision to have a baby, and to leave home without securing safe living arrangements.

Argyris and Schön (1974) believed that people have roadmaps in their minds that plan, organize, and execute ideas. However, these roadmaps are not always used in a planned sequence (Argyris, 1980). Teenage girls know that education is necessary to grow; however, playing hooky from school to hang out seems like more fun. For example, drawing from the framework of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development which states that "life is a series of lessons and challenges that help us grow" (Cherry, 2015, para 1) and when individuals learn then they can advance. Erikson's model of psychosocial theory explains why these lessons of life either help one grow or remain stagnant in a state of unsuccessful growth. The reason of stagnation is that certain stages

of development were not successfully completed. These theories work in unity to help researchers and humanitarians resolve issues and design programs for intervention or change. The espouse theory and the theory-in-use, are used in this study to propose a new theory of transformation.

Erikson and Maslow Theories as an Explanation for Teenage Behaviors

When children are born into a poor family with multiple siblings, live in an impoverished community, and have parent(s) who are illiterate, neglectful and abusive, or live in a female headed household, they often inherit disadvantages (Cavendish et al., 2014; Cooper et al., 2011). If parent(s) are unfamiliar with social services geared to provide momentum to relieve some of the hardships and stress, then families may experience missed meals, unsafe living conditions or both. The fundamental contributor to the experiences of children born into poor families is economic hardship. Among these experiences are delayed or totally unresolved stages of development that may either advance or prohibit successful psychosocial development (Cherry, 2015).

Erikson's (1959) suggested that if the development stages are not successfully completed, then maladaptive behavior is likely to follow and persist. In the case of teen mothers, some stages may not have been successfully completed, in that two complete stages were totally missed, the adolescent years and young adulthood. These are two of Erikson's psychosocial stages of development that focuses on identity versus role confusion and the young adulthood stage that identifies intimacy versus isolation.

The adolescent stage of development, if successfully completed, yields positive outcomes related to fidelity and devotion (Cherry, 2015; Erikson, 1959). Because teen mothers generally have not successfully completed the role of identity versus role

confusion, some may experience negative outcomes such as fanaticism and repudiation (Cherry, 2015). Other developmental concerns involve the extent to which members of this cohort retain coherence in relation to intimacy and isolation during young adulthood (Cherry, 2015). Because the teenage mother has not successfully completed the previous stages of development, she may not fully discern real romantic love from fantasy and or infatuation (Medora, Goldstein, & Hellen, 1994; Ware, 2012). Resulting from immaturity and lack of successfully resolving two very important social developmental stages, these young ladies often endure further psychological trauma as they occupy a middle adult role while embracing the role of teen mom (Steeger & Gondoli, 2013). These unresolved developmental issues often cause a disruption at times in mother/child relationship.

Many teen mothers placed in middle adult roles too soon are not able to handle their new positions as parents. The middle adulthood role entered prematurely may continue to affect her love life and other life challenges, including her mother/child relationship (Bailey, Moran, & Pederson, 2007). Due to immaturity, the teen mom may experience promiscuity and exclusivity (Cherry, 2015). With these needs unfulfilled, one is left to assume that many of the other stages of development may remain unresolved as well. From a psychosocial developmental perspective, mental and or emotional problems are fairly predictable for adolescent mothers in that they generally have not successfully completed the eight stages leading up to mid-adulthood, which is the appropriate age of development for childbearing (Erikson, 1959). However, no matter what issues may arise from these incomplete stages of development; teen mother could benefit from appropriate intervention programming not only for herself, but her child as well.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as a Predictor of Adolescent Pregnancy

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory can help rationalize the teen mother's behavior to belong and be loved. Maslow (1949) believed that, "humans are perpetually wanting creatures" (p. 382); i.e., as one type of need is satisfied, then other needs become sources of desired assignment. However, growing up under economic hardship, and in a depressed community, many of the most basic needs may simply not be readily available (Brand, Klimes-Dougan, 2010; Connelly & Strauss, 1992). If basic needs (e.g., food and safety) are not adequately met, the individual will adapt to the insufficient amounts before moving on to the next readily available need (Worth, 2009). When individuals know that safety needs are not possible while residing in dangerous communities, they adjust and change their behavior to accommodate whatever happens within their community. In this sense, the youths move to the need that is available and for many that is to love and belong (Maslow, 1949).

Adolescent boys and girls do not expect to have safe provision within hostile impoverished communities. Therefore, these adolescents adapt, adjust, and move to the next need that is readily available; that is the need to be loved and belong. Maslow postulated that, an individual is ready to act upon the growth needs if, and only if, the deficiency needs are met. Families experiencing extreme hardship may be homeless, given food, and know that their situation is not permanent. Yet, many find comfort in sexual gratification (Maslow, 1949). Adolescent girls are vulnerable in this respect; missing satisfactory completion of most of their development stages their immediate urges are to feel loved and to belong (Huitt, 2007). This is a need that is freely available. However, because adolescent girls are not mature and confused about romantic love over

infatuation she fantasizes about her knight and shining armor (Cinderella Complex) envisioning her escape from her impoverished circumstances (Medora, Goldstein, & Hellen, 1994; Ware, 2012). The downfall to the Cinderella Complex is that [unbeknownst to her] there is rarely a happily ever-after. Teenage girls romanticizing about having a fantasy life with their sexual partner, usually end up stuck in a nightmare (e.g., pregnant and alone). There are many young adult males willing to have a romantic relationship with underage girls (Hoffman & Maynard, 2008). Adolescent boys may join gangs to get the feeling of belonging and family. In both cases, the needs felt in their minds of belonging and love are real, and are being fulfilled with negative reinforcement.

The problem with teenage girls is that by opening Pandora's Box, it becomes very difficult to close. The sexual act is enjoyable and for those moments of intimacy, these girls often feel loved and wanted (Ware, 2012). It may be just a fairy tale, but for that moment this act seems to be fulfilling a missing need, and that is to belong and be loved (Ware, 2012). Many teens deliberately get pregnant to hold on to their intimate partner, trying to fulfill that missing need. Lacking the maturity to differentiate between real love and fantasy, the choices she makes are usually wrong. Getting pregnant before successfully completing all the stages of development alters her life, and may have a profound impact not only on the adolescent mother and child's well-being, but society at large.

Formulating a Transformational Theory

Informed by Erikson's psychosocial development theory and Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, one might accept the hypothesis that homeless teenage mothers and pregnant teens can be transformed into exceptional parents, leaders in their

chosen fields, and assets to the communities in which they choose to live. Still, this transformation may take personal intervention that includes skilled trainers, educators, mentors, supervisors, and even ministers working in collaborative efforts in support of this population. Helping these young moms resolve their previously unmet developmental needs and issues may help move them toward self-actualization. This support invariably begins with the young mothers' desire and willingness to change.

The first unmet need is providing a safe and caring environment for the mother and her child. This act will resolve one of Maslow's unmet needs, which is the safety need (Maslow, 1949). But to discover the other missing needs and unsettled development stages; an assessment of each of the young mothers and mothers-to-be is necessary to create individual intervention programs. This would necessarily include assessment of these youths along health, psychological, physical, and nutritional; educational, ethical, and spiritual domains, among possible others. The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-Adolescent (MMPI-A) may be used to measure characteristics of personality and psychopathology among the adolescent (Butcher et al., 1992).

Formulating a comprehensive transformational theory for this population would take time, close observation, individual development programs, and long-term intervention strategies. The long-term psychological effects of traumatic life experiences are not easily dismissed, but can be subdued with the right balance of love, trust, open communication, careful listening, and, promoting adolescent mothers in positive quest for identity (Eshbaugh, 2006; Turchetti, 2012). Putting the espouse theory and theory-in-use to the test, motivating these individuals to map-out a plan of empowerment based on their strengths and following those directions are steps towards creating leaders (Argyris,

1976; Argyris, 1980). Success in transforming these teenage mothers into exceptional parents with strong leadership abilities will help to significantly reduce it, but not outright eliminates the generational curse. Promoting self-confidence and self-efficacy in teenage mothers should help in supporting successful completion of the developmental stages of their children as well, effectively dispelling society's myth of doom.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

In review of the literature concerning female leaders who were once homeless teenage mothers, the search for scholarly articles pertaining to this subject matter yielded ‘few results’. There was little research found focusing on, or following, the progress of adolescent mothers after transitioning out of assistant living programs (e.g., transitional living or emancipating out of foster care). The exceptions of documentation for the homeless teenage mother population were limited to those who returned to homeless assistance or remain on public assistance. An assumption of why this population is not better documented within the literature is because homeless teenage mothers who become leaders in their adult lives are ostensibly no longer considered statistics and are no longer categorized with this population. They become a part of the general population, and fall under a different classification of the working class. Thus, they are not generally regarded as news worthy. Notwithstanding this, their resilient natures and successes are worthy of becoming a part of the literature.

The literature retrieved concerning homeless teenage motherhood focused on the probable causes and the social, emotional, and economic effects of this social disorder. There are many scholarly articles concerning the social disadvantages, family conflict, supportive programs, and probable causes of emotional behaviors and instability in this population. However, very few researchers or sociologists have reported on those who transitioned out of this state of hopelessness to become leaders in their chosen fields, good mothers, and assets to their communities. The former homeless teenage mothers who managed to move out of the ranks of the impoverished classification to a medium to upper socioeconomic status deserve recognition. The literature routinely reports teenage

mothers who beat the odds through supportive family networks, mentors, and higher educational attainment, but fail to do the same for those without this network of support (Rafferty, Griffin & Lodise, 2011). Unlike the homeless population who depend on public doles, the loving and caring nature of government agencies and the charities' employees is not the same as devoted supportive family members. The motivational push is designed by employees of the various programs, but the incentive comes from self-determination (Adminlf, 2016). Although there may be some empathetic staff members that genuinely care, in general, staff working with this population is motivated by wages (Mantovani, 2015).

Among the population of homeless pregnant and parenting teens, the literature failed to address those who have transformed their hopeless states to leadership roles in adulthood. This study not only aims to fill the gap in the literature that have limited resources pertaining to this population, but to also provide a model of inspiration in the anticipation that other homeless teenage mothers will find their leadership potentials and carry them out.

The Search for Scholarly Peered Review Articles in Support of the Study

EBSCO Host Databases A-Z was accessed in search of article to support or discredit the topic of this study. From the A-Z databases, Academic Search Complete was selected to find supportive literature pertaining to the subject of this study. This database is considered the world's most valuable and comprehensive scholarly, multi-disciplinary full-text database and has the highest probability of finding scholarly peered reviewed, full text articles in support of my theory. To locate full text scholarly peered reviewed articles the searches performed were through EBSCO Host's Academic database using

terms such as resiliency, resilient, successful, homeless, homelessness, adolescent mothers, teenage mothers, homeless adolescents and adult leaders, transitional housing, homeless shelters, foster care homes, parenting teens, transformation of homeless adolescents and adult leaders in varying combinations of these words and word phrases. The searches yielded no results.

The second database used to search for articles pertaining to adult leaders who were once homeless parenting teens were primary research sources in sociology and related fields. The searches for information in SocINDEX connected to more areas of sociological research, including criminology & criminal justice, ethnic & racial studies, political sociology, social anthropology, social psychology, social work, substance abuse and addictions. Also, the SocINDEX database includes conference papers, author profiles, and content from the Criminal Justice Abstracts database. Emphasizing the same terminologies used in the Academic Search Complete Database, the search yielded no results for adult female leaders and homeless teenagers. The same terms used in the Academic Search Complete database were repeated in the SocINDEX database. Although there was no information found on the transformation of homeless adolescent mothers into adult leaders, there were numerous articles that focused on resilient teen mothers and their educational pursuit. There were also countless articles pertaining to solutions and treatments for this population. It is noted that teenage mothers with supportive networks have a higher probability of educational success than those without (Youngblade et al., 2007). Moreover, it becomes quite difficult when the teenage mother is homeless and without supportive networks that makes their successes more of a challenge and more news worthy.

The Causes of Homelessness among Adolescent Mothers

This literature review examined scholarly articles that related to probable causes of adolescent mothers' homelessness, which suggested that first; it is the result of extreme poverty and secondly, a lack of affordable housing (The National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2016). However, youth frequently cite family conflict as the principle cause for their homelessness or incidents of running away from home or leaving home (Fernandes-Alcantara, 2013). In agreement, The National Alliance to End Homelessness (2016) concluded that homelessness amongst adolescent mothers is a complex problem attributed to conflict in the family. An adolescent's relationship with a step-parent, a mother's live-in boyfriend, sexual activity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, school problems, and alcohol and drug use are strong predictors of family discord (Kennedy, 2007). The precise number of homeless runaway and throw-away youth is unknown due to their residential flexibility and connections among the populations. Determining the number of these youth is further complicated by the lack of a methodology that cannot account for those homeless youths who evade the systems that accounts for this population.

Becvar and Becvar (2006) also believed that all children's problems and conflict originated within the family system. The article, "Mothers' and Adolescents' Perception of Family Environment and Adolescent Social-emotional Functioning," presented by Cavendish, Montague, Enders, and Dietz (2014) found that family system theory has been an integral source in understanding and explaining the ecological nature of families, as well as the dynamics among family members. As an example, children growing up in poor communities, in mother only households, low in-come status, with multiple siblings

are predicted to have very limited opportunities or resources (Kennedy, 2007). Among homeless youth and pregnant and parenting adolescents, experiences with family violence, abuse and neglect seemed to be relatively common (Conger, Wallace, Sun, & Simons, 2002). Family violence includes witnessing parental physical violence within the home as well as physical abuse by a parent (Kennedy, 2007). The children in these family types will observe, absorb, and follow suit, this synopsis is one rationale of why the literature points out that poverty is inherited and passed down from generation to generation, but failed to stress that violence is passed down as well (Cavendish et al, 2014). However, this scenario is not always the case because a unique few will observe; make use of the espouse theory, mapping out a solution (e.g., do I really want this for myself), and follow through by doing the opposite of what they see (i.e., the theory-in-use).

Children born under crippling circumstances, such as poverty, single-mother households, multiple siblings, and live in dangerous communities are at a disadvantage, but more so are the adolescents (Youngblade et al., 3007) The adolescence years are the periods of the psychosocial developmental stages of life where emotions are heightened, and without the right supportive networks and guidance emotions can run amok (Erikson, 1959). Adolescence are at the age where they can decipher the differences between the “haves and have nots”, and the wanting creatures as they are, want the same possessions as the “haves”. Without the financial means of the haves the only solution for the have-nots is through criminal activities (e.g., stealing, selling drugs, robbery, prostitution, burglary etc.). Attitudes toward the poor have left them very limited resources and very narrow avenues of escape, so they do what they must to survive.

The Causes of Psychological Issues among Homeless Parenting Teens and its Distresses

The abuse and neglect by a mother or close family member inhibits the development of children's trust in the world, in others, and sometimes in themselves (Erickson, 1959; Toth & Graverneer, 2012; Turchetti, 2012). Later as adults, these abused children may find it hard to trust the behaviors and words of others, their own judgements and actions, or their own senses of self-worth (Erikson 1959; Lindhorst, Beadnell, Jackson, Fieland, & Lee, 2009). Not surprisingly, they may experience problems in their academic work, their relationships, and in their very identities. Bailey, Morgan, and Pederson (2007) discovered growing evidence that suggested unresolved attachment is associated with risk for psychopathology, including anxiety disorders, Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD), dissociative symptoms, suicidal ideation behaviors, and emotional distress.

The pattern of abuse or neglect during childhood is often internalized and during adolescence years is frequently expressed through self-destructive behavior (Conger et al., 2002; Constantine, 1983). This pattern of destruction may begin in childhood and without intervention could possibly continue well into adulthood (Moore & Zaff, 2002). In another instance, neglect or abuse experienced in childhood (e.g., by a parent or caregiver) could be externalized and the traumatic effects are demonstrated by adolescence in the form of exclusion, (e.g., only socializing with those like them) social aggression, and violence (Moore & Zaff, 2002). These patterns of negative behaviors are transforming and could easily be passed on to the offspring.

Low-income and poverty is stressful, adding to maternal depression which may place infants and children at a greater risk for less emotional availability and other problems in the relationship (Bailey, Moran, & Pederson, 2007). Depressed mothers often have unpredictable behaviors toward their children, at times showing sadness, helplessness, very little affection, and at other times, irritability and anger (Osofsky, Eberhart-Wright, Ware, & Hann, 1992). Teen mothers are at a stage of development where they want to experience socialization with other teens or young adults (e.g., hanging out) and yet, they feel trapped with a baby that prevent them from being a teen (Osofsky, 1992).

The trauma of becoming an adult too soon has a debilitating psychological effect on both mother and child. Lee (2013) pointed out that “researchers in the field of child welfare have identified various potential risk factors related to child maltreatment, and the age of their parent(s)” (p.102). Young mothers may be at-risk of child maltreatment because of factors, such as single parenthood, insufficient social support, low-education, inadequate knowledge of child development, immaturity, and unsatisfied needs (Connelly & Strauss, 1992). Infants raised by teenage mothers frequently experience misregulated affection exchange resulting in unshared rather than shared affection usually shows signs of disassociation symptoms (Osofsky et al., 1992). Teenage mothers who demonstrate misregulated affections towards their babies may show them love and affection in her happy times, but in her depressed state may abuse or neglect them. This mixture of emotions and reactions towards her baby may affect the infant’s sense of trust (Cherry, 2015). A major problem with infants and children of depressed mothers is the psychological and emotional unavailability that contributed the same distress to their

psychological and social disconnect could possibly be transferred to their children (Osofsky et al., 1992).

When young mothers make the transition from being a youth, a dependent child to being a parent (i.e., an autonomous adult), she needs resources that are limited for young homeless mothers (Hogan & Aston, 1986). Erikson (1959) stressed that when developmental stages are not successfully resolved psychological issues pursue. Depending on the age of the mother these psychological problems attributed to unresolved development issues are associated with antisocial behavior, substance abuse, aggression, delinquency, early promiscuous sexual behavior, and depressive symptomology (Eaton, Kann, Kinchen, Shanklin, Flint, Hawkins, Wechsler, 2012). These traits are indicative of the population of homeless teenage mothers without putting the espouse theory to use (e.g., mapping out a contingency plan before becoming homeless).

Strengthening At-Risk and Homeless Young Mothers and their Children

Adolescent behavior tends to cluster. There is growing evidence that suggest “teens with positive or negative characteristic have other corresponding characteristics” (Moore & Zaff, 2002, p.1). For example, adolescents who are depressed often have an anxiety disorder and may use drugs or alcohol. Also, young people who drink alcohol, take drugs, smoke cigarettes, and engage in risky sexual behaviors are more likely to have poor sleep habits and are physically unhealthy (Moore & Zaff, 2002). These teens routinely do poorly in school and often drop out. Toro, Dworsky, & Fowler (2007) emphasized that homeless teenage mothers have a multitude of unmet needs. To address the complex needs of homeless teenage mothers the key initiative is to connect to supportive networks that consist of housing to provide safe living accommodations;

professional supportive services to improve the physical and psychological health of both mother and child (Cooper & McLoyd, 2011). The mental and physical health of mother and child is imperative so that mothers can function in the capacity of a responsible parent (Mantovani, 2015). Once the mother's mental and physical health is stabilized and she learns to properly care for her child, the children will have a better opportunity to successfully complete their stages of development (Constantine, 1983). Schools, colleges, and universities are essential towards gaining academic knowledge for better job outlooks. Education, professional career, job, and entrepreneurial opportunities are important factors toward the support of the transformation of teenage mothers out of the ranks of homelessness and economic dependency.

Toro et al., (2007) believed that safe and secure housing is part of the transformation of teenage mothers; however independent housing for young teenage mothers is not acceptable. Several reasons exist why teenage mothers should not be allowed independent living, first because most are not mature enough to handle the responsibilities that come with independent living. Secondly, they are teenagers who need rules and guidance (Erickson, 1950). Thirdly, teenage mothers should have a transitional period that moves them toward independent living. Fourthly, she needs time to become mature enough to develop the skills capable of managing a family and household successfully. Institution and intervention programs cannot succeed without first building these young mothers' momentum and trust. The initiative sought is to build a community of trust, improve the availability of housing, health care, child care, education, and jobs in support of homeless at-risk adolescent mothers and their children by supporting locally based partnerships (Amatea, West-Olatunji, 2007; Cox et al., 2012).

Programs of intervention can provide solutions but only to the extent that teen mothers are ready to put the espouse theory and the theory-in-use into action. The intervention programs should be used to map out a strategic plan for self-efficacy and self-sustainability for the improvement of the family. For example, mapping out a plan for educational completion may begin with a plan for getting ones G.E.D or completing high school. This is an accomplishable first step towards higher educational attainment. The teens must follow through on their plans or goals to achieve success.

Increasing leadership effectiveness among this population is an ambitious goal, and can be accomplished once the teenage mothers have gained the momentum necessary to set accomplishable goals and carry them out. Argyris and Schön (1974) described the classic “theory of action” perspective on what individuals say; as compared to what they do as espoused theory vs. theory-in-use. Individual’s theory of action is put through a variety of dilemmas that relate to the gap between espoused theory and in-use theories (Argyris, 1980). Argyris and Schön (1974) believed learning involved the detection and correction of errors.

When individuals make bad decisions that have a profound impact on their lives, an initial protocol for many people is to look for another strategy that will address and work within their central needs of exchange. In other words, choose goals, values, plans that can be accomplished. Argyris (1980) suggested that “one reason for insisting that what people do is consistent with a theory, is the argument that what people do is not accidental” (p. 93). People design the action to take and are therefore responsible for their design and the actions that follow. Argyris (1980) asserted that “although individuals design their action they are often unaware of the design and of its difference from their

espoused design” (p. 94). To ensure that teenage mothers live up to their full potentials, their momentum must be strengthened so they can map out a coherent plan to develop their leadership potentials. This is a crucial step in getting the espouse theory versus theory-in-use right.

According to Dubrin (2004), transitional leaders need to look beyond the current situation and think outside of the box by continuous learning and self-development to overcome traditional thinking. The transitional leaders should use multiple senses when seeking solutions, and staying alert to opportunities. Cranford and Glover (2007) suggest that transitional leaders analyze the similarities (also commonalities) rather than differences in people and it is a good approach in assisting global leaders to communicate and lead more effectively.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative inquiry¹ into the lives of women that were once homeless teenage mothers, resided in a homeless facility, and acquired leadership roles in adulthood. The intent of this inquiry is to seek an understanding of how these professional women transcended from homeless adolescent mothers living in a homeless facility to professional leaders in adulthood. A phenomenological design will give voice to the participants and enable them to tell about their experience, giving insight to their motivations and actions (Embree, 1997), by providing an understanding of the social behaviors, values, and beliefs that contributed to their resiliency. This philosophical perspective reveals a glimpse into their thoughts, inhibitions, visions, and past actions that strengthened their abilities to excel. The past experiences of participants that moved them into the direction of professional leaders in their chosen fields are the center of the data collected within the context of this study (Silverman, 2001).

A qualitative method of inquiry was the best fit to discover and understand the questions that seek answers to that are guided first by the central question which is: What were the processes of adult females who were once homeless teenage mothers in becoming professional leaders?

The sub-questions in sequence to the central questions are as follow:

1. What was your childhood like?

¹ Qualitative Research is primarily exploratory research. It is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. It provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research. Qualitative Research is also used to uncover trends in thought and opinions, and dive deeper into the problem. Quantitative Research is used to quantify the problem by way of generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into useable statistics. It is used to quantify attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and other defined variables – and generalize results from a larger sample population. Quantitative Research uses measurable data to formulate facts and uncover patterns in research (Creswell, 2013).

2. What interventions changed your behavior?
3. What made you change what you were doing?
4. What were the barriers, strengths, and motivations that encouraged your leadership roles?

The answers to these questions are crucial in discovering and understanding the phenomena associated with resilient female leaders who were once homeless teenage mothers. The sub-questions are open-ended and may enlist additional inquiries depending on the feedback.

The methodology section provides a comprehensive view of the research design. The research design covers several subtopics, including Participants Selection, Sampling Strategies, an Instrument for measuring the Data Collection, the Data Collection Procedure, Data Analysis and Interpretations, Protection of Human Subjects, and finally, the summary reiterates major points of this chapter.

Participants

During the early stages of this project, securing participants was somewhat challenging. Participants were ultimately recruited from among Governors State University's graduate students, faculty, and staff; as well as from Facebook, LinkedIn, and LinkedIn Pulse social networking sites. These three social websites were selected because of their popularity in anticipation of reaching participants who are not restricted to one university or central location. The study did not restrict race, ethnicity, or religious affiliation, but these characteristics were counted in the frequency of respondents. The targeted populations were females who currently hold leadership positions within various fields (e.g., directors, social workers, nurses, accountants, educators, etc.). The

solicitation resulted in responses being received from six participants ranging in ages from 22 to 52, who were once homeless adolescent mothers and who are now occupy positions of leadership. The variances in age has allowed for insights into the history of this phenomenon at various eras to see how realities changed or remain the same over times. The study did not exclude any minorities willing to participate and share their stories. Diversity among subjects has provided in-depth and nuanced knowledge and understanding regarding strategies [including cultural underpinnings] that respective subjects relied upon to help them transcend their former negative life trajectory.

Sampling Strategies

The sampling method began with a convenience sampling approach. Depending on the number of people responding to the solicitation, this approach allows for a change to either a snowball method or a simple random sampling method. In this project, the participants were selected because they were willing and available to be studied (Creswell, 2013). Creswell (1998) concluded that “a phenomenology investigation should consist of five to 25 subjects” (p. 64). However, Morse (1994) stated that there should be at least six (p.225). The sample size in this in-depth phenomenological study was six participants which are more than sufficient for this type of qualitative inquiry. If more participants are recruited than what the sample size call for there may be a need to do randomized sample which every other participant will be selected until the desired number of participants has been researched (Adler & Adler, 1987). If there are too few respondents than a snowball method (e.g., word-of-mouth) would be necessary to obtain the necessary number of participants (Creswell, 2013). This selection procedure is frequently used in concealed populations which are difficult for researchers to access.

Recruitment of participants began after approval from GSU's Internal Review Board (IRB). There is very minimum risk to the participants, which may consist of painful childhood memories. In another instance, many of the participants may recall very happy memories. The major ideal is to get participants open and responsive to answer the questions honestly and accurately as they can recall. It may be more difficult for some than other participants to recall certain long-terms account of their childhoods due to age variations. The 22-year-old² participants will generally have memories that don't expand as far back as the older 52- year-old participants (Buchanan, 2008), and "long-term memories may be influenced by the emotion experienced during learning as well as by the emotion experienced during memory retrieval process" (p. 761). The cognitive theorists believed that there are two major events in life that individuals never forget: (a) the very happy events, and (b) the tragic or sad events (Buchanan, 2008). This study has generally put these beliefs to the test.

Procedure

To recruit participants a request was sent by way of my LinkedIn® account, which is a professional online site and my Facebook® account, which is a popular social media online network. These are two very popular online social systems and are restricted to my friends and people requesting to connect. However, for the sake of gaining participants the site was open to public viewing. After receiving IRB approval (Appendix B) the process of solicitation for the subjects began the recruitment stage of the study. An online post requesting female women leaders ages 22 to 52, who were once

² The snowball method of recruitment is where the researcher asks participants to recommend other candidates for participation in the study. This is the second method of recruitment because the first method may not yield the number required for the study (Creswell, 2013).

homeless teenage mothers and wish to participate in a study of resiliency were asked to contact this researcher for full details of the study.

When participants responded to the recruitment letter, an informed consent with full details of the study including permission to participate in the study was emailed to each respondent. After receiving the signed consent forms, the online surveys were sent by way of SurveyMonkey.Com® to participants via email. SurveyMonkey.Com® program automatically sent messages to researcher's email when surveys were completed (e.g., you have a completed survey). With the automatic response for completed surveys there was no need to check bi-weekly, as assumed for responses to the surveys. Because placing consent forms as a cover page on the SurveyMonkey.Com® survey page is no longer valid or acceptable protocol, consent forms were emailed under separate cover to the responding participants.

Once the respondents agreed to participate in the study, they were contacted by email or phone to provide them with more detail on the study. Because the recruitment was done through two very popular social media sites, the expectation was that the response would be numerous and from different geographical locations with varying or similar professional positions. To restate, response rate was six participants here. Only one participant joined the project through social media recruitment sources, and that individual was from the state of Kentucky. Although this participant sent a signed consent form and completed both the surveys there was no response to the repeated request for a phone interview.

Participants' current professions are stated on the required surveys with multiple selections. The online qualifying survey consisted of real name and contact information,

which was for the researcher's use only. To protect the identity of the subject they were referred to as Participant One, Participant Two, Participant Three, and so forth. What is your current position within your chosen profession? The participant's age, family composition (i.e., mother and father, mother only, father only, grandparent, etc.) while growing up, economic state while growing up, number of siblings, and participant's age at the time their child was born. At what age was your child when you became homeless? What was the cause of your homelessness? What is your current salary range: \$30,000 to \$45,000; \$50,000 to \$65,000; \$70,000 to \$85,000 or above? What is your current marital status? These questions are relevant in matching the respondents with the description of participants necessary for the study. In addition, answers from the two surveys may also serve to validate many of the interview responses. The results of these surveys were matched with those of requirements for participation in the study.

Upon identification of participants, each was contacted by email and telephone, with the final part of the data collection instructions, the open-ended interview questions. This part of the data collect began by setting dates for the open-ended interviews. This was the most difficult part of the data collection process, getting participants to commit to a date and time for the open-ended interviews. Many of the excuses were legitimate because family, work, and class schedules had to be factored into their free time for the interviews. Thus, since only one of the participants lived in another state, a telephone interview was scheduled. With the phone on speaker the conversation was recorded with the knowledge of the participant. Although these interviews were not as transparent as the face-to-face interviews where the interviewer could take notes on what was observed, they were still very informative. Many of the participants had complicated schedules;

balancing job, school, and family made it apparent that I had to do these by phone. Email and phone interviews are the most impersonal of all methods of qualitative data collection. However, when face-to-face was not an option then telephone or email were my best methods. Interviewers cannot see whether the participant is saddened by her responses or happy. However, voices sometimes also give notice to emotions (e.g., quivering voice, sniffing, laughter, etc.). The emotions of the participant can only be imagined by the changing tones of voice. Neither Skype nor Hangout was used for any of the interviews, the two alternative methods of interviews were face-to-face or by phone. Both were recorded. Interviewing participants through personal contact provided both visual and audio observations that were further clarified through both verbal and visual cues. The best method for interviews remains to be the face-to-face method; both the researcher and the participant can see the honesty of the conversation.

Instrument for Measuring the Data Collection

The instrument for measuring the data collection is NVivo 11® which is an instrument for analyzing all forms of unstructured data. In this study, it analyzed the surveys and the results of the interview questions (Creswell, 2013). The instruments interrogated data using powerful search query and it can also process visualization. It uncovered subtle connections within the context of the written data. NVivo 11® is qualitative research software that helps to manage, shape and make sense of unstructured information. It was helpful in classifying, sorting and arranging information into understandable categories. It further helped to identify themes, glean insight and develop meaningful conclusions. This allowed for additional time to analyze materials, identify themes, glean insight and develop meaningful conclusions.

Cross-comparing the data after the NVivo 11® program categorize and identify the themes made it easier to develop meaningful themes of the commonalities and differences of the participant's words of experience. However, it is always good to explore the data further because although NVivo 11® is a comprehensive computer software program, there is a possibility that the program may omit some important themes, words or word phrases. Going through the data highlighting repeated words, word phrases, and taking notes may reveal possible themes that the software missed.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

Coding the data is the process of segmenting, blending, and labeling text to form description and to discover themes that answers the questions that guided this study. (a) What were the processes used by adult women, who were adolescent mothers, to become academic leaders in their chosen fields? (b) What was your childhood like? (c) What interventions changed your behavior? (d) What made you change what you were doing? And what were the barriers, strengths, and motivations that encouraged your leadership roles? A line by line analysis of the written data will address or eliminate internal consistency of responses. Creswell (2013) implied that "using computer software does not analyze the data for you" (p. 241). NVivo 11® was also instrumental for creating text data matrixes for comparisons, including visually mapping categories identified in the analysis here.

Because descriptions are detailed renderings of people, places, or events in a setting, the researcher looks for themes that answer the guided questions. In addition, the researcher looks for the processes that the women used to grow from teen age mothers to professional leaders. These areas were highlighted in yellow. We look for hidden word

meanings such as repeated phrases or words throughout the text. These repetitive words may have underlying meaning. This is done throughout the transcribed text with the responses of each question. Minor themes are categories first and from these minor themes major themes may emerge with a commonality among all of participants. The data is reevaluated looking for themes until saturation. Common themes within the data from each participant must be compared for compatible and contrasting themes. The findings are discussed in the result section or the discussion section.

Protection of Human Subjects

Subjects' participation in the study was voluntary, and participants could choose to withdraw from the study at any time. Participants' identities were kept confidential. Each participant was assigned a code number, in lieu of any personally identifying information. All data collected in conjunction with this study was secured in a locked drawer. The list of assigned codes connecting the names of participants was kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher chair's office at Governors State University.

Data Collection

The study required a unique population for the phenomenological investigation and the researcher felt the best way to get the numbers sought for this specific population was through social media. Thus, the letter of recruitment (Appendix C) was posted on Facebook, Facebook Prime, and LinkedIn®. It was assumed that these social media sights would reach the highest number of participants for the study in varying geographical locations. In addition to advertising for participants through social media sites, the letter of recruitment was also emailed to GSU graduate departments for female students to participate in the study.

The results and demographics for the respondent of readers of the letter of recruitment from the social media sites were: Facebook yield 54%, LinkedIn.com yielded 34%, and LinkedIn Pulse yielded 12% of the overall readers. Although there was 100% reader engagement of the letter of recruitment, predominantly from the greater Chicago area, there were no responses for participation. LinkedIn Demographic Report indicated that 97% of the readers were from higher education, and 3% were writers and editors. The top job titles of the readers were reported to be 91% Librarians/Archivist, 6% Information Technologists, and 3% Founders (See Appendix E). There was one respondent from the state of Kentucky who was interested in participating in the study. This participant was apparently the result of one of the social media sites' recruitment efforts. However, this was the only out-of-state participant responding to the published letter of recruitment. This out-of-state participant returned the signed and dated copy of the consent form but did not complete the Qualifying Questionnaire Survey or the Family Demographic Survey after several reminders. After several attempts to contact her, she

was eliminated as a candidate for participation. If this respondent had qualified for the survey the only method of interview would have been by telephone or skype.

Fifteen students from a state university's female population responded to the email recruitment letter, but only four met the complete qualifications to participate in the study. See Appendix F: Qualifying Questionnaire for results. The Family Demographic Survey provided insight into the participants' family circumstances while growing up (Appendix G: Family Demographic Survey). This established whether the family was supportive or non-supportive, and a rationale for leaving home prematurely. However, a few of the participants left home because they no longer wanted to follow the rules of their parent(s) home. They were rebellious and left home to live by their own rules. These three exceptions were from middle class families who started out with their biological parents, mother and father married that later divorced. These participants wanted to live adult life styles. These participants left home because of a change in family structure. While one left home because of abuse or neglect, another left her secure housing to live in an unsecure resident with her divorced father, and yet another just wanted her independence to live by her own rules. Appendix G shows the results of the Family Demographic Survey.

The results of the open-ended interviews questions revealed much more than the Qualifying Questionnaire Survey or the Family Demographics Survey and are reported in tables A through I in Appendix E.

CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Data Interpretation

The answers to central questions guiding this study did not yield a unified response; rather, there were commonalities in participants' destructive behavior patterns, and the causes of emotional breakdowns. There was also consensus in their reasons for reform. Six subjects were interviewed to discover the processes that guided their transformation from homeless teenage mothers to adult leaders, and although each had similar obstacles, their flights from their destructive circumstances varied. The subjects' ethnicity varied as well, and included: 2 Hispanics, 2 African Americans, 1 Caucasian, and 1 Bi-racial (was African American and Korean). Results indicated that each faced enduring effects of their families' dysfunction or disruptive environments with the same resolute attitudes that led them to transcend homeless or unstable living circumstances.

Familial Influence

To begin with, results suggest that family issues played no small part in subjects' decisions to leave home. Four of six respondents had experienced the divorce of their parents prior to initiating self-destructive behavior. The review of the literature shed light on the important role that families play in the normal development of their children. The literature also suggested that when that family structure is dysfunctional or disrupted (as was the case of all six subjects here), it may cause a break in the normal development of the children. Erikson (1970) contended that children are very observant, impressionable, and sensitive, and a split in the family will often initiate mental anguish in that child's psychological development.

Reactions and responses here varied, depending on the age(s) of subjects during the time of family turmoil. For example, when the question was asked what was your childhood like, Participant One reported that, after her parents' divorce, her family life was chaotic. She further reported that this disruption in the family dynamics caused other turmoil, including a rift that separated the children from the family structure. The only one of six siblings that decided to move in with her father after her parents' divorce, she reported often feeling isolated from the rest of the family. She believes that this in turn contributed to further mental anguish and withdrawal, including separating herself from the rest of the family and staying out later and later as she grew older. Ultimately, she became rebellious and did pretty much what she wanted to do.

Meanwhile, Participant Two vacillated between describing her childhood as being crowded, nice at times and yet, not really having a childhood at all. Hailing from a single-parent [mother led] household, she reported that as the oldest sibling, she supervised her brothers and sister. She had the care and well-being of her younger brothers and sister to maintain, as well as her mother who was addicted to drugs. Placed in an adult role at or around the age of ten, she spoke of not having a social life and missing out on important developmental stages such as high school prom, dating, and after-school activities. The only times referred to as kind of nice were those when her mother was home, in a sober mind, and helping her out with her siblings. As an aside here, she never mentioned her father, and out of respect for her privacy, the question of whether she had spent time with her father was never pursued.

In comparison, Participant Three reported being born into a middle-class two-parent household, with mom and dad working. She expressed that her family was the

world to her. When her dad had his first episode of schizophrenic outbreak when she was 9-years-old, it was a traumatic and shocking experience for her. She reported that prior to this incident, she was unaware that her father had such an illness. He had an episode and wouldn't take his medicine, and six months later her mother divorced him. She reported that her withdrawal began not long thereafter. She stressed how her dad was always in their lives, even when no longer residing with them.

When asked about her initial response to her father's absence, she stated that, she began to act out immediately, as well as not associating with any of the kids at her school because she felt they were talking about her behind her back. Initially outgoing, by the Fourth grade she had stopped talking to people in her class because she felt they knew her circumstances and was talking about her and her family behind their backs. Thus, she didn't speak or associate with anyone at her school; electing instead to keep to herself.

She reported ultimately befriending two older girls who went to another school. She and her twin sister felt more confident and at ease in the company of these other girls, who taught them how to ditch school and smoke cigarettes, among other negative displays of conduct. She felt more in control with these girls who had a rougher family life than hers. She felt empowered hanging out with these ruthless girls that didn't seem to be afraid of anything. She became rebellious and did pretty much what she wanted. Stating that her father had been the primary disciplinarian, as she got older she pushed the limits doing everything short of getting in trouble with the law.

In contrast, resulting from family foster care placement by the Department of Children and Family Services, Participant Four and her two younger sisters were raised by their maternal grandmother. The older of two siblings, at age of nine she felt had to set

an example for her younger siblings as well as protect them. Her mother had a mental disability and was in-and-out of mental facilities or jail. Her father ran the streets and sold drugs. Her mother and father were never divorced, but they lived apart. She pointed out that her grandmother was old-fashioned, and when participant was old enough to ask for birth control pills, her grandmother's response was that, "she was too young she didn't need them." From her grandmother's vantage point, "if she didn't get her the pills, she wouldn't engage in early sex". In retrospect, Participant Four believed that her grandmother, although good-intentioned, was clearly wrong. This subject further reported that she was pregnant by the age of fourteen, and had her baby at the age of fifteen. With few, if any, role models to emulate, she described her early allure to risky behaviors from joining a gang, smoking marijuana, cigarettes and, drinking alcohol. To sum up, she felt both that she did not have a normal childhood, and had been deprived of her childhood. Moreover, she blamed her mentally ill mother.

Participant Five reported that her parents [African-American father and Korean mother] met while her father was in the military, and stationed in Korea. She went on to describe her mother divorcing her dad and leaving the family when participant was five-years-old; shortly after the birth of her younger sister. The siblings were left to reside with their father, and he later married an African American woman. She recalled that during her parents' brief marriage, the family travelled all around the world while her father was in military. Recalling early childhood memories, she reported growing up first with her mom and dad, and that it was the three of them and then her sister. She further recalled that it was different living with her step-mother because they grew up in a very strict Christian home. Recalling being required to pray every day as a family until leaving

home when she was eighteen, she ultimately expressed that she loved her parents and that she owed them gratitude for the person that she has now become.

Next, Participant Six reported having had an average childhood. She described her parents divorcing when she was three. She stated that upon her mother remarrying, her stepfather was great. She described her earliest behavior problems arising when she was only fifteen years old, and that this had been significantly impacted by the death of her second oldest brother. Perhaps suggestive of the prevalence of substance abuse within her family, she further recalled the later [alcohol and drug-related] death of her oldest brother when he was only forty [40] years old.

As indicated in the literature review; family commitment, permanency of that commitment and supportive structure comprise foundations for raising healthy normal children. When there is a disruption in the family structure or supportive system such as, in the case of divorce, mental illness or death, it breaks the perceived safety net that some young children often feel in close family systems, and various behaviors pursue (Swain, 2017). Erikson's psychosocial stages of development and Maslow's hierarchy of needs were each insightful to understanding the inherent role that early life events played in the development of participants' life course here.

For example, Participant One, Three, Four, Five, and Six all experienced losses in their original family structures through divorce. Participant Five may have even felt a sense of desertion or abandonment stating that, during her parent's divorce her mother opted to leave her and her sister with their father. These divorces were obviously interruptions in the families' safety networks. The children encountered a breach in their security because of the breakups in the original family systems and most were not

perceived by the subjects as pleasant divorces. Participant One stated that her mother wanted a divorce, but her father didn't. She also recalled that her mother had nothing but nice things to say about her father, whereas her father seemed to disparage her mother every chance that he got. She reported that by the age of nine, the emotional turmoil surrounding her parents' divorce had begun to take a toll on her.

Participant 4 knew her father and mother and had lived with them up until nine when her mother started experiencing mental illness. Her father moved out and she and her sisters were removed from their mother's custody by the Department of Children and Family Services and placed with their biological grandmother. Participant Two and Four both stated that they were robbed of their childhood because of their early responsibilities of taking care of their younger siblings. The behaviors exhibited by the participants ostensibly resulted from family dysfunctions. Their developmental stages were disrupted because of feelings of loss, abandonment, helplessness and hopelessness that were expressed through self-destructive acts of behavior.

These patterns of destructive behavior consisted of: ditching school, hanging out late, drinking alcohol, smoking marijuana and using other illicit drugs, gang affiliation, and having early unprotected sexual relationships. Participants Two, Four, and Six dropped out of high school; while Participants One and Five described recognizing the significance of an education beyond high school. Analogous to the literature, most subjects stated that self-destructive behaviors were deemed as normal conduct once their family was disrupted because of divorce, mental illness, loss, or when they were forced to grow up too soon (Swain, 2017). Lastly, all six subjects displayed behavior problems, hanging out with groups who they could communicate and found common grounds.

These groups encouraged them to engage in those negative behaviors, which are often noted as “an escape hatch”.

Unresolved Needs

Results indicated that each subject had unresolved issues or missing needs during adolescence. The behaviors the participants engaged in helped minimize the participants’ true feelings of loss, hurt, anger, abandonment, helplessness and hopelessness; emotions that are generally displayed in most cases of divorce or loss (Swain, 2017). Subjects One, Three, Five, and Six reported that the loss of a parent resulting from divorce, left them feeling powerless to appropriately respond to their respective situations. This appears further consistent with Swain (2017), who pointed out that when young children experience divorce they often feel discarded by the missing parent. Participant Five stated that, her biological mother, who was Korean, opted to leave her and her sister with their father. Participants Five and Six were too young to act upon their emotions at the time of their parents’ estrangement from one another.

For example, Participant Five was five-years-old and Participant Six was three-years old during their parents’ divorces. In contrast, Participant Three was nine-years-old when her mother divorced her father, and recalled instantaneous withdrawal and acting out. Participants Five and Six also recalled vivid memories of their parents’ break-up and remembered their ages during the time of the separation of their biological parents. This would suggest that, the missing parent had an impact on their psychological well-being that; effectively showed up in their behaviors as they got older.

Although the self-destructive behavior patterns the girls engaged in ostensibly provided them with a sense of control over their lives, their collective narrative suggests

that the self-treatments for their depressed emotions were delusional and destructive at times (Swain, 2017). As an example, none of the participants were forced to leave their homes. But rather, each left because of a personal desire to no longer follow the rules. In short, each became rebellious at some point while living at home. All the subjects reported moving out of their homes to reside with their intimate partners; living an adult life and making their own rules and decisions. Ultimately, each would discover the error of their judgment.

Early Fantasized Romance

Findings further suggest that despite participants' initial belief, early fantasized romance did little to fulfill previously unmet needs. The defiance participants exhibited at one point became a compulsive act of self-destructive behavior and determination to leave home. Each of the participants left home, some sooner than others, to find their own lives and to live adult lives making their own rules and decisions. Four of the participants left home to live with their intimate partners. Participant Two left home [with a purported friend] to find a life at the age of fifteen. However, once she got pregnant at seventeen, her friends abandoned her, and she had to return home. She stated that, when you get in a situation where you are pregnant and have lost your job, and have no one you can stay with unless you have something to contribute financially, you suddenly find out who your real friends are.

Participant Three became depressed and withdrew from reality when her baby's father broke-up with her. She thought her world had ended and she turned to drugs to cope with yet another loss. As her drug use escalated, she lost the support of her family. At that point, she sank further into illicit drugs and promiscuous sex as a means of coping

with everything. Currently, she has 3 daughters, 16-years-old, a 7-year-old, and a 5-year-old, and with several years of sobriety, has vowed to set good examples and make them proud of her. She is now employed as a counselor now helping people work out their problems.

Subject Four left her grandmother's care for Section VIII apartment that belonged to her father's girlfriend to live adult lives. She reported ultimately getting involved in an intimate relationship, becoming pregnant, and having to return home. Inevitably, the subjects' decision to leave home at such young ages to live with their intimate partners was not in their best interest. Most ultimately had to return home once they got pregnant. Participants who returned home was due to the birth of their baby's and they had no stable place to go. Participants knew that they needed something stable until they could figure out what they had to do to become independent. Participant Two found nothing had changed when she moved back home with her mother. Her decision to move into a homeless shelter seemed to be the best decision for herself and baby daughter. The homeless shelter is where her support for independence originated and became a reality.

Participant Five recalled getting pregnant prior to their eighteenth birthday, with each electing to have an abortion. She reported that the decision to have an abortion was hers alone, and that no one pressured her to do so. She recalled that she had gotten pregnant prior to high school graduation. She reported that, although she was very much in love with her high school boyfriend, she also knew that she wanted to attend college full-time, and that it would be difficult to work full-time and take classes full-time and part time wasn't an option for her. She further recalled that she knew her boyfriend was not responsible, and that the baby would likely be her responsibility alone. She recalled

that, having a baby made her grow out of her rebellious attitude, and wake-up to how she was going to make a better life for herself and her baby. She also recalled that she didn't want any public assistance.

Finally, Participant Six reported that at by the tender age of eighteen, she had believed that she had found her married her "Knight in Shining Armor", and felt that the logical thing to do was to get married. She recalled acknowledging shortly thereafter that this had been a bad decision. A victim of both verbal and physical abuse, she recalled this period as representing a nightmare that she continued to endure for over twenty-years, all the while trying to avoid the inevitable divorce.

Impetus for Change

Moving closer towards a clearer understanding to what growing up was like for these subjects; the next question was directed towards their motivations or interventions, if any, that helped them to change these patterns of negative behaviors. Findings further suggested that teens had to reach a certain maturity level before realizing their leadership ambitions. Again, with most subjects expressing having been inspired by their babies to pursue leadership ambitions, and one subject who attributed God as the guiding force in her pathway to leadership.

For those subjects who were inspired by their children, having responsibility for the well-being of another human being ostensibly inspired each subject to contemplate changing their behavior. Desiring to make a better life for their children than they themselves had experienced, each participant went from self-destructive behaviors to seeking out some positive solutions regarding how they would take care of their children and make a better future for themselves as well.

Participant One left home at age of seventeen with her 'daughter, and although it didn't work out with her baby's father, she wants him to remain actively involved in their daughter's life. She has resolved to never force her daughter to choose between mother and father, thus, she strove to keep the channels of communication open for him to stay in their daughter's life. She has reported receiving support from her mother and other family members. This contrasts with Participant 3 who did not receive support from her family during her drug addiction, and was forced to seek professional help on her own.

Participant Two returned home with her baby girl, but found nothing had changed and decided to move into a shelter where support and other remedial services was readily accessible. It was within this shelter that she was encouraged by the counselors to go to culinary school and ultimately discovered her life's passion. The counselors at the shelter helped her access Section VIII housing, a job, and childcare services. She recalls this as a seminal period in her life in that, for the first time she had a life of her own without her brothers, sister, or mother. She reports that she was on her way to a positive life.

Unlike other respondents, Participant Six endured twenty-years of abuse, in addition to having five children, and surviving an abortion before later finding strength to divorce her husband. She credits God with move her out of that bad relationship. The battered women's shelter was a significant support system because they help her find housing, a job and helped with her educational expenses. She found a nice Christian Church where she found God and the people attending the church provided much support, both socially and emotionally. She stated that, it was God first and her children next that gave her the strength to divorce her husband and move on. However, the

counselors at the battered women's shelter helped find housing, helped me get my G.E.D., and to enroll in college. After she graduated from college she was accepted into a university's graduate program where she majored in Interdisciplinary Leadership Studies.

Impending challenges.

When asked, what the most pressing challenges were in their early life, most participants generally expressed similar sentiments, including giving birth to their children at a young age, finding safe, and affordable housing, and gainful employment. Three out of six of the participants recognized that education would be the best way of securing a profitable job, and had vowed to pursue their academic degrees full-time. While two of the participants felt that pursuing their college degree full-time, working full-time and providing child care for their babies were the biggest challenges in their lives, others had more complex challenges to overcome. For example, Participant Three felt that getting out of her addiction was most challenging, and Participant Six felt that finding a way out of an abusive marriage challenging. She felt that getting married at an early age, having five kids and one abortion while trapped in an abusive marriage was a challenge. For over twenty years, she stayed in this aggressive relationship. An assumption being she didn't want her children to suffer through a divorce. Because she had low self-esteem, she might have also feared being alone.

By most standards, subjecting her children through the ordeal of witnessing their mother being abused by their father suggests poor role modeling. Parents who allow children to witness the abuse of either parent, inevitably places their child at risk of someday repeating similar behavior patterns as either abuser or victim themselves. It is doubtful that Participant Six realized the impact that staying in this abusive relationship

might have on their five children until her eldest son was later charged with an abusive offense, that resulted in him being required to perform community service as a condition of his release. Recalling this as an epiphany, she now acknowledges that, staying in an abusive relationship can be just as hard or crippling to the children as a harsh divorce itself.

Other challenges were equally apparent and common to participants here. Subject One recalls having difficulties discerning where she fit in with her own family [mother and siblings]. She admits making some poor decisions, including moving in with her father and then moving back in with my mother, which was a very uncomfortable situation. She recalled that her siblings had begun referring to her as a traitor, and that she no longer fit within her nuclear family unit.

Participant Two and Participant Four reported narratives that in some ways mimic one another. Both recalled having been keepers of their younger siblings, and at very young ages, their lives did not appear to be their own. Each also regretted missing out on their childhoods. In addition to growing up fast to care for their siblings and then their own children, they both also reported that initially finding jobs and quality housing was quite difficult for them.

Overcoming challenges.

Responding to inquiry regarding how they overcame their particular challenges, Participant One reported that observations and experiences helped her to learn from her mistakes. She recalled “scoping” her environment to see what was working versus what was not. She reported mapping out a plan of action for achieving her goals and paying close attention to everything along the way.

She expressed that she knew where she didn't want to be, as well as what she wanted out of life. Utilizing observations above, was useful in guiding moving her in the direction towards what she wanted and where she wanted to be. She reported that she learned through her observations and experiences regarding how best to avoid and or maneuver around any obstacles or barriers that may have presented themselves along her path. Avoiding negative people and aligning herself with positive goal seeking people was of highest import.

As an example, she noted that education was very important in her being able to get ahead in life. She realized not only that it was important to graduate from college, but also to do so without amassing huge debt from student loans. She recalled having heard horror stories about student loan debt, thus resolved to pursue grants and scholarships to fund her undergraduate education. Completing her B.A, in Psychology this year with a 4.0 grade point average, she is planning on continuing her education by receiving a M.A. in Physical Therapy. She hopes to ultimately secure a position that includes educational benefits which would help her to pursue this subsequent degree.

In contrast, Participant Two reported that she left home at the age of fifteen, and moved to Tennessee with a friend. She recalled being able to complete high school, get a job, and even finished two years of college. She further reported that, had she remained at home with her mother, she may very well have emulated her mother's bleak outlook. She recalled that after getting pregnant, she had briefly returned home to reside with her mother, only to be confronted with the reality of her rationale for having left in the first instance. She reported that her ultimate support came from a homeless shelter.

As for Participant Three, she recalled going to individual counseling that helped her sort out some things in her life. She reported that her issues started slowing down, as two weeks turned into two months and suddenly she no longer needed drugs to cope with her problems. She learned to face them and resolve them in a logical manner. She recalled that, change did not happen all at once. But rather, she got to the point where she could handle her affairs without drugs. She attributed her new-found confidence to individual counseling and being in an educational environment. She further credited these individual counselors and people in her academic environment with helping her set goals, and to empower herself.

In comparison, Participant Four recalled that at age fifteen she felt finding a job was an important first step to being able to support herself and her baby. Although extremely young at the time, she recalled that persistency paid off for her. She put in an application and got hired at White Castles. Dropping out of high school in her junior year, she was able to work more hours, and quickly advanced to supervisor. She further reported that her grandmother was instrumental as a babysitter, as well as filling in the gaps when she fell financially short.

She also recalled that with other youths in her inner circle generally drinking and drugging daily, she wanted a different outlook for both her child and her siblings. At age of sixteen. She had lived in her dad's girlfriend's apartment, because she didn't want to stay with her granny (e.g., who had refused to allow her to act as an adult). She reported that she knew that her granny would never turn her in to the DCF caseworker. A few months later, she had her own place and big responsibilities to go along with it. Her first home was a three-bedroom town house, which functioned as the hang out spot for every teenager that she knew. Feeling grown because she had her own home, she was proud to be living an adult life; yet still had that teenage mentality. She recalled her enlightenment when she realized that these teens were themselves dependent, and that she needed to reduce her inner circle. She further reported that although a few "hangers on" remained, she ultimately moved on from them as well once she got married, as her husband advised her that it was time for them to find another hangout.

Participant Five reported that her impetus for change began when she reconciled with her parents. She no longer had to worry about childcare or childcare cost, as her parents kept her son. This allowed her to both attend college full-time and work full-time. Changing her major from education to sociology set her back a year. However, taking eighteen credit hours of coursework a semester for three years allowed her to ultimately graduate. After graduation, she entered law school. Her parents were so delighted they agreed that her son could remain with them until she finished law school. After receiving her law degree, she relocated near her paternal grandmother's home town. She reported that her grandmother bought her first car, which allowed her to pursue her first job in the legal field. In short, her supportive family network was instrumental in her success.

Participant Six devoutly insists that her inspiration for change was God, in that it was God who delivered her out of her abusive relationship. She recalled finally entering a battered woman's shelter, where she was able to access help in securing housing, a job, and encouragement that inspired her to enroll in college. She also spoke confidently about discovering that, she wasn't as dumb as her husband had long led her to believe. Ultimately earning her Graduate degree in Counseling, she recalled feeling empowered by her experiences in academic settings. Grateful that she now has something positive to contribute to society, she credits God for guiding her path, the counselors at the homeless shelter for encouraging her to go further, and the academic settings with helping her to discover her niche. Regarding participants' decisions to make changes in their life course, espouse theory helps to illuminate how each were able to map out a course of action for change, and the theory in use helps to explain how they were able to apply those changes.

Transcendent leadership.

In describing the motivations that moved them toward leadership roles, most participants continued to mention their children as primary factors that led them out of their careless states of behavior. Again, the lone exception was Participant Six, who felt it was God who guided her pathway, then the counselors at the battered women shelter that influenced her growth towards transcendent leadership. Many assigned their leadership attributes to experiences in life and the determination to be successful. Once again, the biggest incentive indicated by the other five participants were, their responsibilities for a tiny human being; whereby each ostensibly realized that they needed to grow up, and do whatever it took to make sure their children had a good life.

They would not abandon their children, but rather find a way so that their child would have a better childhood than the one that they themselves had endured. Subjects [One and Five] believed that finding the right careers would be through education and trial and error of various work experiences along the way. Subjects Three and Six both recalled being inspired by others to seek higher education, as they found their career path through their academic concentrations, which were Psychology and Counseling respectively.

Apart from Subjects Three and Six, responses to this question had generally the same motivations; that their leadership motivations grew out of necessity. Participant 5 stated; here you have this little person who is dependent on you entirely, and you have to make a good life for him” You can’t screw this up”. So, you plan what is going to be in your best interest to make this happen. In my case, it was education and work, plus making amends with my parents (p. 49).

However, Participant Three started using drugs after she and her baby’s father split up. This was a blow because she thought they would be together as a family. This breakdown could have probably been a rehash of the divorce of her mother and father that was displayed during her reckless life as a teen. It was making a change for her three daughters that made her seek counseling. She didn’t want to show her daughters this part of her life so, she sought help. Her leadership role and self-worth came as a result of the counseling and her academic attainment.

Participant One stated that, she was never in foster care, and had no experience in homeless shelter. Yet, her realization of an unstable home and living environment came when she decided to leave her mother’s home after an ugly divorce, to move in with her

father. She reported that she might as well have been in a homeless shelter. The subjects in this study live remarkable lives and their leadership skills have always been there, they just had to realize those attributes for themselves after reaching a more mature state of well-being.

Impactful encounters

Each participant attributed their life experiences as being influential in preparing them for their current leadership roles. Participant One found her leadership role in Sales and Education Related Occupation where her earnings are \$25,000 to \$50,000 yearly. But as a twenty-eight-year-old with an eleven-year-old daughter she is not satisfied with her current position and despite earning excellent wages. Her current degree is in Psychology and Counseling. Her plans are to get her M.A. in Physical or Occupational Therapy and pursue a position in that field.

Participant Two believes that she has been training for her leadership role all her young life; cooking and cleaning, and caring for her brothers, sister, and addicted mother. She hopes to inspire her daughter to find her passion in life just as she found her niche within the Culinary Arts. Currently lead chef at her place of employment, she is looking forward to opening her own restaurant someday. She said: "I have everything I want, but I am missing my soul mate, maybe one day he will come along, but I am old enough now to know the difference".

Participant Three, through everything she endured; the divorce of her parents, the birth of her first daughter, her break-up with her daughter's dad, to her bout with drugs were experiences that empowered her to know and understand that she doesn't want to go down that road again. She wants her three daughters to never feel that they need drugs to

help them cope with their true feelings. She is now in a Community and Social Service Occupation, and is employed as a Mental Health Counselor earning \$25,000 to \$50,000 yearly. Her education prepared her for her leadership role as a Mental Health Counselor, which is the career she always dreamed of having. Participant Three stated: “It helps me stay clean and focused by helping others with their problems.

When asked Participant Four, what prepared you for your leadership role? She stated: Life (e.g., she dropped out of high school in her senior year). If you live as I have lived; you will either grow from your experience, or you’ll drown in failures. I chose to improve my life and I realized, for my son’s sake as well as my own, it would take money and change. I found fast food jobs at first that advanced me to manager, but I never got to executive supervisor because I didn’t like the fast food industry. My next position was at a nursing home and I enjoyed working with the senior citizens, they reminded me of my grandmother. The problem wasn’t the work itself, but the wages earned. The position I have now, working with the State of Illinois as a Mental Health Technician 4 as a supervisor, I earn \$50,000 to \$75,000 yearly and I have the option to do overtime. My benefits are excellent, and if I choose to, I can return to school through their Upward Mobility Program. I am doing a job I love and I am making good money so I am going to stop here and count my blessings (p. 44).

She believes that her leadership qualities first revealed themselves when she was nine-years old looking after her baby sisters who were 6, and 4 at that time. As the eldest sibling, she recalled feeling compelled to protect her two younger sisters from their emotionally ill mother, as well as the frequent guests in their home. She also pointed to her stint as leader of a well-known street gang at the age of 14, with thirty to forty girl

followers. Upon learning that she was pregnant at 14, she recalled making an immediate decision to go for a more legitimate life style for the sake of her baby. Returning to school after the birth of her child, she completed her junior year in high school before dropping out permanently.

After completing a G.E.D. program, she was able to obtain her high school diploma. She reported that this was pivotal in obtaining a job with the State of Illinois, where after several promotions, she now serves as a Mental Health Technician IV; which is equivalent to supervisor and trainer for new hires. She further reported that she never dreamed in a million years that she would find a job that she loves so much, and learn so much from it. She also believes that she now understands her mother's mental condition better, and is more able to empathize with her mother's plight I life.

Participant Five's experiences from being bullied and unsure of whom she was provided the incentive she needed to become a powerful warrior defending her heritage was my perception of this young woman. She found her identity and the noble heritage that was missing from her life as a child and she realized her leadership role. Her determination and dedication to succeed is a part of her character that has made her the powerful leader she is today. She has had many hurdles from her biological mother opting to leave her and her sister with their father, to her stepmother who was uncertain of how to raise and nurture a half Korean child. She was also bullied in grade school from kids that wanted to know what race she was.

As a military dependent Participant Five was placed in military schools where race didn't matter, but once her father resigned from the military and moved to southern state, she was put in a public school that was typically African Americans. They teased

and bullied her about her differences. At first, she tried to convince them that she was Black, the same as they were, but then she got angry and tough letting them all know that she wasn't ashamed of who she was. She let them know that she was unique because she has the best of two ethnicities, both African American and Korean. She embraced her identity and did not allow anyone else to bully her or question her identity. This act, from the researcher's point of view, mark the first sign of her strong leadership potentials; knowing exactly "who you are".

She was lacking the Korean part of her identity because she never saw her mother again after the divorce and this was a missing need in her life. A person who was there during the start of her life wasn't there anymore. As a child, she felt the void. This experience may explain her rebellious attitude. She said that her loss was one of the reasons she went into domestic law. Although her practice will never fill the gap in the losses she experienced growing up without her biological mother, it may help meet that missing need in a positive way through her domestic law practice. Her leadership role is undeniable; she is a brilliant attorney with earnings that places her in the position of the upper-middle class wage earners.

Participant Six experienced many losses in her young life; first her mother divorced her father and remarried. Second, was the death of her older brother when she was fifteen-years-old. Later, there was the death of her oldest brother who was forty years-old when he died from abuse of drugs and alcohol. Participant Six believes that her brothers' deaths have long tormented her mother.

After a bout with drugs herself, Participant Six found that her leadership motivations originated while in graduate school stating that she had a good mentor who

took her under her wings, and she begin to grow in academic knowledge and confidence. Under this mentoring, she published a couple of articles. Recalling that her mentor went above and beyond the call of duty in helping her, she was inspired to seek leadership positions that would allow her to “pay it forward”, as her mentor had done for her.

Current roles

All the participants have extraordinary careers and are leaders in their chosen fields. However, their careers apparently seem to correlate with their childhood or adolescent problems. Participant One currently in sales and education related employment, but is in college working towards her B.A. in Psychology (e.g., trying to understand her parent’s dilemma). Her mother never had a bad word to say about her father; and yet, her father was always bad mouthing her mother to whichever kid would listen. Apparently Participant One was the only listener.

Participant Two is Head Chef at her place of employment and her background in Culinary Food Preparation gives her lead over the younger chefs. She plans the menu and gives the Sous Chefs instructions on the preparations and serving. Having gotten an early start in cooking, cleaning, and caring for her younger siblings, she stated that her current career seems like an extenuation of those days. With her twenty-ninth birthday upcoming, her dream is to someday own a restaurant.

Participant Three is now in a Community and Social Service Occupations where she serves as a mental health counselor. Listening to the problems of other people helps her to keep a sober mind and clarity of her purpose in life. She has three daughters that inspire her to keep moving forward her job allows her to remember how far she has come. Her daughters I imagine are very proud of their mother.

Participant Four has come a long way from a 15-year-old teen mother, living in foster care with her biological grandmother. She is now a Mental Health Technician IV. No longer working double hours to bring home enough money to pay the utilities as she did working in those fast food restaurants when she was younger, she is happily married with twin girls and her oldest son is doing well. He is now 22 years old. She loves her job as it has helped her to understand her mother's condition. She now accepts that her family's circumstance was not her mother's fault.

Participant Five is a lawyer practicing in Domestic Law. She always knew the importance of an education. She also understood work ethics, to the point that she did not want to be depended on public doles. Thus, education and employment was her two goals to prevent from any possibility of having to accept charity. She stayed with her boyfriend for a while and then some friends, but she knew she would have to return home for the sake of her baby. Changing her major from education to sociology, she recalled wanting to create a good life for herself and her baby. She moved back home so she did not have to worry about childcare. After graduation, she decided to go to law school.

Participant sixth is currently in Educational Training and Library Occupation; she has come a long way from an 18-year-old battered housewife to a 52-year old counselor and trainer. She has since divorced her abusive husband, finished her graduate degree, and gotten an exceptional job that pays well. She has gotten her self-worth back and now attributes her success in order to God, counselors at the battered women's shelter, and to her school counselors, and to her children. She endured a lot to keep her family intact in an effort to avoid a divorce, which was ultimately inevitable.

They were teenage mothers who during some points in their young lives, lived without stable living arrangements. These women left home as teenagers on their own, they were not forced out but didn't like to obey the rules. Each began life with their biological parent(s) until something either changed the family original structure (e.g., divorce), and each were placed in adult roles early. Five subjects left home of their own free wills, no one asked them to leave. The emotional turmoil they were experiencing included the lack of trust; feelings of loss, abandonment in some cases, and the helpless state of not being able to voice an opinion about their feelings. The state of depression, abandonment, neglect, and abuse that many of the girls experienced became obvious through their rebellious attitudes.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The Purpose of the Study was four-fold: (1) to provide a framework for establishing the importance of [and need for] a thorough and otherwise non-political investigation into the incidence, prevalence and plight of teenage mothers (Miller, 1991); (2), to share with the reader the results of other reports that are closely related to the one being communicated here (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990); (3) to contribute to a larger, ongoing dialogue[about homeless adolescent mothers] by filling in gaps as well as extending prior related studies (Marshall & Rossman, 1989); and (4) to inspire hope within current and future homeless adolescent mothers' population by dispelling myths relating to their purported negative life trajectory.

To restate, the first objective has been to fill a gap in the literature regarding teenage mothers who were either, once homeless, resided in a residential homeless shelter

or without permanent housing, and yet, have gone on to become leaders in their chosen professions, assets to their communities, and exceptional parents. Through the literature review, portion of this study, it became ostensibly clear that there have been few examples that followed or examined the success of this population after their having left a homeless shelter, foster care, or other transient housing.

A second purpose has been to dispel some of the myths that linked teenage mothers to a lifetime of failure and poverty that ultimately continues in their offspring. As findings suggest, some youths were able to transcend their negative life trajectory despite auspicious beginnings. Thus, this project has shed significant light on the paths that some youths are/have been able to navigate to attain successful life outcomes.

Thirdly, this project had hoped to instill hope in both current and future teenage mothers experiencing a homeless state of destitute. Ultimately, it is hoped that homeless pregnant and parenting teens might find their leadership potential through the experiences of these leaders whom themselves were once in similar destitute states.

The participants were 2 Hispanics, 2 African Americans, 1 Caucasian American, and 1 Bi-racial African/Korean American. They ranged in ages 28 to 52 and stories have overlapping themes. Only one of the participants was under family foster care enforced by the Department of Children and Family Services for parental neglect and abuse. She and her two sisters were placed with their biological grandmother who she considered old-fashion and easy to deceive. None of the other girls were asked to leave home.

Predictably, each left home on their own to pursue adult lives. The subjects became rebellious at different ages within their respective lives, with at least five subjects being products of broken homes. Related to this, Subjects One, Three, Four, and Six were

victims caught in the middle of their parent's divorce. In each of these cases, their father remarried or the mothers remarried and they were forced to live with these new and different parents. One subject recalled often referring to her stepmother as her mother. Two of the children were at the preschool and kindergarten ages during their parents' separations, yet were able to recall their parents' divorce so vividly in the interviews; suggesting a significant correlation or impact with their later rebellious attitudes.

To restate, each participant left home at young ages to live adult lives or find their fit in life. Two participants, Two and Four respectively, ostensibly by-passed most of their developmental stages and went straight to adulthood. Participants One, Three and Four reported being from low-income families but never mentioned being deprived of any of their basic needs. Participant One and Two, who grew up in rather large families; with six and seven respective siblings.

Findings suggest that family dynamics plays an integral part in the development and healthy behaviors of children growing up. Ultimately, the subjects here each endured unmet missing needs during their youth, some more than others. Regarding children growing up amidst family disruption, dysfunction, or loss. Rappaport (2017) stated:

When a child's parents become divorced, it makes them more vulnerable to developing a wide variety of social, behavioral, emotional, and academic problems. For some children, these difficulties are short-lived and within one to two years after the separation, they can pull themselves together and move on. For others, however, the road to becoming well-adjusted is longer and paved with obstacles (para 2)

Considering the respective ages of most subjects at the time of their exodus from their family, these situations were not handled well at all. This suggests commonalities with the literature, regarding the children of divorce parents, especially when the divorce is harsh (Swain, 2017). Saposnek (2003) concurred in stating that, it should never be

assumed that the absence of trauma means that the child is fine with the divorce. A child's response to this event will always unfold in time. This was clearly the case in many of the participants' family life even when most stated that they had a normal or happy childhood.

Among subjects reporting a parent who had mental illness, the impact of this dynamic appeared to be just as debilitating as divorce. Research suggests that children whose parents have a mental illness are at greater risk of developing social, emotional and/or behavioral problems. The literature also suggests that the environment in which youth grew up generally has similar affects to their development and emotional well-being as much as their genetic makeup does (HealthyPlace.com, 2017)

Subjects here seemed to face common challenges, including some having reported enduring the onset of mental illness by one of their parents. Similarly, Participants Two and Four also recalled having to assume inappropriate levels of responsibility in caring for themselves as well as keeping the household functional. Related to this, most subjects also recalled initially blaming themselves for dysfunction and or pathology that existed within their family dynamics during the time of their youth. This is consistent with the [limited] literature on this subject, in that the impact on subjects as youths was revealed through their expressed anger, anxiety or guilt (HealthyPlace.com, 2017).

Oftentimes, participants felt embarrassment or shame resulting from the stigma associated with their parents' mental illness or substance abuse, or both. Many seemed to acknowledge that these dynamics left them at increased risk for problems at school, drug use and poor social relationships. As youth, most subjects felt isolated from their peers

and other community members (HealthyPlace.com, 2017). Participant Three recalled exhibiting such behavior because she believed that her school mates were talking about her behind her back. This is consistent with existing research, in that such troubled youths are generally vulnerable for mental health problems such as; mood disorders, alcoholism, and personality disorders (HealthyPlace.com, 2017).

Despite many setbacks, subjects seemed to draw upon personal attributes such as autonomy and resolve, along with supportive networks along the way, to discover their leadership potential. The challenges that many of the participants experienced as children because of divorce, parents with mental illness, and parental dysfunctions; related in part to both genetic and environmental setbacks. These debilitating obstacles were factors that contributed to their successes. Success is directly related to the number of strengths and challenges existing within the family: the greater number of strengths and lesser number of challenges, the greater the likelihood of a child being successful. However, in this study it was the family challenges that moved the participants to action. The actions had some failures and yet, participants ultimately learned from those failures, some sooner than others, and still became leaders.

Findings suggest that services for families and children should inevitably include opportunities for reducing challenges and enhancing strengths, if society is serious about improving the opportunity for youths' success. Counselors should be readily available through charities such as Aunt Martha's for families who are experiencing discord and cannot afford fees. Sufficient resources should be directed towards building stronger bonds between parents and children, which would enhance the strengths in families, as

well as minimize the challenges that many face (e.g., divorce, a mental illness and family dysfunctional, among others).

Nationally, there are thousands of teenage mothers and mothers-to-be who are living without stable housing arrangements. These teens and their children are at-risk of committing acts of juvenile delinquency, as well as violence by them and against them. Many of these teens solve their problems by using evasive techniques or violence their anger, frustration, and despair are all too often passed along to their children. In many families, mental illnesses and divorces become unavoidable. However, there are ways to minimize the effect these issues have on the children.

Many of the destructive behavior patterns the participants exhibited may have originated early in their respective childhood as the result of divorce, mental illness or both. Regardless of whether family disruption resulted from divorce or mental illness, the manner in which parents interact with these youths can make a difference in the healthy development of their children. Developing negative behavior can have both lasting and profound effects on the healthy development of youths.

Children must be reassured that their security and family circumstances are safeguarded (HealthyPlace.com). Ugly divorces are never easy for the children and the children often blame themselves for the breakup of their parents (HealthyPlace.com, 2017; Rappaport, 2017). Research suggests that, children of divorce and mentally ill parents can adjust to the circumstances if the communication is at a level where the children can understand, and the separation is not violent or harsh (Rappaport, 2017). Towards this end, the doors of communication must be open and children's concerns should be addressed by both parents together.

Inevitably, youths' sense of personal identity is shaped by their experiences and interaction with others, particularly with family members and peers. Findings suggest that the behavior of most subjects may have been attributed to divorce of a mentally ill parent, the separation of parents due to mental illness, or a drug addicted parent. Their identities ostensibly guiding their actions, beliefs, and behaviors, it would behoove society to find solutions for helping this population to not only reach their own full leadership potential, but to also their children to pursue the same. If successful in this endeavor. Not only will we help these youths to succeed, society at large will reap benefits as well.

Hopeful Signs/Trends

Children are naturally resilient, and have innate abilities for grasping new ideas or concepts; which contributes to their growth and development. Parents are children's first sources of knowledge and wisdom regarding the world in which they live. When healthy family dynamics are disrupted, results may often be predictable, in that youths can often be expected to act out certain negative behaviors. Although the exhibited behaviors are often introverted and harmful to youths themselves, it inherently affects others as well; directly or indirectly. Individuals affected can range from fellow siblings to parents themselves, to peers and classmates, and ultimately society at large.

Meanwhile, dysfunction within the household often reveals itself in corresponding dysfunction within the parent-child dynamics. This can, and often does include the onset of self-destructive behaviors ranging from playing hooky from school, dropping out of high school, associating with other delinquents and gang members; drinking, smoking cigarettes and marijuana, engaging in promiscuous behavior ranging from unprotected sex to leaving home to live an adult life with intimate partner, and ultimately becoming

pregnant at an early age. The problem becomes further exacerbated when pathology (i.e., domestic abuse, substance abuse, divorce and poverty, etc.) is also present in the home. Is it any small wonder that many youths seek an escape from such environments?

Disadvantages for youth hailing from unfortunate backgrounds are apparent, and have been for some time now. Results from this study suggests that this phenomenon continues today. Nevertheless, pregnant and parenting youths are not new occurrences; neither is homelessness among this population. Related to this, homelessness and teenage pregnancy do not limit themselves to any single demographic group or social class.

Rates have decreased among pregnant teens but remains too high to abandon concern. Live births [per 1000] decreased from a high of [62] in 1991 to [29] by 2012 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015). These decreases have been seen across demographic lines, i.e., Non-Hispanic Whites, Non-Hispanic Blacks, Hispanics, American Indian/Alaska Native and Asian Pacific Islander respectively (C.D.C.P., 2015). Locally, homeless rates among youth in Illinois, ages 12-21 who have been pregnant has unfortunately doubled from 33% to 68% over the last 20 years (Toro, & Fowler, 2007).

Limitation of the Study

As insightful as this project has been regarding this subject, there has nonetheless been limitations to the study. These factors are further discussed below:

Sample size.

First, although this project has allowed for a more nuanced glance into the lives of this [at risk] population, a follow-up study using an empirical framework may contribute further insights. For instance, a more quantitative approach would certainly allow for increased sample size; in turn helping to discern whether the results are unique to these

subjects here or translatable to the population at large. From this vantage point, the small sample size has been somewhat limiting to the study here.

Demographic factors.

Moreover, the limited sample size does little for providing clarity regarding the definitive distinctions among demographic groups. The instant study involved subjects from four demographic groups; two Hispanics, two African Americans, one Caucasian, and one Bi-racial (African American and Korean). Although subjects were selected from four diverse groups, it is unclear if results would be similar, lesser or greater, if sample size was increased ten-fold or twenty-fold.

Gender issues.

For similar reasons, the same point could be made regarding the lack of clarity vis-à-vis gender. Phrased differently, are the results of this study unique to females, or is the data translatable to males and LGBTQ populations as well. Currently, there is no definitive answer to this question because first, no males were selected to participate in the study, and secondly, none of the subjects reported identifying with the LGBTQ population. Nevertheless, in the spirit of full diversity, inclusion of these populations within the discussion may serve to further enhance our insights regarding this issue.

Generational factors.

Because subjects here were asked to respond to questions regarding their former life (e.g., childhood), it is unclear if similar inquiry was conducted into the lives of youths today, that the results would be similar or different. One solution would be to conduct a follow-up study with current youth as the control group, and youth of yesteryear as the experimental group. Results could then be compared to discern whether the treatment

(having reached adulthood) would have a greater impact on subjects' perceptions of their family dynamics or lifestyle, or whether all subjects regardless of generation would recall similar dynamics. Again, because of the limited sample size, we simply do not have a definitive answer to this question at this time.

Related to the lack of clarity regarding whether results today would be consistent with youths of yesteryear, there is also lack of clarity regarding the impact of the age of youth at the outset of family dysfunction. Although the age of respective subjects at the onset of family discord varied from as young as three, to as old as fifteen, we simply do not have sufficient data to extrapolate definitive answers regarding whether age is a very prohibitive determinant regarding whether youth are able to transcend negative life trajectories. Additional study of this factor may therefore be very insightful.

Questions for Further Study

Whether empirical research would add enhanced insights?

To restate, empirical inquiry may serve to enhance our insights regarding whether the results of this study are generalizable to the population at large. Although results are quite promising here, without extended study to encompass a much larger sample size, validity of the research may inherently be open to questioning. For instance, although the instant study included subjects from multiple demographic groups, it is unclear if additional study would reveal commonalities specific to each demographic group, or if certain behavioral issues might be predictable regardless of the ethnicity of subjects involved.

In effect, "is sexual promiscuity more prevalent among African-American and or Hispanic youths than it is among White youth"? Similarly, is the problem of "high school

drop-outs” more prevalent among White youths than among either African-American or Hispanic youths, or vice-versa? Answers to these questions and others would further inform our insights regarding this issue. Empirical research would inevitably allow for larger sample size, which in turn may be helpful in discovering whether some of the findings are unique to the subjects participating in this pilot study, or whether translatable to subjects in subsequent study as well.

Whether results of this study are gender-neutral or gender-specific?

Likewise, additional research may provide enhanced insights regarding whether findings are unique to females, or whether the data translatable to males and LGBTQ populations as well? Future studies should expand the research population to include more respondents from LGBT homeless youth.

Whether results are common across generations, or unique to today’s youths?

Related to the above paragraphs, a longitudinal study might be appropriate for observing whether results are common across generations, or are unique to today’s youths. We do know that with each successive generation, factors often come into play that were nonexistent during previous times. For instance, technological advancements have altered the landscape for many youths and their respective families. Consider if you will that one generation ago, technologies such as cell phones, laptops, tablets and flat-screen televisions were either nonexistent or not readily accessible by the population at large. The same could be said for social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, among others. Undoubtedly, these technologies have had an impact on society in general, family dynamics notwithstanding. Conventional wisdom suggests that these are factors worthy of further study.

Whether age at onset of family dysfunction has larger impact on future prospects?

Finally, there is need for further inquiry to determine whether age at the onset of family dysfunction has any effect on future transcendence within their life course. Ages at which youth initially experienced family discord varied among the subjects here. Yet, because of the small sample size, the instant study was not able to pursue this dynamic in greater detail. Ultimately, it would be insightful to understand what role, if any, that age plays in youths being able to rise above such traumatic beginnings. In closing, this study has enhanced our insights regarding how some [former] homeless teenage mothers have been able to transform their lives. These additional questions could further enhance our understanding of the foregoing issues, as well as lend much needed voice to the plight of this at-risk population.

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APPENDIX SECTION: A -J

Appendix A. Permission to Reuse Image.

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CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™

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Appendix B. IRB Letter of Approval

Institutional Review Board
Room G353
1 University Parkway
University Park, IL 60484
www.govst.edu/irb

To: Dr. Natalia Ermasova; Ms. Annie Ware
From: Institutional Review Board – Governors State University –
Dale Schuit, PT, PhD, MS, Board Member
CC: Fatmah Tommalieh
Date: December 8, 2016
Re: The Transformation of Homeless Teenage Mothers into Adult Leaders
Project Number: #16-09-04

We are pleased to inform you that your proposal has been approved by the GSU Institutional Review Board. Please be advised that the protocol will expire on December 8, 2017, one year after the date of approval.

At the end of the year, if your research is completed, please inform the IRB in writing of the closing date by using the IRB Annual Review form, which can be found at www.govst.edu/irb. If you intend to collect data using human subjects after that date, the proposal must be renewed by the IRB. If you make any substantive changes in your research protocol before that date, you must inform the IRB and have the new protocol approved.

Please include the exact title of your project and the assigned IRB number in any correspondence about this project.

Best wishes for success with your research.

Appendix C. Letter of Recruitment

Seeking Resilient Female Leaders to Participate in a Study

Greetings, my name is Annie Ware, I am a Doctorate Candidate in the Interdisciplinary Leadership Program in the Education Department at Governors State University. I am conducting research concerning the resilient nature of female leaders who were teenage mothers, lived without permanent housing, or had experience living in a shelter or foster care facility. All women ages 22 to 52, living in the United States, regardless of color or nationality, are invited to participate. Participation in this research includes taking a survey posted on SurveyMonkey.Com regarding family background information, your age, your educational level, your current financial status, and your profession. All candidates must sign and date a consent form prior to any participation. The consent form will be emailed to you if you agree to participate. Please contact the researcher for further details on how to proceed. If you decide not to participate there is no response necessary. A contact telephone number for participation is also a part of the consent form.

The results of the online survey will either qualify you for participation or eliminate you from participating in the study. The qualifying survey will take approximately 15 minutes. If you qualify and agree to participate then you will be contacted by the researcher to set a date, time, and place for an interview. Because of the recruitment being done through internet sites there is no specific geographic location, therefore the type of interview is not specific now. The options are face-to-face, telephone, or Skype. Regardless of the method the interview will be recorded. The entire process may take between 60 to 75 minutes of your time (e.g. depending on responses to the open-ended interview questions). If you decide to participate in both the survey and the interview, your total time of commitment will be between 60 minutes at the least and at the most, 75 minutes.

If you have any question prior to taking the online survey you may contact the researcher at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] u for further details.

Appendix D. Letter of Consent

Protocol Title: The Transformation of Homeless Teenage Mothers into Adult Leaders

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

Purpose of the research study is threefold, firstly to fill a gap in the literature that eliminates the population of homeless teenage mothers who beat the odds and became leaders in their chosen fields. Secondly, the study hopes to provide a model for current homeless teenage mothers, who believe they are trapped in their current realities that there is a way for positive change. And thirdly, there is a high probability that the outcome of the study will provide information that will help in developing programs of intervention for this population.

What you will be asked to do in this study: You will be given a link to SurveyMonkey.Com to answer questions that will provide background information of your family history as well as questions that will qualify you for the study, or eliminate you. The first questions on the survey will ask; what is your current age. The answers are from 22 to 52. The second question asked is: Were you born and raised in the United States? A Yes or No answer is required. The third question will ask: what is your current profession? The next questions are concerning family history: What was your family type while you were growing up? Single Mother; Single Father; Mother and Father Married, Mother and Father Cohabiting; Grandparent(s); Foster Care. The second question will ask about the number of siblings in your family while you were growing up; Number of Sisters __and Number of brothers __. If you were an only child, please indicate that on the survey. Did you live with extended family members, uncles, auntie, stepsister, etc.? If you did not live with extended family, please indicate it by checking no. You will be asked at what age you became pregnant. You will also be asked at what age you decided to leave home. Why did you leave home? And where did you stay once you left home? Answers to these questions will help to either qualify you for participation in the study or eliminate you from the study. If you qualify you will be contacted by email or telephone to schedule an interview. Depending on your location there are three options for interviews which are by telephone, Skype, or in-person.

Time required: Approximately 75 minutes for survey and interview questions

Compensation: There is no compensation for participation. Participation is voluntary.

Risks and Benefits: The study will help fill a gap in literature that have ignored the homeless population of teenage mothers who managed to transcended their hopeless states of destitute into professional leaders in their chosen fields. Hopefully this study will shed light on how the participants could transform from homeless teenage mothers to adult leaders. The study is important because it will serve as a model of hope for those teenage mothers living without permanent housing or residing in homeless shelters that they may be able to excel as well.

Although there are no financial benefits or gains for the volunteer participants, they may experience a sense of empathy and duty of loyalty. There is a possibility the results of

this study may provide answers that will help to develop intervention programs for current homeless teenage mothers in hopes of leadership outcomes.

This study is not intended to provoke any physical or emotional harm to the participants. However, the risks are none to minimal, which may consist of painful memories of troubling events from their past. There may also be happy recalls as well. In the event of sensitive recollections that results in emotional injury the researcher is not be obligated to assume liability for cost. Participants who volunteer to participate in the study shall do so at their own expense.

Confidentiality of Data: Volunteers’ identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by the law. Any information collected as a result of this study and can be identified by participants will be kept in a safeguarded place. Participant’s information will be assigned a code number, in lieu of any personal identifying information. The list of assign codes connecting the names of participants shall be kept in a locked file cabinet in researcher’s chair, Dr. Ermasova’s office at Governors State University, room number C3340, 1 University Parkway, University Park, Illinois 60484. Participants’ names shall not be used in any reports; a pseudonym will be used in the interviews. No personal information is shared without written permission from the participant.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary: There is no penalty for participating. You may refuse to answer any question that you are uncomfortable answering.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

Whom to contact if you have question about the study: Natalie Ermasova, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, College of Art and Science, Governors State University,

[REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]. Annie Ware, Doctorate Candidate, and student researcher, College of Education, [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]

Who to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study: If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research study or concerns regarding the study itself, you may also contact the Chair of the Governors State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Renee Theiss, Ph.D. at [REDACTED] or email at irb@govst.edu

Agreement:

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description.

Participant: _____ **Date:** _____

Principal Investigator: _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix E: Online Viewers of the Recruitment Letters

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December 11, 2016
Seeking Resilient Female Leaders to Participate in a
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Dec 27	65
Jan 10	5
Jan 24	15

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Appendix F. Tables A - I: Responses to Open-ended Interview Questions

Table A

What was your childhood like?

Participant	Participant's Responses
P. 1	<p>I would say it was chaotic. There were 6 of us, and my parents were going through a separation. I was next to the baby of the family. Well my mother wanted a divorce, but my father didn't. My mother never had a bad word to say about my father, but it was totally different with my father. He would pour salt on her every chance he got. We, their children, were caught in the middle. Unknowing who to pledge our loyalty to. We loved both parents. In the end when my father did move out all my siblings stayed with my mother. I chose to move with my father. I don't know whether or not I became the target of his contempt for my mother or not, but it sure felt that way. I came to the realization that I might have made the wrong decision in choosing to move in with my dad. I eventually moved back in with my mother, but never felt like I fit. My siblings taunted me about deserting our mother, and that didn't help matters much. I felt like an outsider I pretty much stayed to myself. When I became a teenager, I would hang out with friends as much as I could and as late as possible.</p>
P. 2	<p>Crowded. Well I was the oldest of seven children so I always had to watch after another child. Kind of pleasant sometimes. But I had to grow up a little early. I had four brothers and one sister that I had to care for. I had to get up in the morning and make sure my brothers and sister were fed and dressed for school. We were on the school's free lunch plan so I didn't have to worry about fixing lunches. We had to walk to school so I had to make sure we got there on time, and after school I had to wait and make sure we all got home safely. When we got home from school I had to make sure they took off their school clothes and were fed. I had to make sure my chores were done and the kids were bathed and in bed by nine o'clock. Sometimes my mother would be home and sometimes she wouldn't. When she was home I didn't have to be an adult as much. But I had to be the adult when she wasn't there. What I mean by this is when my mother was home she would help me get my brothers and sister ready for school and it took some of the pressure off me. Because sometimes she had a job and sometimes she didn't. When she didn't have a job, she was out doing drugs. So, you could say I didn't really have a childhood. Most of it was spent looking after my siblings, and my mother.</p>
P. 3	<p>We lived in a middle-class family my mom and dad both worked. Everything seemed fine to me. My family was the world to me.</p>

	<p>My dad had his first episode when I was nine, that was kind of traumatic and shocking experience for me, but he was sick. My father was a schizophrenic and he stopped taking his medicine. My mother stayed with him another six months and then she divorced him. My dad was always in our lives although he was no longer living with us. (Interviewer: As a young child nine-years-old how did you respond to the absence of your father from your home?) I was outgoing but in 4th grade when that happened I stopped talking to people in class because I figured they knew and was talking behind my back about my father and my family. I withdrew; I didn't speak or associate with anyone in that school. I had friends outside of school that went to a different school they were a couple of years older than us. They were like sixteen. When I say us, I have a fraternal twin. So, the two older friends I hung out with had a sister our age. I felt more at ease with these girls than any of the back stabbers at my school.</p>
<p>P.4</p>	<p>Well, I was raised by maternal grandmother, my mother. My mother had mental illness problems. She was in and out of institutions and jail much of my life. My father was running the streets all the time. I really didn't have any guidance. I had people to talk to but, an everyday role model I didn't have. I did have a person I could talk to but not an ideal role model. I had my first child at 15. In my opinion I believe my family thought I would have a lot more. I believe my family thought my sisters and I were going to be the ones who wasn't going to make it. But young kids are impressionable and as such I was draw toward the street. The only thing that I regret is that I didn't have the job that I have now and I didn't know better. The streets were what I knew and where I learned valuable lessons. I was good at what I learned.</p>
<p>P. 5</p>	<p>My dad was in the military, he met my biological mother in Korea and they had me and my sister who is four years younger than me. They divorced when I was 5 and my mother opted to leave us with our father and he married another woman who was African American who raised my sister and me and they went on to have two more children. But I have not seen my biological mother since I was 5. I grew up first with my mom and dad and First it was my mom and dad with three siblings and we were a very close knit family and we travel all around the country all around the world with him being in the United States. I grew up in a very strict Christian home. We had to go to church and we had to pray every day as a family, Until I left the house when I was 18. I love my parents and I owe a lot of who I am to them.</p>
<p>P.6</p>	<p>I had an average childhood. My parents were divorced when I was about three-years-old. My mother remarried and my step-father was great. I had a pretty happy childhood. (Interviewer: So, you would say it was routine childhood). Oh yes, it was normal.</p>

Table B

What interventions, if any, changed your behavior?

Participants	Participants' Responses
P. 1	Close observation and realizing what I did not want. I looked and learned and took notes on what I had to do to move forward. (Researcher: Could you explain what that observation and realization was) I did not want to repeat my parent's mistakes with my child. I didn't want her to never have to decide whether it was her father or me. Although that was not the case. (Note: didn't feel comfortable talking about this subject).
P. 2	When my grandmother died. At 12 or 13 I moved in with my grandmother and I was babied for a change. I was with my grandmother off and on living with my grandmother, but when my grandmother died of an overdose and my mother gave birth to my twin brothers I moved back in to help her out. I was thirteen when my mother had my brothers and sister. She was married and my stepfather worked at night so I still had to keep my brothers and sisters. At fifteen I became a little rebellious because I was feeling slighted that I could not go out and hangout without lugging my siblings along. So, at 15 I moved to Tennessee with one of my friends. I knew that it couldn't be any worse than wasting my life away there raising my mother's children. I feel like I was cheated out of my childhood. I never got to go to a prom, or get a job, or just hang out. Moving to Tennessee was the best thing that happened to me, so I thought. I had friends; I finished high school and even got a job. I got my own car and even managed to finish two years of high school. Then I got pregnant and I quickly found out who my friends were. I had to move back home.
P. 3	I kind of started to hang out with friends from a different school. When I did come out of my shell I started misbehaving. I started smoking, drinking, and playing hooky from school. The friends I hung out with had a rougher family life than I did. But I was comfortable hanging out with them. I was pushing my limits with my mom. My mother wasn't the disciplinarian; my father was but he was gone. So, I pushed the limits. Plus, I think my mom was trying to compensate for what we were going through without our dad. I stayed out late, I ditched school, and I did everything short of getting in trouble with the law.
P. 4	When I had my son at 15, the things I was doing had to change. I knew my baby would need a live mother and a good

	<p>caring home, that I did not have. I had someone who I would be responsible for. I wanted to be there for my baby so I had to change.</p>
P. 5	<p>My rebellion started when I was around 12-years-old, which is quite normal. At this age, you want to be around your friends. You start to separate from your mom and dad and this was normal behavior. My mother thought there was something psychologically wrong with me so she had me see a psychologist or psychiatrist I don't know which one it was at that age but I went through a battery of test and the test came back that I was just being a normal 12-year-old. My mom disagreed and she made some allegations against the psychiatrist that was just unfounded. But that's a whole other rabbit hole with her. Outside of that, this was the only intervention I can remember. But I was grounded or reprimanded. These were the strategies my parents used for intervention of my rebellious attitude. They didn't stop the rebellion which extended to my teen years.</p>
P. 6	<p>As a teenager, I was pretty rebellious. I started in middle school. I started smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, and smoking marijuana by the age of probably 12. I started hanging around with people I grew up with some I knew in middle school that introduced me to drugs and alcohol. So, I started smoking, drinking and smoking marijuana. So, in high school I was hanging out with gang members. I was running away from home. I was ditching school. I cause my family a lot of grief. I was sexually assaulted at the age of probably fifteen. I did and experienced a lot at an early age.</p>

Table C

What made you change what you were doing?

Participants	Participants' Responses
P. 1	<p>The birth of my daughter. I wanted a better life for myself and my child, different from the one I experienced. I knew that I couldn't depend on anyone to make that happen, but me.</p>
P. 2	<p>My daughter made me change. My stepfather had told my mother I couldn't move back with a baby. He didn't tell me to my face but he told my mother. However, I had nowhere else to go so I moved back in with my mother who promised me she would help me out but I ended up doing all I could to help her and my brothers and sister out and she did nothing to help me or my daughter. My mother took the things I had for me and my baby and sold them for drugs and then denied it. My</p>

	<p>mother wanted me to go to school because she never got a high school diploma or a G.E.D. I felt that she was trying to live her life through me that is why I dropped out. I felt like I was becoming my mother and I didn't want that, so when I turned nineteen I picked up my baby and moved out for good. I moved out into a shelter. I met a lot of positive people in that shelter and that is where I learned my culinary trade.</p>
<p>P. 3</p>	<p>I don't know; the people I hung out with. You could say they gave me the confidence in myself not to put too much in what others thought about me. I developed an attitude where I didn't care what other people thought about me. It was just what I thought about myself that mattered. So, this influence changed me from being withdrawn.</p>
<p>P. 4</p>	<p>Having a child who really depends on you change you. It's different for everyone, but for me it was my son. I didn't want my child growing up without a mother so that made me make drastic changes in my life. I did go to my grandmother because she was old fashion and I knew she would want to keep me there with her, but I wanted something better for my child. I had a huge responsibility I owed my son everything. I wanted to give him everything I didn't have and I knew that meant change.</p>
<p>P. 5</p>	<p>I got pregnant when I was 16 and I chose to have an abortion, no one forced that on me. It was my decision. I had a very close friend of mine who had a child when she was in high school and I concluded there was nothing wrong with it. I was very much in love with my high school boyfriend or so I thought at the time. With my teenage mind, it seemed normal to see teenagers having children; it seemed like the thing to do. When I graduated from high school I was pregnant, not showing but if you ask me what I did right after high school I had a baby. Having a baby made me grow out of that rebellion. While I was pregnant I lived from my boyfriends, house to my friends' house, and sometimes I stayed at home. I remember my mom having a talk with me saying "Once you have this baby you can't hangout or stay out all night and do all these things that you are doing. I knew who I was having my child by and I knew he was irresponsible. I knew that the child would be my responsibility and mine alone. Having a child was a wakeup call. It was my responsibility and mine along. I knew that I didn't want to be that mother on welfare. I wanted to live a good life and it was my responsibility to make sure this child has a good life. And that is what put me into gear. When I had my son, I was working at Burger King full time up until two days before I had my son. I stayed with my boyfriend and then I stayed with some friends. My father</p>

	came to visit me at the hospital and told me I could come home if I wanted, and that is what I did, moved home, until I could map out a plan. So, it was my son who actually made me change.
P. 6	I had an abortion when I was 17 years old. The guy was pretty much a one-night stand, I think. I could not tell my mom that I was pregnant so I took my income money and I got an abortion. That kind of woke me up a little bit to what I was doing and the consequences of my actions. However, I didn't stop drinking or getting high I just started being more cautious of who I was having sex with. My next relationship was with the man I married who was very abusive. I married at the age of 18 and moved out of my family home. I married an abusive man. I had 5 children from this marriage and I also had an abortion while married to this man. I was married to this man for 20 years and he was abusive the whole time verbally, physically, and emotionally. I don't know how I stayed for so long enduring the abuse. I thought I was doing it for the children but it was fear that kept me there. Fear of not being able to care for my children. Fear of being alone.

Table D

What were the challenges in your life?

Participants	Participants' Responses
P. 1	Trying to find where I fit. Making poor decisions, admitting I made a mistake moving in with my father and moving back in with my mother, which was very uncomfortable. I felt like a deserter, who had to come crawling back home. Trying to find where I fit outside of the family was equally as challenging. Having my daughter at an early age in her father being more out of life than in is a challenge. I want her to have some stability, but to completely omit him from her life would be wrong.
P. 2	Not having help with my daughter. When my mother married my stepfather she'd always try to bring me in the middle of their disputes. My stepfather was always working. He worked the night shift so while he was at work my mother would go out to get high and I was home with my brothers and sister. If my stepfather would come home early he would ask me where your mother is. I didn't want to tell him she went out, but when she came in he knew. At ages 10, 11, 12, and 13; I was the keeper of my siblings. I never had a life like other children, or teenagers. I never went to a prom. I never got to date. I never got to hang out

	<p>as most teens. I didn't get a job until I was 16 and had left home. I was my sister and brothers' keeper. This was something I had no control over, but while my mother was gone I was in charge.</p>
P. 3	<p>When I got older, I have three children one is almost 16-years-old, a 7-year-old and a 5-year-old and they are all girls. I just completed my graduate degree in Clinical Psychology and I wrote a thesis this was a big struggle, plus raising my daughters. It was hard to juggle everything. It goes back to when I was seventeen and I had my first child. When her dad and I broke up, I started doing drugs and I did that for two years and then I got sober, it did not happen overnight, but once it did and I started going to school and I started working at a mental health facility.</p>
P. 4	<p>Having a kid at the age of 15. You want your own place but you are not old enough to get your own, but it didn't stop me from trying. Even getting a job was difficult because at 15 you needed a work permit. I was determined to get a job and I did. It didn't pay the best wages and I had to work a lot of overtime, but it was something for a 15- year-old.</p>
P. 5	<p>I moved out of my parents' home and I moved into this apartment so I was trying to figure out how to go to college full time and pay my bills. I didn't want to go to college part-time because time was of the essence. One challenge was trying to figure out what job I could work full time while taking a full load of college courses. At that time, I lived in a town where there was a factory that made computers and they had a shift that went from Thursday, Friday, and Saturday and I worked these 12 hour shifts. I could work this three-day shift and go to college full time, and that is what I did. I got promoted very quickly on that job and then I got fired. I worked for a little while still attending school full time. I got a retail job at JC Penny's, I told them my situation that I had a child and I was in school full time so I could only work certain days. They gave me a thirty-five hour a week work schedule and they worked around my schedule. I really didn't have to work the weekend. Balancing, work, full time enrollment in college, and a baby was a challenge.</p>
P. 6	<p>I didn't have a lot of self-esteem. My mom's mother died when my mom was thirteen. Her older sisters raised her. Growing up my brother died when I was fifteen-years-old. He was the second oldest. My oldest brother did drugs and alcohol. He passed away when he was forty-years-old from alcohol it was pretty bad. My mother loved her children very much but she didn't know how to stand up and be a mother. So, I pretty much did what I wanted to do. My step-father tried to step in and guide me and discipline me, but I wasn't listening. My mom,</p>

	<p>after she lost her sons, she kind of gave up on life for a while. I believe I was experiencing that grief as well but I didn't know where to turn so I turned to the streets. So, there is where I spent most of my time. I thought getting married was going to change all of that for me but it didn't. I was never empowered as a person. I always thought that I was less than my girlfriends, whom I thought, were prettier than me, skinner than me and I was too fat. I was too plain. Anyone who paid any attention to me I would just suck it in. It was a bad move marrying at 18; my husband was abusive verbally and physically. He wasn't very Christian. I thought this would be empowering for me. I did not have any self-esteem and he deepened that image I had of myself. My challenges were not having enough self-esteem and self-worth to move beyond where I was.</p>
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Table E

How did you overcome those challenges?

Participants	Participants' Responses
P. 1	<p>As I mentioned before, I pay attention to everything. I know where I don't want to be and I know what I want. I take that part of the observation that is useful to what I want and where I want to be and I use it towards my advantage to get there. I learn how to avoid or maneuver around those obstacle courses (Interviewer: Give me an example.) I know that education is very important in getting ahead in life. I know I don't want to graduate in huge debt from student loans. I heard the horror stories and I didn't want that—to be in debt for the rest of my life. So, I found grants, and scholarships to help me pay for my undergraduate degree, I am completing my B.A. in Psychology this year with a 4.0 grade point average. I am planning on going on for my M.A. in Physical Therapy. I just haven't decided where just yet. I just might stay here. I am hoping to find a job with educational benefits attached that will help me pay some or all the costs for my Master's Degree</p>
P. 2	<p>At 15 I left home and moved with my friend to Tennessee, I was able to complete high school, get a job, and I even finished 2 years of college. I even bought me a car. I was on my way to a positive life. These were things I could have never accomplished if I had stayed at home. I had friends. I never would have experienced these things if I had stayed at home with my mom. I would have become my mom</p>

<p>P. 3</p>	<p>I went to individual counseling that helped me sort out some things in my life. My issues started slowing down. Two weeks turned into a month and suddenly I didn't need the drugs to cope with my problems. I learned to face them and resolve them in a logical manner. It was not all at once that I got to this point. Counseling helped and being in an educational environment with people who set major goals. The people and the academic environment kind of rubbed off on me.</p>
<p>P. 4</p>	<p>Finding a way to get employment. I know I was young but persistency paid off. I put in an application and got hired at White Castles. I dropped out of High School in my Junior year so I could work some overtime. I advanced quickly to supervisor. The people who I was around drank heavily and did drugs. I wanted something so different for my son and sisters. At 16 my dad's girlfriends had an apartment that she rented through Section VIII my father talked her into letting me have it. So, he got this place for me and my son. At the age of 16, I had my own place and big responsibilities to go along with it. But as a teenager my apartment which was a three-bedroom townhouse was the hangout for every teenager I knew. I felt like I was grown because I had my own place. I was living an adult life but still had that teenage mentality.</p>
<p>P. 5</p>	<p>How did I overcome these challenges? Well, I made up with my mom and dad and they were happy to babysit for me. So, I had a baby-sitter whenever I needed them. So, I didn't have to pay for daycare now. I changed my major from education to sociology and that put me back a year, so I took 18 credit hours of coursework for about 3 years. After I decided to go to law school my parents were ecstatic. My parents offered to take care of my son while I was in law school. My dad and mom decided to move to California right when I got accepted into law school. So, my last semester in college they moved to California and took my son with them. He stayed with my parents for the remainder of my two weeks in law school. After I finished law school I moved to Chicago with my son. I didn't know anyone there professionally but my grandmother, my father's mother was there. I didn't have a car all I had was a couple thousand dollars of savings. In the interim part of my law degree I ended up staying with my grandmother in one room with my ten-year-old son. My grandmother ended up buying me a car. I remember asking her for quarters just so I could get buy. Not knowing where my career was going and couldn't find a job. 2006 and 2007, it was impossible to find employment. Being in the City not knowing anyone and not being able to find a job as a lawyer was very depressing. I just pressed on and decided to start my own firm. And it went own</p>

	from there. The challenges began here as well just being a black business owner with no capital, you know coming from a family that couldn't give me money, but moral support was what they had.
P. 6	With God. I became a Christian. I left my husband after 20 years of abuse. We moved to Bolingbrook, my son had to do community service so I found a Christian Church and that's when I started on my journey with God. I believed He led me out of that abusive relationship. I still had a lot of challenges trying to raise my five children on my own. But that gave me the courage to start this journey. I needed to seek help I went into a domestic violence shelter in Joliet and they help me find housing with the housing requirements, you worked part time but you went to school which was a lot. But this was something I wanted to do. I started going to school college. They paid the rent so that helped out a lot. The shelters help you barely get enough for lights and gas and sometimes barely any food, but that is where the food pantries improvised. I ended up getting a job at the college. I graduated from that college with my Associated Degree in General Education and I transferred over to a university where I majored in Interdisciplinary Leadership Studies. I received my graduate degree from this same university.

Table F

What were your strengths?

Participants	Participants' Responses
P. 1	I always considered myself a leader, I like to inspire others. I visualize my future and like to inspire others to reach their goals. I am a great observer, I see where something is useful to me and I take advantage of that. I see where something might be destructive to me and I avoid the temptation. I have not always mapped out my directions, but I must now, because it is not just me to think about. I want to set a good example for my daughter, so I must be the best that I can be. I hope my ethics rub off on her. You could say she is one of my initial strengths.
P. 2	My daughter was my biggest strength, and the choice I made to move out of my mother's house for good into a homeless shelter. It turned out to be a good move for me and my daughter. I was able to get my G.E.D. and a Culinary Certification. I completed 2 years of college and got a good job using my culinary skills.

<p>P. 3</p>	<p>I was resilient I had the support that I didn't have when I was using drugs, but when I stopped I had the support of my family. I began my college education which further inspired me.</p>
<p>P. 4</p>	<p>Like I said when I was growing up I didn't have a role model and I had two sisters and I wanted to be a role model for them. That coupled with my son made me want to live and show them a better life different from the one I experienced. My life had to change. I had to stop the gang banging and go a different route. I went after what I wanted and I usually got it. For example, after my father got his girlfriend to give us her apartment I knew that I would need money, and there were not too many jobs a sixteen-year-old could get that made a lot of money, but I was fortunate enough to get one working for a fast food place. It paid the light bill and bought some food. My grandmother would give us the link that she was getting for us as wards of the state in family foster care, as well as the money. She never reported that I wasn't living there or else we would have been placed with another family. I was counting and holding out to the time I became 18 and could emancipate out of foster care. At seventeen I emancipated out of foster care and was issued my own Section VIII voucher for independent living. I found a house that was perfect for me, my son, and my sisters. I knew to use the system for momentum and not to become trapped in it and that is what I did.</p>
<p>P. 5</p>	<p>My strengths were my determination and dedication to succeed, to provide that good life for me and my son. I am a very determined person and if there is something I want I am not going to let anything stop me. I take initiative to empower others I am a leader and I have a good personality. I am very confidence in myself and my abilities. I instill this self-confidence in others. I have been a lawyer for almost 10 years and within that time I should have been a practice for 5 years, but because of the relationship I made were good and I asked for the position I wanted and got it.</p>
<p>P. 6</p>	<p>My greatest strength is my relationship with God. That is foremost that I have. Then I went to some changes in going through some of these classes as strengthening and empowering as they were. My strength and self-worth started to develop and I realized I wasn't a dumb ass as my husband portrayed me to be. Just empowering myself through education. I realized I could learn and grow. I found that I was a smart person.</p>

Table G

What were the motivations that moved you towards leadership roles?

Participants	Participants' Responses
P. 1	Wanting to make a better future for my daughter as well as wanting a better future for myself.
P. 2	I didn't know this but I have always been a leader (a servant leader but steal a leader). My daughter was my first incentive. But for the most part I did not want to become my mother. These were the two biggest motivations in my movement towards independence.
P. 3	Honestly, I believed a lot of my drive came from school. My drive overcoming being a drug addict and proving to myself I didn't have to use to cope with life. Writing my thesis, having it published and graduating with my M.A. in Clinical Psychology reconfirmed my belief in myself. I could do anything I set my mind to do.
P. 4	My leadership skilled originated as a teenager. I was a gangbanger. I was what you call a Black Stone. I was leader of over thirty to 40 girls. I knew the literature and I knew it well. The girls under me knew what I was talking about and knew what I was capable of. What I didn't know is that tough dominating leadership would follow me. Evening after I settled down and got married to a nice loving and caring man I found it difficult to let him lead the household. I had to humble myself to let him dominate. Even now I must hold back to keep from taking charge. Because I was used to being in charge. It was hard breaking that acquired behavior. My job for example, I went from a Mental Health Technician Trainee to a Mental Health Tech 4, which is considered a supervisor. I train people who come into my unit. Yet, I still have problems with sharing my department with other Supervisors. I am working on sharing and collaborating more. I love my job, if I had known that I would find a position that was my ideal job. I would have gotten the position much sooner. I went to several jobs before I found my idea job. I learned so much in my current position, for one I don't hate my mother any more for being mentally ill, I finally understand what she was going through and it wasn't her fault. My mother and I have a better relationship now that I understand her mental illness. Unfortunately, my dad passed away but I know he loved us dearly.
P. 5	It was almost out of necessity. I would have not considered myself leader years ago, but now looking back with everything I have accomplished and to me it was almost impossible. So, I

	look at myself and often wonder how did this young girl, who wanted nothing more than to grow up and be a house wife, I didn't think I could go to college and become a teacher and thought she wanted to be a teacher and became a lawyer. How did this young girl end up being a lawyer? I don't want to stoke my ego, but I have billboards advertising my law firm. It blows my mind sometimes looking back over my life. I was so determined to be successful that I couldn't let anything stop me. My biggest fear is failure. (Comment from interviewer: "I think we all are guilty of that)
P. 6	I didn't graduate out of high school I earned a G.E.D. so I had never been to college so just going into that environment I still felt like the outsider as students gathered in groups. I didn't think I was good enough for these groups. So, I challenged myself I study hard and I finally realized I do know what I am talking about. I learned so well I could get up and do presentations and speak up for myself. I am a very strong person now and when you look back to whom and where I was you can see that person was created by society. But self-determination, education, and working hard.

Table H

Did your incentive for leadership originate while you were without permanent living arrangement? (e.g., during your stay in-between homes, foster care or homeless residential facilities).

Participant	Participants' Responses
Participant 1	I was never in foster care and I had no experience in homeless shelter. My realization of an unstable home came when I decided to leave my mother's home to move in with my father. I might as well have been in a homeless shelter. (Interviewer: Would you care to elaborate? Note: Did not want to comment on her father).
Participant 2	My leadership skills were always there organizing the care and wellbeing of my siblings, keeping them in line. I've always had leadership skills although; I never knew what they were. But raising your brothers, sister and a mother; who never grew up, is quite a challenge. My leadership skills became apparent to me once I left the homeless shelter and became independent. I had everything I wanted a home for me and my daughter, a job that supported us well. Plus, I had by-passed my mother's fate by getting my G.ED., completing two years of college, and getting a good job that I liked doing. My leadership skills originated at 10 years old with the care of my twin brothers and continued with the

	birth of each of my other 4 siblings. However, I had more encouragement while I was in the homeless shelter that was empowering.
Participant 3	In graduate school. I had a good mentor. She took me under her wing. Under her mentoring, I published a couple of articles. She went above and above her call in helping me. She inspired. I found the confidence I needed to become that leader.
Participant 4	As the older of 2 sisters I had to kind of protect my baby sisters. Even when we were with my mother and father, I felt protective of them. My mother was on drugs and her mental illness didn't help matters much. I had to be a role model for my sisters. I had to be strong for them. When DCF placed us with our grandmother, who was kind of old and old-fashion, she thought by not signing for me to get birth control pills when I asked for them I would not engage in sex. She felt that if she got birth control pills for me she was giving me the okay to have sex. My grandmother was kind, loving and giving, but this was not where I wanted to be. My leadership qualities originate long before, I was sent to family foster care.
Participant 5	My leadership skill became apparent at a young age, but I became fully aware of them once by embracing who I am both African American and Korean and not trying to be something I wasn't. Who I am defined my role as a leader.
Participant 6	Prayer, going to school and working hard. Faith in God and sheer determination.

Table I

What courses of action prepared you for your leadership roles?

Participants	Participants' Responses
P. 1	I always had leadership potentials, but did not always make the wisest of decisions. The lessons I learned from my bad decisions reinforced my leadership potentials, which was first, observation and next using my critical thinking ability to map out a plan of action for rehabilitation and building a successful future (e.g., through education and choosing a career path). Maybe more than one career to have options
P. 2	The care of my siblings at a young age. This was a big responsibility for a ten-year-old. Managing a house doing everything except paying the bills, which became a part of my duties once I got older. I missed out on my entire childhood that pushed me in the direction of leadership.

	Motivating my younger brothers and sisters to do their homework was practice for my independence.
P. 3	The hardship I had to maneuver myself around. Stepping up to the plate and seeking counseling. Not only for myself, but my children. Also, the group projects I had to work on during my coursework gave me extra ambition to do an excellent job with my part. Working on projects in school with different classmates help me connect socially with an innovative group who hide high expectations of themselves. That expectation rubbed off on me.
P. 4	Everything I experienced in my life was preparing me for the leadership role I am in today. I have only one regret in my life and that is not focusing on jobs that I might be passionate about and planning my career sooner.
P. 5	Growing up I was kind of bullied in seventh grade. I had grown up mostly in a military community. You could say I was guarded. I never knew being bi-racial was a big deal until moving to Alabama and going to a typically all black school. For the first time in my life, in a civilian school, I was bullied. I never knew being bi-racial was important. The first thing I was approached with when I started school was who are you? Kids wanted to know why I looked the way I did and why my hair was like it was. I began having an identity crisis. My sister was 1 when my parents divorced so she didn't know that she was half Korean. I came to Alabama and I got bullied. I tried to prove to them that I was black not knowing that I had the best of two identities. I believe this incident prepared me in my subconscious to later pursue my degree in domestic law to protect people's rights. But I learned from this incident that I had to be tough. You can't allow people to treat you badly. You must be prepared for it; you cannot be a cry baby. I got over that identity crisis; I found that I had to deal with my mom who had insecurities about taking on the role of my mother because we were bi-racial. I had to deal with who I am at home and out in the world. All that prepared me for what I am today.
P. 6	Self-determination and finding my fit. I remember when I was being interviewed by the counselor at the battered women's shelter; how I was thinking that I would like to be in her place. But to show you how God works, today I am that counselor.

Appendix G. Qualifying Questionnaire for Participation in Resilience Study

Q 1: Do you consider yourself to be resilient?

Participants	Participants' Responses
Participant 1	Yes
Participant 2	Yes
Participant 3	Yes
Participant 4	Yes
Participant 5	Yes
Participant 6	Yes
Participant 7	Yes

Q 2: On which continent were you born?

Participants	Participants' Responses
Participant 1	North America
Participant 2	North America
Participant 3	North America
Participant 4	North America
Participant 5	North America
Participant 6	North America

Q 3: In what city were you born?

Participants	Participants' Responses
Participant 1	Chicago Heights
Participant 2	Chicago Heights
Participant 3	Hazel Crest
Participant 4	Harvey
Participant 5	Hopkinsville, Kentucky
Participant 6	Chicago

Q 4: What is your age?

Participants	Participants' Responses
Participant 1	28 to 29
Participant 2	29 to 30
Participant 3	33 to 34
Participant 4	35 to 36
Participant 5	40 to 41
Participant 6	51 to 52

Q 5: What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Participants	Participants' Responses
Participant 1	3 years of college
Participant 2	2 years of college
Participant 3	Completed Graduate School (M.A.)
Participant 4	11 th Grade
Participant 5	Completed Graduate School
Participant 6	Graduated from College

Q 6: Which race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please be Specific)

Participants	Participants' Responses
Participant 1	Hispanic
Participant 2	African American /Black
Participant 3	White/Caucasian
Participant 4	African American/Black
Participant 5	Multiple Ethnicity /African American and Asian
Participant 6	Hispanic

Q 7: Which of the following best describes your current occupation?

Participants	Participants' Responses
Participant 1	Sales and Education Related Occupation
Participant 2	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupation
Participant 3	Community and Social Service Occupations
Participant 4	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations
Participant 5	Legal Occupation/Lawyer
Participant 6	Education Training, and Library Occupation

Q 8: What is your average annual income?

Participants	Participants' Responses
Participant 1	\$25,000 to \$49,999
Participant 2	\$25,000 to \$49,999
Participant 3	\$25,000 to \$49,999
Participant 4	\$50,000 to \$74,999
Participant 5	\$75,000 to \$99,999
Participant 6	\$25,000 to \$49,999

Q 9: What was your age at the birth of your first child?

Participants	Participants' Responses
Participant 1	17 to 18
Participant 2	17 to 18
Participant 3	17 to 18
Participant 4	15 to 16
Participant 5	17 to 18
Participant 6	17 to 18

Q. 10: At what age did you leave home?

Participants	Participants' Responses
Participant 1	18 to 19
Participant 2	14 to 15
Participant 3	17 to 18
Participant 4	15 to 16
Participant 5	17 to 18
Participant 6	17 to 18

Q 11: What was your reason for leaving home?

Participants	Participants' Responses
Participant 1	No longer feeling like a part of the family
Participant 2	Drugs and abuse (Mother)
Participant 3	Respondent Skipped this Question
Participant 4	I wanted to live an adult life
Participant 5	Rebellion
Participant 6	Rebellion I got married at 17.

Appendix H: Family Demographics Survey

Q 1: What was your family type?

Participant	Participant Responses
Participant 1	Mother and Father Divorced so (Mother Only)
Participant 2	Mother Only
Participant 3	Father and Mother Married
Participant 4	Father and Mother Married
Participant 5	Father and Mother Married/ Divorced Step Mother
Participant 6	Father and Mother Divorced /Step Father

Q 2: How many siblings were in your family while you were growing up?

Participant	Participant Responses
Participant 1	6-7
Participant 2	6-7
Participant 3	1-3
Participant 4	1-3
Participant 5	1-3
Participant 6	1-3

Q 3: Where did you fit in the sibling birth order?

Participant	Participant Responses
Participant 1	Fifth Born
Participant 2	First Born
Participant 3	Second Born
Participant 4	First Born
Participant 5	First Born
Participant 6	Third Born

Q. 4: What was your family’s economic status while you were growing up?

Participant	Participant Responses
Participant 1	Low to no income
Participant 2	Low to no income
Participant 3	Middle Class
Participant 4	Low to no income
Participant 5	Middle Class
Participant 6	Middle Class

Q 5: What was the highest level of school your mother completed?

Participant	Participant Responses
Participant 1	Some College, but no degree
Participant 2	Less than a High School Diploma
Participant 3	Bachelor Degree
Participant 4	High School
Participant 5	Associates Degree
Participant 6	High School

Q 6: What is the highest level of school your father completed?

Participant	Participant Responses
Participant 1	High school degree or (e.g., G.E.D)
Participant 2	Less than a High School Diploma
Participant 3	Some College but No Degree
Participant 4	Less than a High
Participant 5	High School Diploma
Participant 6	High School

Q 7: What was your family's living arrangements?

Participant	Participant Responses
Participant 1	Rent
Participant 2	Rent
Participant 3	Owed Their Home
Participant 4	Rent
Participant 5	Rent
Participant 6	Owened Their Home

Q 8: What was your relationship with your mother?

Participant	Participant Responses
Participant 1	Detached (No close relationship)
Participant 2	Somewhat close
Participant 3	Very Close
Participant 4	Somewhat Close
Participant 5	Somewhat Close
Participant 6	Detached