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RESILENCY AND FATHERLESS HOUSEHOLDS

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RESILIENCY AND FATHERLESS HOUSEHOLDS

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Joshua Kennedy
Crystal Orellana
May 2023

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ABSTRACT

Fatherlessness is a complex and prevailing issue in society associated with many vulnerabilities and unfavorable outcomes. This study seeks to describe and identify the contributing factors to resilience among individuals who were raised in fatherless homes. Findings from this research would contribute to the body of knowledge that focuses on promoting resiliency and would specifically provide insight on contributing factors to resiliency that can help mitigate the negative consequences of fatherless homes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

God, you have been our anchor and pillar, we praise you for allowing us to see this journey through.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the department of social work, Dr. McAlister, Dr. Barragan, and Dr. Thomas for your support, flexibility, and intentionality to guide us through this project.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my family and friends who have demonstrated unwavering support and encouragement. A special feeling of gratitude to Joshua Kennedy, my classmate, friend, and thesis partner. Thank you for being a constant source of support throughout the entire program. To my grandmother, Ana Velasquez, thank you for instilling the value of education in me.

- Crystal Orellana

I want to dedicate this thesis to the resilient children raised without their father and the strong single-parent mothers who pour their all into raising their children. I am eternally grateful to all my friends who have become my family during dark times. I give special recognition and gratitude to Crystal Orellana for being an amazing support, partner, and constant banner of encouragement throughout this program. Lastly, to all the families who lost loved ones to COVID, I pray for God's comfort for you.

- Joshua Kennedy

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest and deepest societal concerns plaguing America is fatherlessness. Fatherlessness entails multiple situations and can consist of the biological father's absence, the father's death, the father is not involved in the child(ren) lives due to divorce, separation, or non-marital birth (Debell, 2007; Kramer, 2020). Studies have consistently and overwhelmingly highlighted the profound adverse effects of fatherlessness (Debell, 2007; Pougnet et al., 2012; Wiemann et al., 2006). Therefore, no matter the reason for the father's absence, fatherlessness is a societal issue worth studying.

For instance, in the education system, children who live in single-mother homes have lower academic success, reporting lower grades than those children who have their father active in their lives, and are shown to have higher rates of dropping out of school than those whose fathers are present in their lives (Scott, 2017; Whitney et al., 2017; Qureshi & Ahmad, 2014). Furthermore, another research from the National Fatherhood Initiative (2017) reports that children in homes where their father is not living with them are more than twice likely to repeat a grade. Children with lower academic performance are vulnerable to lower self-esteem and an unfavorable sense of self-concept, which affects a child's self-worth (Chohan, 2018). The outcomes of low academic

success of children growing up in fatherless homes can lead to a domino effect that can impact many areas of their lives, ultimately affecting a child's future.

An individual's family is one of the most important environments for human development (Monnat & Chandler, 2015). Additional research asserts that the father's absence can negatively impact a child's cognitive development (Shinn, 1978). Therefore, fatherlessness is categorized as an adverse childhood experience that can impact developmental pathways and determine how an individual will respond when faced with adversity (Monnat & Chandler, 2015).

Studies have indicated that children with non-residing fathers in the home are likely to experience and develop issues related to anxiety, depression, low self-esteem (Gobbi et al., 2015, 2012; National Kids Count, 2018; Osborne & McLanahan, 2007; U.S Department of Health and Human Services). Among the development of issues relating to a child's emotional, behavioral, and mental health, the risks for unfavorable outcomes in other parts of their lives also increase. For example, studies have reported that fatherless children are reported to be at four times greater risk of poverty than children who reside with their biological fathers (U.S Department of Health & Human Services, 2012); two times more likely to drop out of high school and have academic challenges (Whitney et al., 2017); seven times more likely to have an early sexual activity and teenage pregnancy (Ellis et al., 2003). Additional studies have described a linkage between fatherlessness and substance-related issues, becoming gang

members, engaging in delinquent behavior, and a high likelihood of incarceration (Swisher & Shaw-Smith, 2015; Debell, 2007).

The alarming statistics surrounding fatherlessness make it an undeniable social issue deserving of serious attention. According to Pew Research (2020), the prevalence of fatherlessness is noted that nearly half of American children will grow up in single-parent households; most of them will be fatherless (Anderson, 2002; Debell, 2020; Kramer, 2020). In addition, the U.S Census Bureau (2018) estimates that nearly 19.5 million children, almost one in four children, live in homes without their fathers. Many of these same children will also contact the child welfare system.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the research is to assess and identify the contributing factors that promote resilience among individuals raised in fatherless homes. Fatherlessness is a complex and widespread issue worthy of serious attention. The increased risks for negative outcomes in individuals who grew up in fatherless homes affect not only the well-being of the family but of society as a whole. As remarked by the National Center for Fathering, a non-profit research organization and lead contributor in the studies of fatherlessness and family dynamics states: "If it were classified as a disease, fatherlessness would be an epidemic worthy of attention as a national emergency."

The research study will provide insight into family dynamics that allow for resiliency to build up and mitigate the negative consequences of fatherless homes. This insight can benefit families and stimulate better outcomes than those predicted by prior research. This research study will use a quantitative design using self-administered surveys. Participants will be adults who were raised in fatherless households where the father was absent in the adult's childhood. Measures in the study will include basic questions related to demographics. This research design was selected in an effort to collect data from many participants at one point in time. In addition, due to limited time frames, this research design was selected due to its feasibility and practicality. Also, the selected research design ascertains that the researcher's biases and values will not intrude on participants' responses and interpretation of the data collected.

Significance of the Project for Social Work Practice

As normalizing and growingly common single-parent households and fatherless homes have been and will continue to become, there is little to no doubt that social workers have worked or will eventually work in such a family setting. Practitioners need to understand how to work with fatherless children and single-parent homes and develop effective ways to promote resiliency on the micro-level. Research emphasizes that such family dynamics can affect behavioral, mental, and emotional health and possibly perpetuate vulnerabilities and sensitivities to children (ren) and parent(s). On the macro level, research

preponderantly highlights the negative effects of fatherlessness on society and how it has been associating with increased incarcerations, increased high school dropouts, and poverty. The child welfare system experiences firsthand the negative effects of fatherlessness. From initial referral to open case, single parent households must navigate an already complex system from a disadvantaged point. Social workers competent in promoting resilience can implement strategies throughout all levels of intervention, pushing for greater outcomes.

The deep ramifications of fatherlessness incite deeper attention to research for more ways and strategies to promote resilience and guide interventions to mitigate fatherlessness's negative trajectories. Past research has continuously echoed the unfavorable outcomes of fatherlessness. This research would contribute to the increased studies focusing on resiliency that can nurture positive outcomes. At the heart of social work in child welfare, the aim is to marshal resilience, preserve families, and empower communities.

For this reason, the research question for this study is: what are the contributing factors to resilience among individuals who were raised in fatherless homes?

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, established research on fatherlessness will be identified in congruence with the purpose of the proposed research study. This chapter will also identify research findings related to resiliency in fatherless homes. Lastly, theories guiding conceptualization will be acknowledged.

Resiliency and Fatherless Households

Fatherlessness is a growing social issue, and a phenomenon consistently underscored in research as an escalating concern (Wilson et al., 2016). For example, studies such as Horn and Sylvester (2002) and Anderson (2002) report that the United States leads the world in the highest proportion of children living in a single-parent home with their mothers. Moreover, as noted in Kreider and Elliott study (2017), the rising numbers of single mother households have continued to double decade after decade, in that, from 1970 to 2008, numbers of single mother households went from nearly 3 million to 10 million; by 2018, the U.S is slightly under 20 million single-mother homes.

Although there is no singular cause to the complex social issue of fatherlessness, research has highlighted divorce and out-wedlock births as the leading causes of fatherlessness (Cheadle et al., 2010). Additional research from Pougnet et al. (2012) and Debell (2017) observed several trends were

fatherlessness pervaded generation after generation. Both studies implied that fatherlessness might exist as a form of intergenerational continuity, where men that are raised without fathers were more apt to become absent fathers themselves. At the same time, women raised in fatherless homes had a higher likelihood of having children with absent fathers.

The growing concern regarding the rising numbers of single-mother households is related to the negative outcomes and trajectories emphasized in research (Debell, 2007; National Kids Count, 2018; Whitney et al., 2017). Among these negative outcomes and trajectories include higher teenage pregnancies (Whitnery et al., 2017), conduct disorder and mental issues (Osborne & McLanahan, 2007); higher vulnerability to poverty (U.S Department of Health and Human Services, 2013), higher delinquency (Casey Foundation, 2020); and the likelihood of incarceration (Kreider & Elliot, 2017).

With such growing concerns and negative outcomes associated with fatherlessness and single-mother households, research and literature began to highlight and identify factors that promote resilience in single-mother families and focus on factors that help support adaptability and family functioning to support coping with stress and mitigating the negative trajectories associated with single mother homes (Greeff and Merwe, 2004; Jackson 2003; Moore 2010; Taylor & Conger 2017; Wilson et al., 2016). Resilience is the process and capacity of leveraging resources to overcome challenges and difficult times (Wilson et al., 2016). Among the literature on promoting resilience, common themes and

identified factors include maternal optimism, social and community support, spirituality, and religion (Greeff and Merwe, 2004; Jackson 2003).

Maternal Optimism

Maternal optimism relates to the mother's positive attitude towards life, motherhood, and their family's future (Greeff and Ritman, 2005; Jones et al., 2002). Commonly, single mothers are burdened with overcoming high psychological and emotional stressors associated with financial stress, lack of parenting and disciplinary support, and social isolation (Jones et al., 2002; Taylor & Conger, 2017). With such stressors, single mothers are more vulnerable to the exposure of depression, anxiety, poverty, and poorer parenting (Greeff & Ritman, 2005)

According to Taylor and Conger (2017), maternal optimism is an important protective factor in resilience, in that mothers that had higher optimism tend to have lower levels of depression and anxiety and higher levels of positive parenting. Furthermore, the study highlights that optimism is positively associated with active coping strategies that help reduce the adverse effects associated with depression, anxiety, and self-esteem. In contrast, mothers who have lower levels of optimism, self-esteem, and self-efficacy more frequently recruit punitive disciplinary practices that have been associated with child behavioral problems (Jones et al., 2002). Consistent findings were also highlighted in Jackson's longitudinal study (2000) that single mothers who

identified with a stronger sense of self-efficacy and optimism tend to be more active, vigilant, and more adaptive to parenting strategies than those who felt lower optimism and efficacy.

Research highlights maternal optimism as an association with child optimism; specifically, the mother's attitude can influence the attitude a child may adopt during stressful times and difficulties (Jones et al., 2002). For example, in a qualitative study that described the lived experience of successful black men raised in fatherless homes conducted by Wilson et al.(2016), selected participants included single mothers and their successful sons. In the study, maternal optimism was a recognized as contributing factor that promoted resilience, whereby the mothers were described to demonstrate their optimism by refraining from conveying negative attitudes to their sons about their absent father, encouraging their sons to pursue education and to minimize their worries by focusing on their faith. Additionally, findings from the study discussed how responses and attitudes from the successful sons who described their lived experience of overcoming adversity also mirrored the responses of their mothers, whereby the sons expressed the inspiration and desire of persevering stemmed from the optimism and faith of their mother.

Social Support

Throughout literature, social support has been echoed repetitively as a vital protective resource and contributing factor for overcoming adversity and challenging situations (Angie et al. 2016; Debell, 2008; Jackson, 2000; Taylor &

Conger, 2017; Greef Merwe, 2004; Greef& Ritman, 2005; Zulu & Munroe, 2017). Specifically, emotional, and financial resources are scarce in single-mother households than in homes where both parents are together (Zulu & Munro, 2017). So naturally, childcare challenges, attending school events, attending medical and dental appointments, and accommodating the unique needs of children can be daunting tasks to maintain in homes where both parents are together. But in single-parent homes, keeping up with the daily challenges of life while providing and attending to the needs of their children can be physically, psychologically, and financially more stressful (Moore, 2010).

As noted in research by Taylor and Conger (2017), single mothers who had higher social support were associated with higher positive parenting behaviors, lower depression and anxiety, and warmer relationships with their children. Additional implications from the study highlight the benefit of support group-based interventions for increasing social support levels and reducing depressive symptoms while also offering more mentoring opportunities and empathetic networks. In addition, Wilson et al.(2016) noted the use of grandparents' involvement to compensate for the lack of paternal support in their grandchildren's lives. Consistent findings in Greef and Merwe (2004) also highlight the availability of family, friends, and community support was a strong contributing factor to resilience in both children and single mothers.

In contrast, as highlighted in Jackson's study (2000), mothers with low social support were associated with less optimal parenting behavior, feeling

higher levels of stress that affect their responsiveness to their children's psychological and emotional needs than those with higher social support. Furthermore, additional research from Greef and Merwe (2004) suggests that children place a higher value on the need for social support, specifically, their friends, than their parents. Finally, the value of social support as a resounding contributing factor to resilience is observed as a leading factor in the construct of resilience theory (Van Breda, 2018).

Spirituality and Religion

Consistent qualitative and quantitative research recognize spirituality and religion as protective factors of promoting strength and resilience (Moore, 2010; Jones et al., 2002; Pandya, 2017). In addition, spirituality is highlighted as a critical aspect of promoting resilience and is typically discussed in the growing field of positive psychology (Pandya, 2017; Zulu & Munroe, 2017). Spirituality is identified as a contributing factor to family resilience, in that people from across cultures often rely on a form of spirituality and religion to deepen their sense of wholeness and draw strength from the belief that their faith can serve as the power to persevere, adjust, and overcome challenges (Zulu & Munroe, 2017)

Although spirituality and religion may vary from culture to culture, research highlights the supportive and conjunctive nature of spirituality to enhance other factors such as optimism and social support (Moore, 2010; Pandya, 2017; Taylor & Conger, 2017; Zulu & Munro 2017). For example, Taylor and Conger (2017)

discuss how participants in their study accentuated spirituality and religion as a factor that promotes positive emotions and fosters commitment, clarity, and a sense of purpose when facing adversity.

Theories Guiding Conceptualization

Resilience Theory

There are many approaches and theories based on resilience. Each theory derives its conceptual framework based on how resilience is defined. Pioneers to the research on resilience Garmezy (1991) viewed resilience based on individual characteristics, family support, and social support attributes. According to Garmezy, resilience derives from realizing cognitive capabilities, personal discipline, and the capacity to build supportive social networks, and for that reason, promoting resilience centers around the observation and the internal building capacity to respond to difficult situations and focus on positive attitudes to identify personal strengths, openness, and commitment to withstand hardships and promote personal wholeness despite past and present discomfort. Following the theoretical framework introduced by Garmezy, creating and identifying tools that enhance optimism, promote self-control while building social support networks, and promote resilience in individuals.

Family Stress Adaptation Theory

Family Stress Adaptation theory describes how families adapt to stressful circumstances and conditions by identifying the contributing factors to

family stress that disrupt family homeostasis and equilibrium and focus on internal and external family resources to support coping and family coherence (Forrest Martin, 2016). The theory also emphasizes the importance of supportive social networks like extended family, church, community, and social groups to help the family cope with stress. The theory also postulates the importance of family perception on negative events. Families who mentally dwell on hardships and negative impacts increase family stress, making the family's capacity to cope more difficult. Family Stress Adaptation theory is relevant to the current study as it emphasizes identifying contributing factors that cause stress and the necessity to focus on internal and external resources that will support healthy coping.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

This study seeks to describe and identify resilient factors among individuals raised in a fatherless home. This chapter will discuss the design and process for which this study will be carried out. This chapter includes the study design, sampling, data collection and instruments, procedures, protection of human subjects, and lastly, the data analysis.

Study Design

The purpose of the study is to describe and identify the contributing factors to resilience among individuals who were raised in fatherless homes. This is a descriptive cross-sectional study consisting of quantitative methodology that will allow the focus and collection of insight from those raised in homes where their father was not present. Employing a descriptive and quantitative approach to this topic provides an opportunity to capture information from large populations and different demographics. In addition, this approach strengthens the study as the issue of fatherlessness is not exclusive to any group of people but is a pervasive issue that stretches nationally, globally, historically, and presently.

Through the employment of quantitative methodology, this study will capture information from the participants anonymously. The subject of one's

family composition and childhood experience can be a sensitive and private topic that some participants would not like to share under direct observation or through interviews. Using surveys, the study can collect information from those who have experienced fatherlessness while growing up while keeping the identity of the participants unknown.

Anticipated limitations of the study will relate to the use of quantitative methodology as response selections from the scales employed in this study will be prescribed and may not accurately and comprehensively account for an individual's experience or level of resilience. In addition, the instruments and measures used to analyze resilience do not directly focus on emotions, personal temperament, and attachment style as potential elements that may affect resilience.

Sampling

The study will make use of a non-random purposive sample. The sample will be composed of 100 individuals raised in a fatherless home. Participants are adults 18 and over and meet criteria for being raised in a fatherless home.

Participants will not be discriminated against based on their age, gender, educational attainment, or financial status. Participants of all backgrounds will be encouraged to participate in increasing the generalization of the targeted population.

Data Collection and Instruments

Measures in the study will include basic questions related to demographics, and questions will be modeled after traditional demographic surveys. The demographic surveys will capture age, gender identification, income, educational level achieved, and employment status. As it relates to addressing questions related to fatherlessness, the researcher will use the Father Absence and Resilience Demographic Inventory (FARDI) (Moore, 2010). in combination with The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (RISC 25) (Connor & Davidson, 2003) to collect information about resilience factors in fatherless homes. FARDI will be used to collect data and screen for qualifying participants that meet minimum criteria of being raised in a fatherless home. FARDI not only captures qualifying data on family composition but also captures information and asks questions relating maternal optimism. Questions were adapted FARDI (Moore, 2010) The adapted FARDI questionnaire consists of a 16-item questionnaire where participants will respond to questions related to their father's absence and involvement in social support networks. Questions from FARDI will question such as: *Did you grow up in a: a) single-parent home b) foster home c) traditional two-parent homed) relatives other than your parents e) other ____.*

Which statement resembles your relationship with your father: a) I never knew my father b) I have not spent 1-2 years with my father c) I have not spent more than 3-5 years with my father d) I have not spent more than five or more years with my father.

RISC 25 will capture information relating to resiliency, specifically, resiliency factors pertaining to social support, self-efficacy, spirituality and religion. RISC 25 is globally recognized instrument for measuring resiliency with strong construct validity and reliability.

Questions from RISC 25. will consist of the use of a Likert scale from 1 to 5, *1 meaning it is not true, 2 meaning it is usually true, 3 meaning it is half true and half false, 4 meaning it is usually true, 5 meaning it is true.* For example, questions will ask, *“I am able to adapt to change”; Sometimes fate or God helps me.”*

Procedures

The survey will be conducted using the Qualtrics platform through the student account provided by CSUSB. Participation in the survey will be solicited by creating a flyer requesting research participants who meet the criteria of being raised in a fatherless home. The flyer will clearly state the goal and purpose of the study and a link and quick response “QR” code through which the survey may be accessed. The flyer will be distributed by the researchers both physically and digitally.

Researchers will post it on approved bulletin boards throughout the CSUSB campus to distribute the flyer physically. The QR codes on the physical flyers will allow participants to complete the survey by scanning the code on the

flyer with a digital device that will prompt the survey link to open on their device's browser.

In efforts to recruit participants who meet the criteria for individuals who grew up in fatherless homes that are not CSUSB students, the researchers will also post a digital flyer and survey link on approved social media platforms. The Qualtrics platform allows for posting flyers and survey link directly to approved social media platforms. These social media platforms allow for web content sharing and discussion posts, allowing the researchers to share the link virtually. The researchers will target online communities that were established on the issue of fatherlessness.

The participants will have a total of an hour and a half to complete the survey. It is not anticipated that more than thirty minutes will be needed. The first part of the survey will include a section summarizing the purpose of the study. Following will be a section on confidentiality and informed consent. The survey will also inform the participant that there is no direct benefit from participating in the survey and will require the participant to acknowledge their understanding. Participants will then begin the survey and will self-report according with the statements. Following the completion of the survey, participants will receive a debriefing statement. The debriefing statement will state the goal of the research and data being collected and thank them for participating. The statement will also acknowledge the possible emotional reactions resulting from participating in the survey and will offer a list of resources that the participant may utilize. Finally, the

researchers' contact information will be listed if the participants have any questions or concerns about the study.

Once a survey is completed, the data gathered will be stored on the Qualtrics platform.

Protection of Human Subjects

The use of a digital survey will establish the anonymity of the research participant. Throughout the survey, there will be no personally identifiable information gathered or collected, establishing the confidentiality of the participant.

The survey will include confidentiality, informed consent, and a debriefing statement. Due to the sensitive nature of the research topic, the debriefing statement would include resources that participants may utilize if they experienced any emotional distress during the survey.

The data gathered from the survey is protected as it will only be accessible on the Qualtrics platform by the researchers. Access to the information requires a username and a password.

Data Analysis

Researchers will use quantitative methods to collect data by employing the CD-Risk 25 survey questionnaire to analyze resiliency and demographic data

from the adapted Father Absence and Resilience Demographic Inventory (FARDI) such as age, income, education, *family setting*, *spirituality* and *father involvement and maternal optimism*. Information will then be entered on SPSS to run correlation test to see if there are any significant resilience factors among individuals raised in fatherless homes.

Hypothesis

It is hypothesis that there is associative relationship between scores on the Connor-Davidson Resiliency Scale and scores related to maternal optimism and spirituality, in that, respondents that who have deeper connection to spirituality and were raised my optimistic mother despite being in the fatherless home will have higher resilience.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter details the analysis of the data collected for the purpose of examining and identifying the resilient factors among individuals raised in a fatherless home. A total of 24 participants anonymously completed the survey corresponding to this study. Participants were all adults, 18 years and older, and were individuals who identified being raised in a fatherless home, where their biological father did not reside in the home and were raised in a single mother home or with relatives. The data collection period transpired from March 2021 to mid-October 2021. This chapter includes descriptive statistics, the findings of this study, and a summary of the results.

Descriptive Statistics

Participants Demographics

A total of 24 adult individuals participated in this study. Table 1 displays the demographic characteristics of all the participants which includes, gender, education, marital status, and household income. In this sample, 15 (62.5%) participants identified as female and 9 (37.5%) identified as male. Marital status included 13 (54.2%) single, 8 (33.3%) married, 2 (8.3%) divorced, with one participant who preferred not to answer.

The education level of the participants included, 3 (12.5%) High school diploma or G.E.D, 6 (25%) with some education beyond high school but no degree earned, 2 (8.3%) had associate degrees, 6 (25 %) had a bachelor level degree, 2 (8.3%) had graduate or professional school but no degree earned, 5 (20.8 %) had earned advanced and master level degrees. The participants ages ranged from 22 to 68 years and older, there was 4 (16.6%) between the ages of 18-25 year old, 9 (37.5) between the ages of 26-35 years old, 7 (29.1%) 36-45 years old, 2 (8.3%) between the ages 46-55 years old, 2 (8.3%) between the ages 56 and older ($M= 34.57$, $STD = 11.027$). Yearly income of participants in this sample included, 3 (12.5%) making under \$29,999, 3 (12.5%) making \$30,000 - \$49,999; 12 (50%) making \$50,000 - \$74,999; 4 (16.7%) 100,000 - \$149,999, 1 (4.2%) \$150,000 - \$199,999, and 1 (4.2%) who preferred not to answer.

Table 1. Demographics

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	15	62.5
Male	9	37.5
Marital status		
Single	13	54.2
Married	8	33.3
Divorced	2	8.3
I prefer not to answer	1	4.2
Age		
18-25	4	16.6
26-35	9	37.5
36-45	7	29.1
46-55	2	8.3
56 and Older	2	8.3
Household Income		
Under \$29,999	3	12.5
\$30,000 - \$49,999	3	12.5
\$50,000 - \$74,999	12	50.0
\$100,000 - \$149,999	4	16.7
\$150,000 - \$199,999	1	4.2
I prefer not to answer	1	4.2
Education		
High school diploma or G.E.D	3	12.5
Some education beyond high school, no degree	6	25.0
College degree- AA	2	8.3
College degree- BS, BA	6	25.0
Some graduate or professional school, no degree	2	8.3
Advanced degree- MS, MA, Ph.D, etc	5	20.8

Father Absence and Resilience Demographic Inventory (FARDI)

Survey questions 6-8 consisted of The FARDI which included multiple choice regarding a participant's experience and interaction with their father. The sample size of this question included 24 participants. Participants were provided with a multiple choices that best fit their description and experience with their father, multiple choices options included: *I have never spent time with my father, I have not spent time with my father in one year or less.* Approximately one-third of participants reported that they (35.7%) never spent time with their father. Approximately another one-third of participants (32.1%) reported participants reported that they have not spent time with their father for more than 5 years. While the remainder of participants (25%) reported between 1 -5 years spent with their father. Only two participants (7.1%) preferred not to answer. See figure 1.

Additional questions in the survey included multiple choice options that best describes the participant's family setting. Multiple choice options included: *Single parent home, Traditional two parent home, Relative (other than parents) home, and Foster parent home.* Most of the participants were raised in single parent homes (75%). See figure 2. In addition, *participants* answered questions such as *why was your father not involved in your life?* Most participants (35.7%) selected *the other*, while both *Divorce* and *Desertion* were the second most selected response from participants (21.4%). See figure 3.

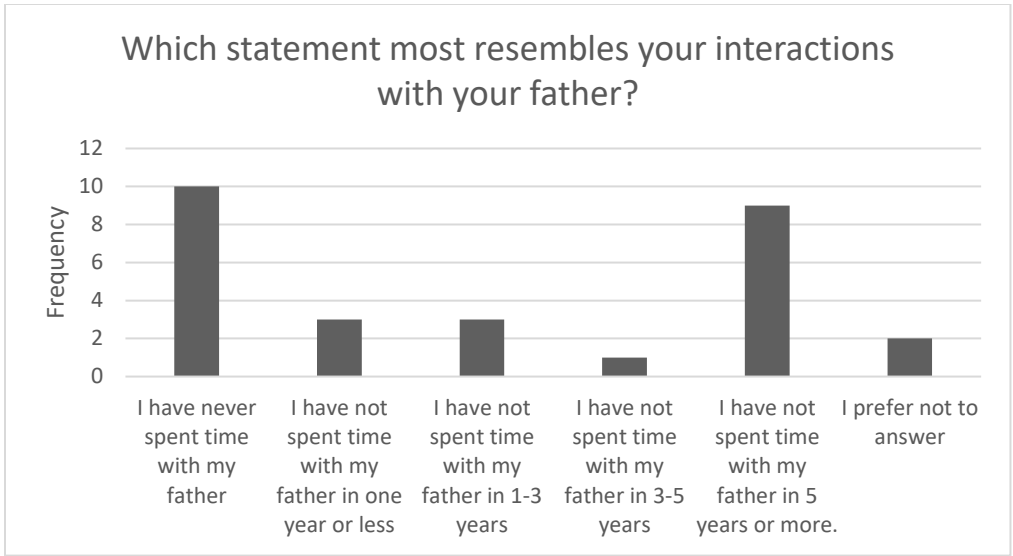


Figure 1. FARDI :Time spent with father



Figure 2. FARDI: Reason for Father absence

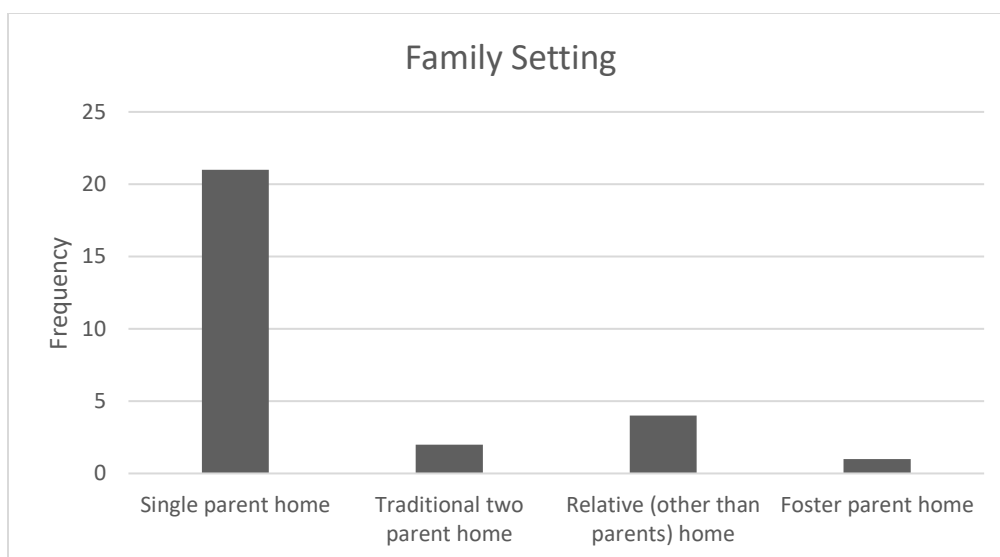


Figure 3. FARDI Family Setting

Spirituality

As this study sought to identify and examine spirituality as a contributing factor to resilience, 24 respondents answered questions 9-12, which consisted of questions that asked the frequency of the religious services they attended, their trust and belief in a higher authority, identifying with faith as a source for help, and if they accept situations that are not in their hands but in the hands of God or a higher authority. Pertaining the question *I attended religious services*, 11 (39.3%) responded with *Never*, a quarter of the respondents answered 7 (25%) *1-3 times per week*, 5 (17.9%) responded *1-4 times per month*, 2 (7.1%) responded *More than 4 times per month*. See figure 4.

Pertaining the question *I believe in God or a higher authority to solve my problems for me* 5 (17.9%) responded *Never*, 6 (21.4%) responded *Sometimes*, 6 (21.4%) responded *Frequently*, and majority 10 (35.7%) responded *Always*.

See figure 5. As it relates to respondents answering *I use my faith to help me decide how to deal with a situation*. 4 (14.3%) responded *Never*, 6 (21.4%) responded *Sometimes*, a quarter of the respondents 7 (25%) responded *Frequently*, while half of the respondents 14 (50%) responded *Always*. See Figure 6. The last question in the spirituality section of this survey asked respondents *I accept that certain situation are not in my hands but in the hands of God or higher authority*, 3 (10.7%) responded *Never*, 4 (14.3%) *Sometimes*, a quarter of respondents 7(25%) responded *Frequently*, while majority 14 (50%) responded *Always*. See figure 7.

Responses from Questions 9-12, were coded and totaled into spirituality scores. M = 10.79, median 11.00, Std. – 3.70, min – 4.00, max- 16.00. see figure 8

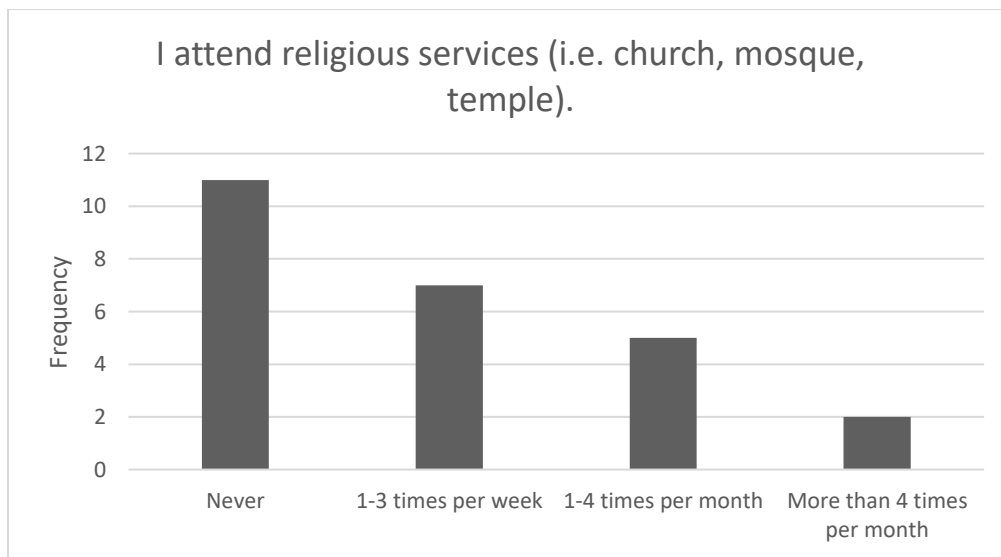


Figure 4. Religious Services Attended

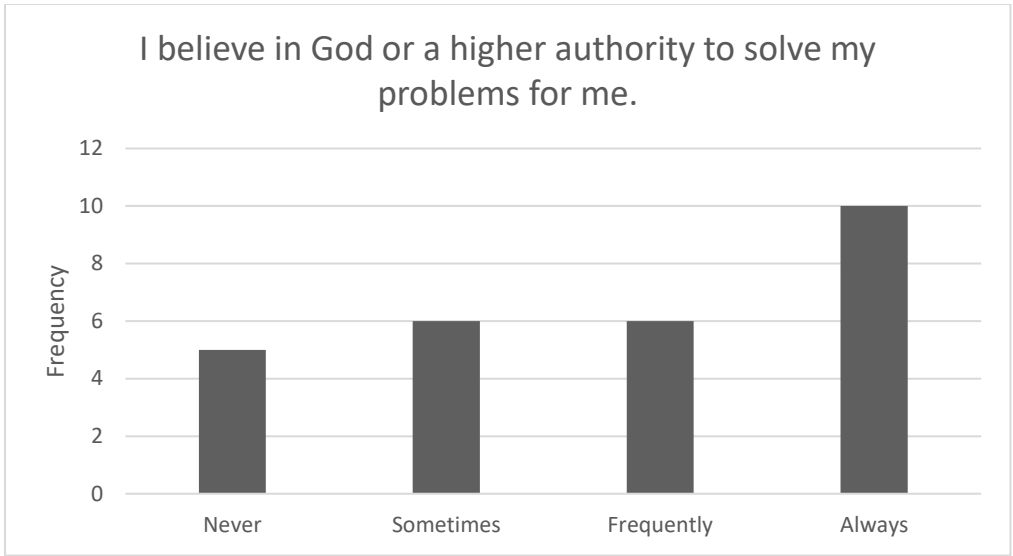


Figure 5. Belief in Higher Authority

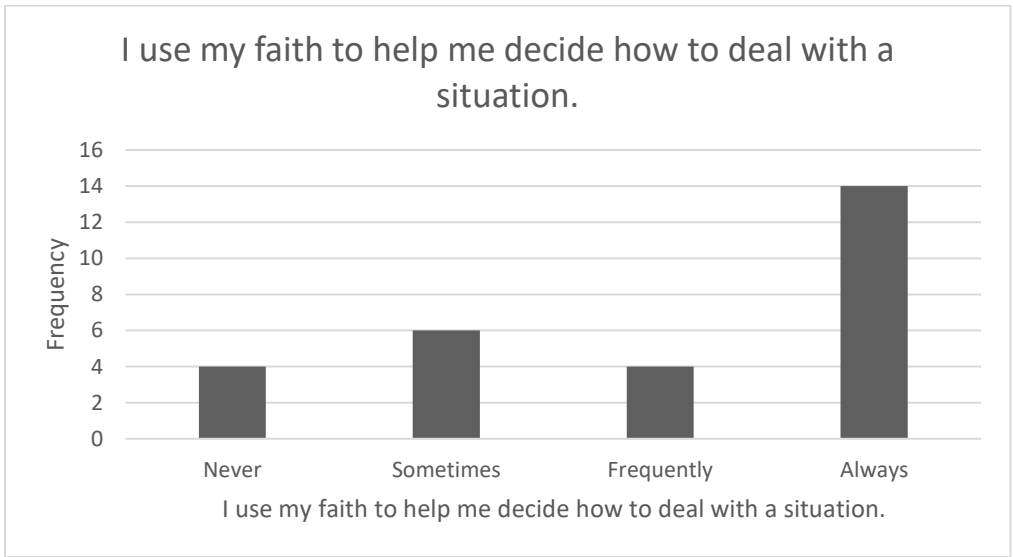


Figure 6. Importance of Faith

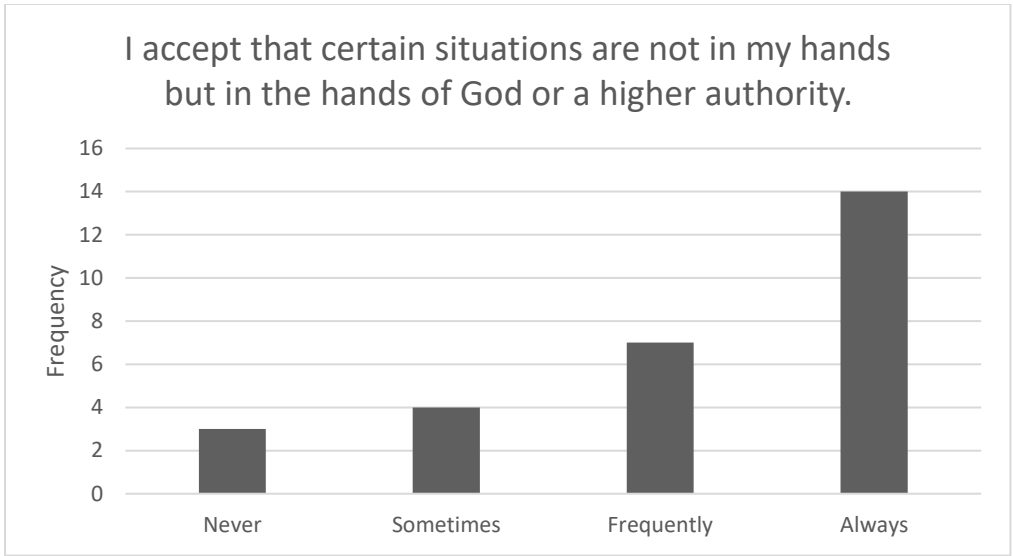


Figure 7. Sovereignty of Higher Power or God

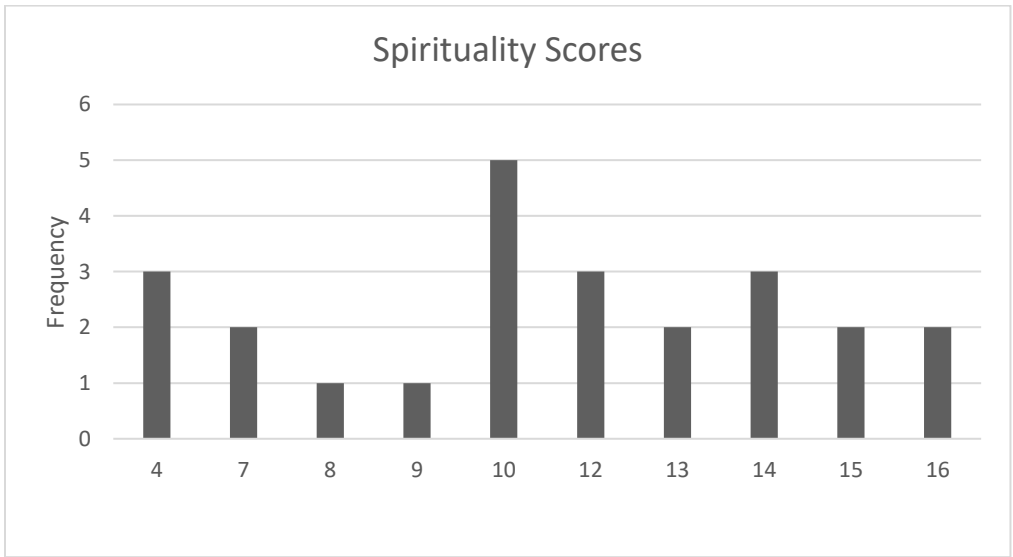


Figure 8. Spirituality Scores

Connor Davidson Resilience Scale Scores

28 Respondents responded to a 25-item survey, which carry a 5-point Likert scale with range of responses, such as: not true at all (0), rarely true (1), sometimes true (2), often true (3), and true nearly all of the time (4). The total score ranges from 0-100, with higher scores reflecting greater resilience (Connor & Davidson, 2003). Results from the respondents of this study are M = 83.21, median – 86.0, Std- 10.53, minimum -62.0, max- 100. See Figure 9.

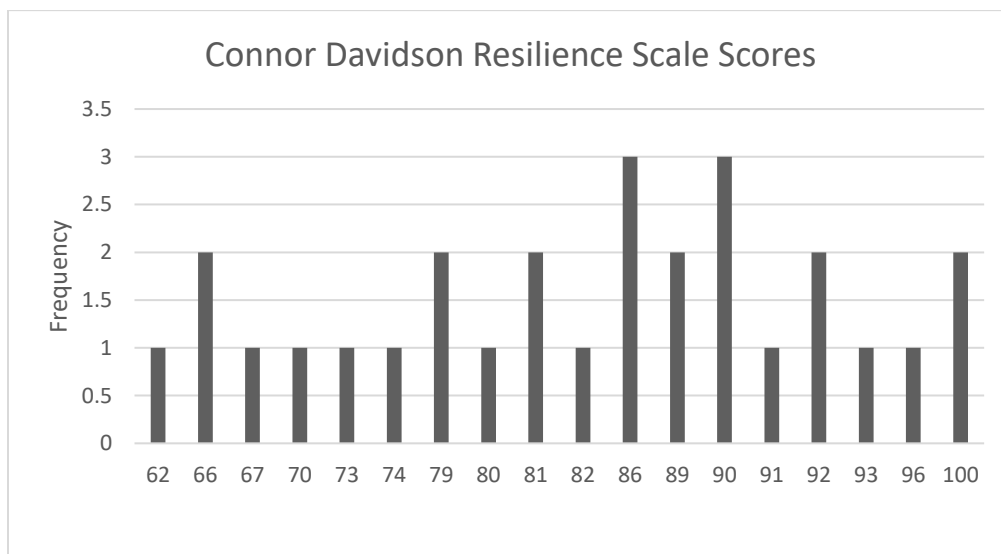


Figure 9. Resiliency Scores

Maternal Optimism

Questions 13-16 pertained to measures of identifying and examining maternal optimism as a contributing factor to resilience. 28 respondents, responded to the question *My mother was a positive influence in my life*. 3 (10.7%) *Never*, 8(28.6%) *Sometimes*, 4 (14.3%) *Frequently*, and majority responded 13 (46.4%) *Always*. See figure 10. Pertaining to the question “My

mother spoke negatively about my father", respondents answered 6 (21.4%) *Never*, 3 (10.7%) *Sometimes*, 28.6%, majority responded 11 (39.3%) *Always*. See figure 11. Additionally, respondents answered the question *My mother encouraged me to have a positive attitude towards myself*, 2(7.1%) responded *Never*, majority 11 (39.3%) *Sometimes*, 6 (21.4%) *Frequently*, and 9 (32.1%) responded *Always*. See figure 11. Lastly, respondents answered the question *My mother recognized positive qualities about myself*, 1 (3.6%) *Never*, 8 (28.6%) *Sometimes*, 7 (25.0) *Frequently*, and majority 12 (42.9%) *Always*. See figure 12.

Total scores from maternal optimism, M= 10.96, Median 12.00, Std. 1.95, Minimum 7.00, Maximum 13.00. See figure 13.

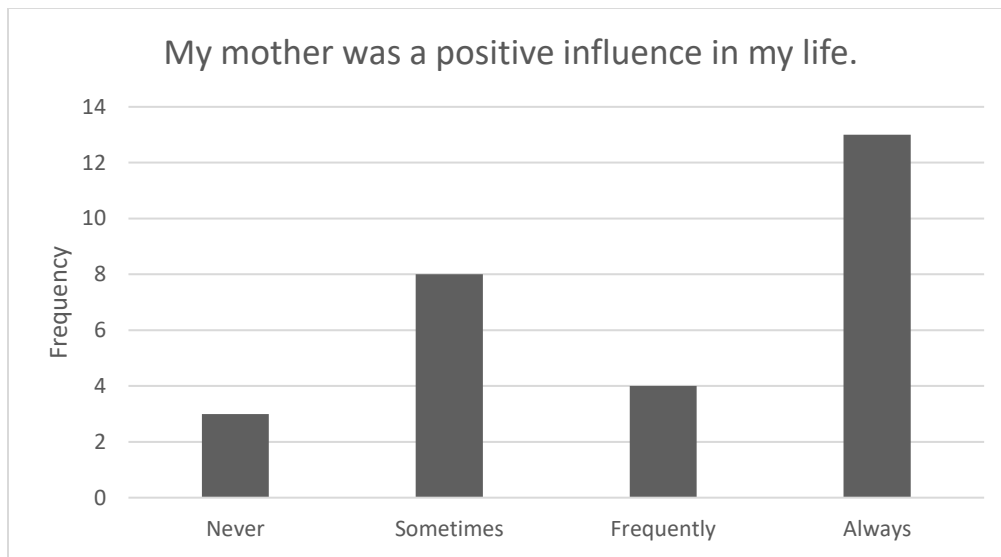


Figure 10. Mother's Influence

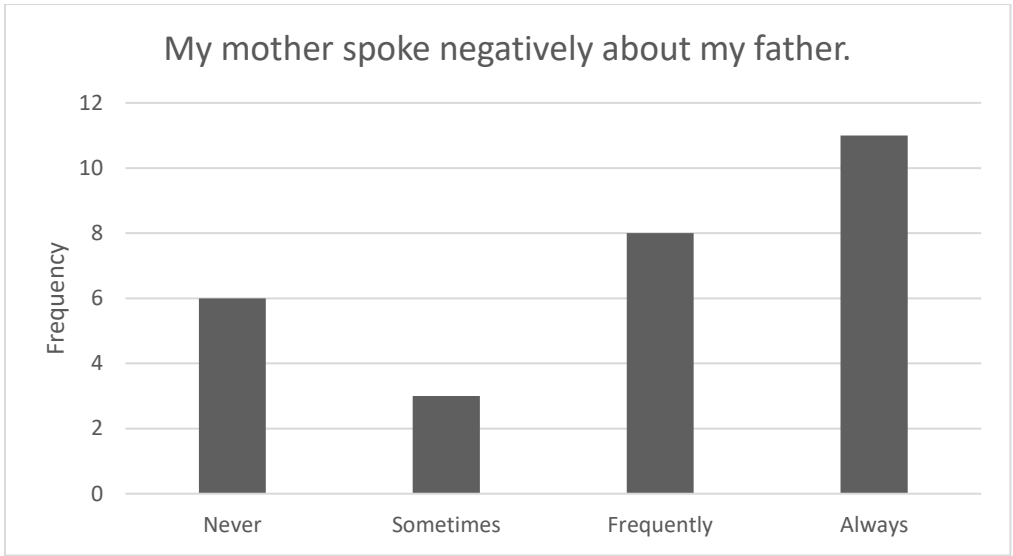


Figure 11. Mother's Attitude Towards Father

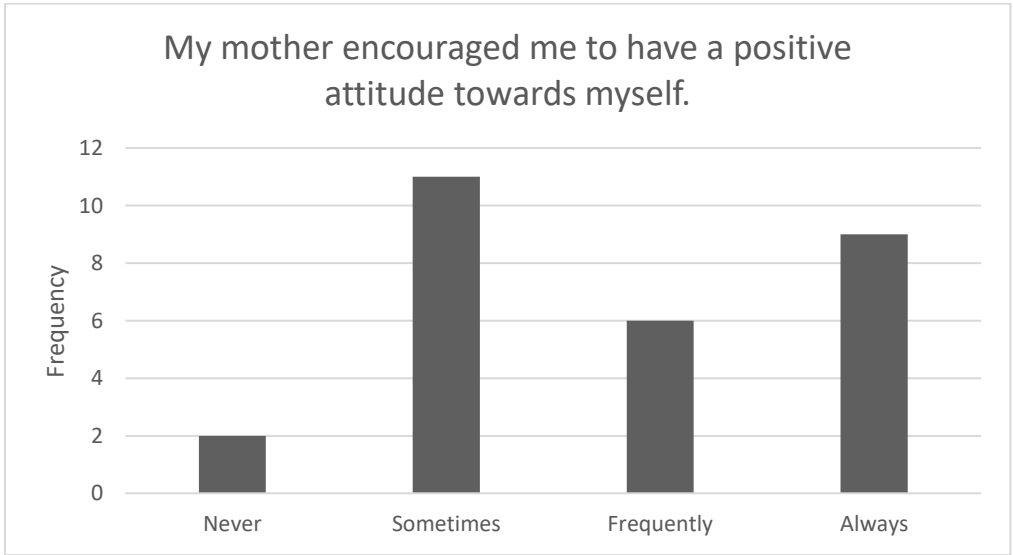


Figure 12. Mother's Attitude Towards Myself

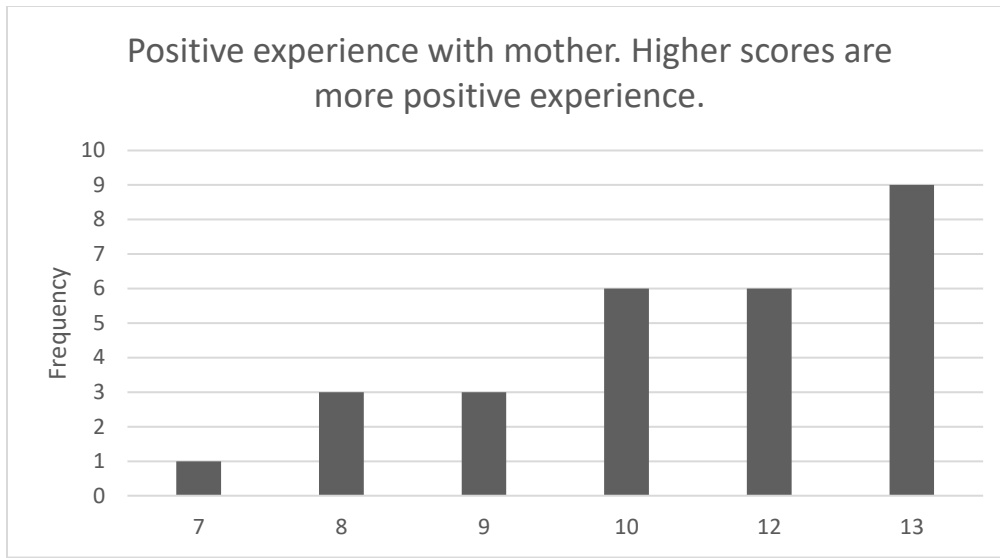


Figure 13. Maternal Optimism Scores

Presentation of Findings

A correlation test was run to examine the relationship between scores on the Connor-Davidson Resiliency scale and scores on maternal optimism and spirituality. The purpose of the correlation test was to analyze and test the hypothesis that higher spirituality and greater maternal optimism would be positively related to higher resilience. The correlation test in this study revealed that there was no significant relationship found between resiliency scores and scores related to spirituality and maternal optimism.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study surveyed individuals who were raised in fatherless homes to identify contributing resilience factors. This chapter discusses the study's findings and correlations in relation to established data and research regarding resiliency in individuals who have been raised in fatherless homes. This chapter also presents the study's strengths and limitations and its relevance to the study's outcomes. In addition, recommendations for social work practice, education and research are offered. Lastly, a conclusion of the study is provided.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify the contributing factors that promote resilience among individuals who were raised in fatherless homes and provide an insight as to what family dynamics allow for resilience to grow in the individual. A fatherless home was identified as a home with no biological or figurative father present in the home regardless of the reason why. For the purpose of this study, resilience was identified as the process and capacity of leveraging resources to overcome challenges and difficult times (Wilson, et al., 2016). The study utilized the Connor- Davidson Resilience Scale (CDRS) to measure resiliency in research participants. The study also utilized the Father Absence and Resilience Demographic Inventory (FARDI) (Moore, 2010) to qualify a participant's eligibility and capture information relating to maternal optimism.

Established research has shown that two main factors are associated with promoting resilience in individuals raised in fatherless homes. Those two factors were maternal optimism and spirituality. In 2017, Taylor and Conger conducted a study to explore protective factors in single-mother homes and maternal optimism was highlighted as one of the important protective factors for both the mother and the child. Maternal optimism refers to mothers' positive outlook or belief system about their ability to successfully parent their children and help them achieve favorable outcomes. Maternal optimism was demonstrated to be associated with building healthy coping strategies when faced with stress and adversity. Maternal optimism also showed to be helpful in reducing the adverse effects of several mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. The correlation test in this study did not find a significant relationship between the scores on the Connor- Davidson scale and the scores on maternal optimism.

Spirituality also plays an important role in promoting resilience, thus why it was included in this study. Spirituality can provide individuals with a sense of meaning and purpose, as well as a connection to something greater than themselves which can help them cope with difficult situations (Moore, 2010; Jones et al., 2002; Pandya, 2017). Research has shown that spirituality can help individuals develop a positive outlook on life and can provide individuals with a sense of social support. In this case, spirituality is a protective factor in individuals raised in fatherless homes due to the resilience it promotes. The correlation test in this study did not find a significant relationship between the scores on the Connor- Davidson scale and the scores on spirituality.

After analyzing the data, there was no significant correlation between the participant's resilience scores and maternal optimism or spirituality. There were also no significant correlations between the variables and participants' age and gender. Therefore, our findings were not significant and did not align with the literature establishing maternal optimism and spirituality as resilience factors for individuals in fatherless homes. There are several factors contributing to the lack of significance with the findings that are discussed below.

Strengths and Limitations

The purpose of examining and addressing the strengths and limitations of this study is to analyze the credibility of the findings and the potential for generalizability. It also important to examine strengths and limitations in regards to the development of future research on fatherlessness.

Strengths

In analyzing the strengths of this study, three strengths were identified. One, the survey research method used is a reliable and standardized method of information inquiry as it asks all participants the same questions, promoting consistency. Two, the study was cost effective as an electronic survey method was utilized to collect data. This facilitated recruitment for research participants. Three, the survey created had a strong survey design implementing close ended questions, appropriate number of answer choices and specific questions.

Limitations

In analyzing the study's potential limitations, having an insufficient sample size was identified as one of the limitations. A small sample size can undermine validity and produce biased samples. Another limitation would be the target population for the research. The study recruited participants and validated participation based on a blanket definition for fatherlessness (regardless of the reason why the father was not in the home). A more refined target population (surveying those who experienced fatherlessness due to death or incarceration) could capture and produce more specific data regarding resilience factors due to the family dynamics the absence of the father has influenced. In addition, qualitative data collection would be able to capture the individual variances of research participants and their experiences with homelessness. Also, majority of the participants identified as female, thus the female experience is captured, and the male experience is not. Finally, because all of the individuals in the sample size did not have a father present, the study was unable to compare resiliency outcomes for individuals who can report having their fathers present.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Education, and Research

The negative consequences of fatherless homes have permeated all systems. Established data has demonstrated the negative consequences of being raised in a fatherless home, from the healthcare system to the criminal justice system and child welfare system. It has also been shown to be detrimental to the emotional development and mental health of the individual as well as a predisposition to risk of poverty and substance use disorders.

Fatherlessness is a common family dynamic. In child welfare, the risk of a child becoming involved with child welfare is automatically increased when the father is not present in the home. Once the child and their family are involved, the current policies and practices discourage and discredit fatherhood in the child welfare system.

In social work practice and education, social work students should be taught about these issues before entering the social work field. However, once entering the field, social workers should continue to develop their knowledge and expertise on fathers and their roles in the home. Most commonly, the problems associated with fatherlessness plague the child welfare system, but they are also present in many other fields where social work is required. Therefore, social work students should enter their prospective fields equipped with knowledge on the complex social issue of fatherlessness and how they can enhance or mitigate the consequences.

It is critical for research on fatherlessness to continue. However, it is also important for research on single-parent homes to continue. When individuals hear the phrase “single-parent”, it is almost always assumed that the single parent is the mother, not the father. However, this family dynamic also presents many of the same complex and adverse effects of fatherlessness and should be studied just as much.

Prevention before intervention should be the goal when working with families. Building a family’s protective factors and contributing to their resilience to help them navigate life’s challenges and enhance their well-being encapsulates what social work is.

Conclusion

This study attempted to identify and highlight the protective factors associated with resilience in fatherless homes. Although the data produced did not correlate with prior established literature, the negative consequences of fatherlessness still permeate all aspects of society. Social workers carry the duty of helping mitigate the negative consequences and change the trajectory of the children being raised in fatherless homes.

APPENDIX A
INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT

The research study you are being asked to participate in will explore resilience factors among individuals who were raised in fatherless homes. This research study seeks participants ages 18+ who meet the criteria. The study is being conducted by graduate students Joshua Kennedy and Crystal Orellana, under the supervision of Thomas Davis at California State University San Bernardino (CSUSB). The research study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at CSUSB.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the study is to explore resilience factors among individuals who were raised in fatherless homes.

DESCRIPTION: Participants will complete an electronic survey where they will answer a series of questions regarding resiliency, spirituality, maternal optimism, and some basic demographics.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation is completely voluntary. At any time throughout the study, you may refuse or discontinue your participation.

CONFIDENTIALITY: No identifiable information will be gathered. All responses will remain confidential and secure. Data collected will be presented in group form.

DURATION: It will take approximately 30 minutes to complete the electronic survey.

RISKS: Due to the sensitive nature of the research topic, you may experience some emotional discomfort. In the event that you do not wish to continue your participation, you may end the survey.

BENEFITS: There are no direct benefits that will result from your participation in this study.

CONTACT: If you have any questions about this study, please contact Joshua Kennedy at 003516057@coyote.csusb.edu or Crystal Orellana at 004272072@coyote.csusb.edu

RESULTS: Results of the study can be obtained from the Pfau Library ScholarWorks database (<http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/>) at California State University, San Bernardino after July 20XX.

I understand that I must be 18 years of age or older to participate in your study, have read and understand the consent document and agree to participate in your study.

Place an X mark here

Date

APPENDIX B
SURVEY

Please review the following statements and rate each statement by how they reflect how you feel or think personally. Use the following scale to rate each statement.

1 =Not true 2= somewhat not true 3= Neither true or untrue 4= somewhat true 5= True

	Not true	Usually not true	Neutral	Usually true	True
I am able to adapt when changes occur.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲
I have one close and secure relationship.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲
Sometimes fate or God helps me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲
I can deal with whatever comes my way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲
Past successes give me confidence.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲
I try to see the humorous side of things when I am faced with problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲
Having to cope with stress can make me stronger.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲
I tend to bounce back after illness, injury or other hardships.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲
I believe most things happen for a reason.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲
I make my best effort, no matter what.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲
I believe I can achieve my goals, even if there are obstacles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲
Even when hopeless, I do not give up.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲
In times of stress, I know where to find help	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲
Under pressure, I stay focused and think clearly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲
I prefer to take the lead in problem-solving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲
I am not easily discouraged by failure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲
I think of myself as a strong person when dealing with life's challenges and difficulties.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲
I make unpopular or difficult decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲

I am able to handle unpleasant or painful feelings like sadness, fear, and anger.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲
I have to act on a hunch	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲
I have a strong sense of purpose in life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲
I feel like I am in control.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲
I like challenges.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲
I work to attain goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲
I take pride in my achievements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	◀	▶	▲

Please type your answer for the following question

1. How old are you? _____
2. What is your household income?
 - a. Under \$29,999
 - b. \$30,000 -\$49,999
 - c. \$50,000 -\$74,999
 - d. \$100,000 -\$149,999
 - e. \$150,000 - \$199,999
3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
 - a. Some high school
 - b. High School diploma or G.E.D
 - c. Some Education beyond high school no degree
 - d. College Degree AA
 - e. College Degree BA
 - f. Some Graduate or professional school, no degree
 - g. Advanced degree (M.S or Ph.D.)
4. What is your marital status
 - a. Single
 - b. Married
 - c. Divorced
 - d. Widow (er)
 - e. Unmarried partners
5. What is your gender
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Transgender
 - d. Prefer not to say
6. Have you grown up in a:
 - a. Single parent home

- b. Traditional two parent home
 - c. Relative other than parents
 - d. Foster parents
 - e. other
7. Why is your father not involved in your life?
- a. Death
 - b. Desertion
 - c. Incarceration
 - d. Divorce
 - e. Other
8. Which Statement most resembles your interactions with your father?
- a. I have never spent time with my father
 - b. I have not spent time with my father in one year or less
 - c. I have not spent time with my father in 1- 3 years
 - d. I have not spent time with my father 3-5 year
 - e. I have not spent time with my father in 5 years or more
9. I attend religious services (i.e. church, mosque, temple)
- a. Never
 - b. 1- 3 times per week
 - c. 1- 4 times per month
 - d. More than 4 times per month
10. I believe in God or a high authority to solve my problems for me.
- a. Never
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Frequently
 - d. Always
11. I use my faith to help me decide how to deal with a situation.
- a. Never
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Frequently
 - d. Always
12. I accept that certain situations are not in my hands but in the hands of God or a higher authority.
- a. Never
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Frequently
 - d. Always
13. My mother was a positive influence in my life.
- a. Never
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Frequently
 - d. Always

14. My mother spoke negatively about my father.
- a. Never
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Frequently
 - d. Always
15. My mother encouraged me to have a positive attitude towards myself.
- a. Never
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Frequently
 - d. Always
16. My mother recognized positive qualities about myself.
- a. Never
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Frequently
 - d. Always

Survey revised from Moore's (2010) doctoral dissertation

APPENDIX C
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER



February 17, 2022

CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Administrative/Exempt Review Determination

Status: Determined Exempt

IRB-FY2022-79

Thomas Davis Joshua Kennedy, Crystal Orellana
CSBS - Social Work
California State University, San Bernardino
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, California 92407

Dear Thomas Davis Joshua Kennedy, Crystal Orellana:

Your application to use human subjects, titled "Contributing factors to resilience among individuals raised in fatherless homes" has been reviewed and determined exempt by the Chair of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of CSU, San Bernardino. An exempt determination means your study had met the federal requirements for exempt status under 45 CFR 46.104. The CSUSB IRB has weighed the risks and benefits of the study to ensure the protection of human participants.

This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional campus approvals which may be required including access to CSUSB campus facilities and affiliate campuses. Investigators should consider the changing COVID-19 circumstances based on current CDC, California Department of Public Health, and campus guidance and submit appropriate protocol modifications to the IRB as needed. CSUSB campus and affiliate health screenings should be completed for all campus human research related activities. Human research activities conducted at off-campus sites should follow CDC, California Department of Public Health, and local guidance. See CSUSB's [COVID-19 Prevention Plan](#) for more information regarding campus requirements.

You are required to notify the IRB of the following as mandated by the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) federal regulations 45 CFR 46 and CSUSB IRB policy. The forms (modification, renewal, unanticipated/adverse event, study closure) are located in the Cayuse IRB System with instructions provided on the IRB Applications, Forms, and Submission webpage. Failure to notify the IRB of the following requirements may result in disciplinary action. The Cayuse IRB system will notify you when your protocol is due for renewal. Ensure you file your protocol renewal and continuing review form through the Cayuse IRB system to keep your protocol current and active unless you have completed your study.

- **Ensure your CITI Human Subjects Training is kept up-to-date and current throughout the study.**

- **Submit a protocol modification (change) if any changes (no matter how minor) are proposed in your study for review and approval by the IRB before being implemented in your study.**
- **Notify the IRB within 5 days of any unanticipated or adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research.**
- **Submit a study closure through the Cayuse IRB submission system once your study has ended.**

If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Michael Gillespie, the Research Compliance Officer. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-7588, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at mgillesp@csusb.edu. Please include your application approval number IRB-FY2022-79 in all correspondence. Any complaints you receive from participants and/or others related to your research may be directed to Mr. Gillespie.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Nicole Dabbs

Nicole Dabbs, Ph.D., IRB Chair
CSUSB Institutional Review Board

ND/MG

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ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities between Joshua Kennedy and Crystal Orellana was equally divided. Each collaborating researcher was an equal contributor to all sections of this thesis.