

8-9-2008

## A survey of Upward Bound Programs on the achievement of rural high school students

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A SURVEY OF UPWARD BOUND PROGRAMS ON THE ACHIEVEMENT OF  
RURAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

By

Dewayne Middleton

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Faculty of  
Mississippi State University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy  
in Community College Leadership  
in the Department of Instructional Systems,  
Leadership, and Workforce Development

Mississippi State, Mississippi

December 2008

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2008

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RURAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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THE ACHIEVEMENT OF RURAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Pages in Study: 96

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of African American students on the impact of an Upward Bound Program on their academic performance, self-esteem, and the attitudes toward post-secondary educational success. Specifically, this study was concerned with the following variables: gender, family structure, and age as they related to the students aforementioned perceptions.

A survey design was employed in this investigation to collect and analyze the data. Three hundred fifty-three (353) African American high school students participated in this empirical study. An instrument entitled "The Middleton Upward Bound Survey" was used to gather the data. The investigative instrument was validated by a group of Upward Bound professionals and university research professors. The instrument had an alpha coefficient of .84 for the test as a whole.

Moreover, the data was tested through the application of the One-Way Analysis of Variance and the Scheffe' Multiple Comparison Test. Among the conclusions of this study were the following; in general it appeared the younger African American high school students are more favorable to his/her perceptions regarding the impact of an Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement. African American high school students who reside with a guardian also tend to have more favorable perceptions regarding the impact of an Upward Bound Programs on their academic achievement. Regardless, of African American high school students' age, gender or family structure, they tend to have similar perceptions regarding the impact of an Upward Bound Programs on their attitudes toward post-secondary educational success.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those persons who assisted and supported me throughout my doctoral program. First, I would like to thank my committee members Dr. Ed Davis, Dr. Howell Garner, Dr. Wayne Stonecypher, and Dr. Marty Wiseman. I appreciate the support you guys gave me during this process. I would like to thank Dr. Sam Jones for his support and for always giving me the uplift that I needed from time to time. I would like to thank the Upward Bound programs, parents and the students for allowing me to conduct my research. Very special thanks go out to the faculty and staff and the administration at Copenhaver-Lincoln Community College. I would like to thank a few of my classmates, Merredith Byers, Deidre Davis, Brent Gregory, Khristy Large, Mildred Stevenson for always calling and making sure that I was working toward completing the program. I would like to thank Nicole Amos, Michelle Crace, and Clara Jaynes for your all your support and assistance it is greatly appreciated. I would like to give a special thank you to my parents Edward and Sarah Shaverd for always being there for me when I needed you. I would like to thank my mother and father-in-law Jessie and Aquilla Grubbs for their support and encouragement. Last, but not least I would like to thank my lovely wife Sirkersia Middleton for all your support, time, patience, guidance, encouragement and understanding that you had throughout this process. She is one of the main reasons I wanted to further my education and without her I could not have done this.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	ii
LIST OF TABLES .....	v
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Statement of the Problem .....	3
Purpose.....	3
Significance of the Study .....	5
Limitations .....	6
Definition of Terms/Variables .....	7
II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	9
History of TRIO Programs .....	9
Types of TRIO Programs .....	11
Upward Bound Programs .....	14
Academic Achievement.....	19
Self-Esteem.....	25
Post-Secondary Success .....	31
III. METHODOLOGY .....	42
Type of Research Design.....	42
Population and Sampling Procedure .....	43
Instrumentation.....	43
Validity of the Instrument .....	44
Reliability of the Instrument.....	45
Pilot Study .....	46
Data Collection Procedure.....	46
Independent and Dependent Variables.....	47
Statistical Analysis .....	47

IV.	ANALYSIS OF DATA .....	48
	Demographic Profile of the Participants in the Study .....	50
	Age .....	50
	Gender.....	50
	Family Structure.....	51
	Examination of Research Question One.....	52
	Examination of Research Question Two.....	54
	Examination of Research Question Three.....	54
	Examination of Research Question Four.....	56
	Examination of Research Question Five.....	57
	Examination of Research Question Six.....	58
	Examination of Research Question Seven.....	59
	Examination of Research Question Eight.....	60
	Examination of Research Question Nine.....	61
	Summary of Research Questions.....	62
V.	SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	64
	Summary.....	64
	Findings.....	66
	Conclusion.....	67
	Implications.....	70
	Recommendations for Further Research.....	71
	REFERENCES .....	73
	APPENDIX	
A.	LETTER TO DIRECTORS OF UPWARD BOUND PROGRAM .....	84
B.	PARENT PERMISSION LETTER.....	86
C.	STUDENT ASSENT LETTER.....	89
D.	IRB CERTIFICATION LETTER.....	91
E.	SURVEY .....	93
F.	VITA.....	95

## LIST OF TABLES

1.	Frequency Distribution Participants in the Study by Age .....	50
2.	Frequency Distribution Participants in the Study by Gender .....	51
3.	Frequency Distribution Participants in the Study by Family Structure.....	51
4.	Analysis of Variance Summary Table Regarding the Perceptions of African American Students toward the Impact of Upward Bound Programs on Student Academic Achievement by Age.....	53
5.	Scheffe' Results Regarding the Perceptions of African American Students toward the Impact of Upward Bound Programs on Student Academic Achievement by Age .....	53
6.	Analysis of Variance Summary Table Regarding the Perceptions of African American Students toward the Impact of Upward Bound Programs on Student Academic Achievement by Gender.....	54
7.	Analysis of Variance Summary Table Regarding the Perceptions of African American Students toward the Impact of Upward Bound Programs on Student Academic Achievement by Family Structure .....	55
8.	Scheffe' Results Regarding the Perceptions of African American Students toward the Impact of Upward Bound Programs on Student Academic Achievement by Family Structure .....	56
9.	Analysis of Variance Summary Table Regarding the Perceptions of African American Students toward the Impact of Upward Bound Programs on Student Self-Esteem by Age.....	57
10.	Analysis of Variance Summary Table Regarding the Perceptions of African American Students toward the Impact of Upward Bound Programs on Student Self-Esteem by Gender.....	58
11.	Analysis of Variance Summary Table Regarding the Perceptions of African American Students toward the Impact of Upward Bound Programs on Student Self-Esteem by Family Structure .....	59

12.	Scheffe' Results Regarding the Perceptions of African American Students toward the Impact of Upward Bound Programs on Student Self-Esteem by Family Structure.....	59
13.	Analysis of Variance Summary Table Regarding the Perceptions of African American Students toward the Impact of Upward Bound Programs on Attitudes toward Post-Secondary Success by Age .....	60
14.	Analysis of Variance Summary Table Regarding the Perceptions of African American Students toward the Impact of Upward Bound Programs on Attitudes toward Post-Secondary Success by Gender.....	61
15.	Analysis of Variance Summary Table Regarding the Perceptions of African American Students toward the Impact of Upward Bound Programs on Attitudes toward Post-Secondary Success by Family Structure.....	62
16.	Summary of Research Questions.....	63

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Over the past four decades, the Upward Bound Program, federally funded activity under the auspice of the TRIO initiative, has been evaluated by researchers for its effectiveness in enhancing the quality of life for many first generation/low-income college students (Billings, 1968; McCormick & Williams, 1974; Ekstrom, Goetz, Pollack, Rock, 1986; Law, 1999; Carson-Warner & Carol, 2003). All of aforementioned researchers, even through their methodologies were different found that Upward Bound has a positive influence on the lives of first-generation/low-income students, especially on their academic performance.

The effectiveness of the Upward Bound Program has been measured by the number of participants who graduate from high school or by the number who enter postsecondary education institutions (Myers & Schirm, 1999; Saenz, Wyatt, & Reinard, 1998; Thayer, 2000). Researchers have also studied the attitudes of parents of Upward Bound students regarding the programs effectiveness (Zimmerman, Bandura, and Martinez-Pons, 1999; Howard, 1996; and Epstein and Hollifield, 1996). Zimmerman, Bandura, and Martinez-Pons (1998) found that parents perceive the Upward Bound Program as having a significant and positive effect on their children's lives. Gunter (2002) found that parents felt that the Upward Bound Program had a positive influence on their children's attitudes toward college. Finally Dennis (2005) found that parents felt

that the Upward Bound Program had a significant effect on their children enrolling in postsecondary educational institutions.

Moreover, other research studies have addressed how well selective participants of various Upward Bound Programs perform when compared with non-participants in terms of their academic success or their persistence to remain in college. (Becker, 1999; Carson-Warner & Carol, 2003; Hewitt, 1998). However, there is very little, or no quantitative research that has examined the impact of Upward Bound Programs as perceived by their participants while enrolled in high school, especially in regard to their self-esteem and their attitudes toward post secondary success.

Research that has been done has been qualitative in nature and only dealt with aspects of the program which motivated students to succeed (Carson-Warner & Carol, 2003; and Choy, 2001).

Although college entrance and completion of a degree is critical for an individual and society, first-generation/low-income students have historically been less inclined more than their peers to complete a college degree. Suffice it to say, these students face more obstacles to pursuing a post-secondary education. Relative to the low college entrance rates for first-generation/low-income students is the impact of parental educational attainment, family socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and secondary school academic preparation (Jacobson, Olsen, Rice, Sweetland, & Ralph, 2001). Another great challenge confronted by first-generation/low-income students is that college attendance represents a departure from the routine established by family and friends, who may in turn become non-supportive or obstructive (Hsiao, 1992). These barriers can cause first-

generation/low-income students to delay entry into college or suspend their hopes and dreams of ever attending college. Surprisingly, these groups of students regard education as an integral factor in their lives, considering the environment from which they come. Since the War on Poverty in the 1960s, initiatives have been undertaken to eradicate some of the obstacles to college entrance faced by first-generation/low-income students (Adelman, 2000). Thus, federally funded TRiO - Upward Bound Programs have proven to be essential to the success of its participants.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem was to determine the impact of an Upward Bound Program on the academic achievement, self-esteem, and attitudes regarding post secondary educational success as perceived by high school students from first-generation/low-income families who participated in this program. Particularly, the student's similarities, differences, and perceptions regarding the impact of an Upward Bound Program were compared by gender, family structure and age.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to examine the perception of first-generation/low-income African American College Students on the impact of an Upward Bound Program on their academic achievement, self-esteem and attitudes toward post-secondary educational success. Specifically, the researcher was concerned with the influence of the variables including gender, family structure and age on the perceptions of high school

students toward their academic achievement, self-esteem and attitudes pertaining to their post-secondary educational success. Answers to the following question were sought:

1. Does African American student age influence the perception of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement?
2. Does African American student gender influence the perception of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement?
3. Does African American student family structure influence the perception of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement?
4. Does African American student age influence the perception of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student self-esteem?
5. Does African American student gender influence the perception of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student self-esteem?
6. Does African American student family structure influence the perception of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student self-esteem?
7. Does African American student age influence the perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student attitudes toward post-secondary success?
8. Does African American student gender influence the perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student attitudes toward post-secondary success?
9. Does African American student family structure influence the perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student attitudes toward post-secondary success?

## **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study is threefold: First, a study of this nature will provide sociologists with relevant data regarding the perceptions previous African American Upward Bound students have towards the impact of the Upward Bound Program, as regards to their academic achievement, self-esteem and attitudes toward post-secondary educational success. As college education is often viewed within the American society as a key social factor in helping to increase one's social status, knowing the perceptions that previous African American Upward Bound students have towards the impact of the Upward Bound program is essential. Upward Bound is designed to help prepare first-generation/low-income and minority students for college. Knowing the perception previous African American have towards the Upward Bound Program as it relates to their academic achievement, self-esteem and attitudes towards post-secondary educational success, can go a long way in developing the necessary learning skills for future participants. These findings will assist them in enhancing academic achievement, self-esteem, and attitudes towards post-secondary educational success while in high school.

Second, this study will help enhance the knowledge and understanding of program administrators and other interested professionals regarding factors that impact African American relationships with the Upward Bound Programs. By understanding the factors that influence African American academic achievement, self-esteem, and attitudes toward post-secondary educational success, program administrators and other interested professionals can then collaborate on strategies which can assist in nurturing and

cultivating their experiences to meet the needs of African American Upward Bound Students.

Finally, the data obtained in this study can be very useful to individuals associated with Upward Bound Programs and those who study such programs regarding African Americans. An empirical analysis of Upward Bound Programs for African American students can provide the type of insight necessary to enable these students to be functional within a college environment.

### **Limitations**

The following limitations will be observed in this study:

1. The study was limited to African American students who are currently enrolled in an Upward Bound Program in the state of Mississippi.
2. The study was limited to first-generation/low-income African American students who were enrolled in a TRIO Upward Bound Program during the period of 2007-2008.
3. The study was limited to the fact that the perceptions of African American high school students were measured solely through the application of a survey instrument.
4. The generalizations drawn from the findings in this study were limited to those African American high school students enrolled in an Upward Bound Program.

## **Definition of Terms/Variables**

The following terms/variables were operationally defined for purposes of providing clarity and understanding relative to the focus of the present research study.

1. TRIO Program - refers to the name given to the three original educational opportunity programs enacted by the U.S. Congress in Title of the Higher Education Act of 1965, in an effort to bring equality of opportunities for upward mobility for all U.S. citizens. Programs included in TRIO are as follows: Upward Bound Math/Science, Veterans Upward Bound, Talent Search, Student Support Services, Educational Opportunity Center, and the Ronald McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program.
2. Upward Bound - refers to a federally funded program that helps first-generation/low-income high school students prepare for higher education.
3. Gender- refers to whether a high school student is male or female.
4. Age - refers to the chronological age of the high school student during the time of participation in the study. For the purpose of this study, age will be measured in the following categories: “15 years, 16 years, 17 years, and 18 years of age.”
5. Family Structure - refers to whether a high school student is residing in a two-parent household, with a guardian, with the grandparents, or a one-parent household.
6. Self-esteem- refers to how a high school student feels about him/herself.
7. Academic Achievement- refers to how a high school student feels about his or her academic performance the first year of college.

8. Attitudes toward Educational Success - refers to how a high school student feels about being successful as he or she progresses from high school to post-secondary institutions.
9. First-Generation - refers to students whose parents did not complete a program of study from a four year accredited institution of higher learning.
10. Federally Funded - refers to monies provided by the United States Department of Education for support service programs.
11. Post- Secondary Institution - refers to institutions of higher learning which offer a two-year or four-year academic degree.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews literature associated with this research study. It begins with a review of the historical background of the Upward Bound Program and continues with specific topics on the characteristics of first-generation/low-income students, academic achievement of Upward Bound participants, self-esteem, and post-secondary success. The final topics addressed are related to the research variables including the following: first-generation college entrance rates and academic achievement, first-generation college entrance rates and self-esteem, and first-generation college entrance rates and post-secondary success.

#### **History of TRIO Programs**

In 1964, Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Economic Opportunity Act that gave life to Special Programs for Disadvantaged Backgrounds, a program more commonly known as TRIO (Gunter, 2002). The first TRIO initiative was Upward Bound followed closely by Talent Search, which was created by the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965. Upon reauthorization in 1968, the Student Support Services program was developed. This reauthorization prompted the transfer of all TRIO programs from the Office of Economic Opportunity to the Office of Higher Education Programs. The 1972 reauthorization brought about the fourth TRIO program, Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC). The

fifth program, Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement program were created in 1986. More recently, the Upward Bound Math/ Science Program were created by the U.S. Department of Education in 1990. Of all the reauthorizations, the one in 1980 was the most pivotal because it adapted two specific eligibility criteria of being a first-generation college student candidate and consideration of the candidate's prior educational performance. The adoption of these two criteria changed the focus and dynamics of the program to include students who are economically disadvantaged as well as those who would otherwise be excluded from post-secondary education. Since its inception, more than 10 million Americans (mainly from poor and working families) have benefited from TRIO pre-college and college programs (Crocker, Luhtanen, Cooper, & Bouvrette, 2003). Results indicate that when compared to all students in the low-income, first generation college student bracket TRIO students enrolled in colleges at the same rate as all-income students (Carbanaro, 2003).

TRIO Programs highlight the importance of providing access to educational opportunity to all citizens and as well as the importance of maintaining a reasonable level of social cohesion and harmony in a racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse society (Hanushek, Kain, O'Brien, & Rivkin, 2005). Ferguson (2001) states that TRIO Programs have much to offer institutions of higher learning and have implemented numerous successful strategies that have been shown to work effectively with first-generation minority and lower income students. The National Coalition of Educational Opportunity Associations (NCEOA) was established in 1981 to assure presence in the national

educational community by leaders of the TRIO programs. This organization later adopted the Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) as their new name (Woessmann, 2004).

By 1988, these programs had provided services to 780,000 Americans nationwide, almost all of them from minority or lower income backgrounds, including 16,000 individuals with disabilities. It is estimated that nearly two million TRIO participants have graduated from college since the first Upward Bound programs were piloted in 1965 (U.S. Department of Education, 2004a). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2002), TRIO programs currently serve nearly 872,000 low income students between the ages of 11 and 27. Many of the programs focus specifically on students in grades 6-12. Contrary to prior belief that TRIO programs only service minority groups, 37 % of TRIO students are White, 35 % are African American, and the other 18 % is spread throughout other minority groups. However, nearly 20 % of all African American and Hispanic freshmen who entered college received assistance through a TRIO program. Two-thirds of the students served by these programs must come from families with incomes under \$24,000, or where neither parent graduated from college. Parents of participating students are screened to ensure that they will stay engaged in their child's academic and extracurricular activities.

### **Types of TRIO Programs**

The U.S. Department of Education [ED] has a number of initiatives designed to help prepare first-generation/low-income and minority students for college and to strengthen the institutions that serve them (Swail, Redd & Perna, 2003). These programs,

known collectively as early intervention, early outreach, or college access, are generally funded by either state or federal agencies and are usually housed on university and community college campuses (Fashola and Slavin, 2001; Swail and Perna, 2002). University and college outreach programs usually exist to enable poor and minority students to add to their personal, social, cultural capital, and to cease the replication of social reproduction (Kemmeimeier, et al., 2003). These programs serve as a link between poor and minority communities and the colleges and universities that serve those communities (McCants, 2004; Oakes et al. 2002). Therefore, the success of the program “hinges on the ability of a program to meet students localized needs by affirming their culture and identity, rather than ignoring or rejecting it” (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005, p.206). Moreover, these programs usually share a common goal and purpose, which is to utilize a host of strategies and interventions to get underprivileged high school students ready for college (Loza, 2003). Strategies within these programs typically include individual academic tutoring, college visitations, college counseling, and some parental component (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005; Gandara & Bial, 2001). Moreover, two outreach programs that have been very instrumental in paving the way for African American and other minorities to enroll in colleges and universities are the GEAR UP and TRIO programs. GEAR UP and TRIO programs support college attendance among students from disadvantaged backgrounds (ED, 2005). For GEAR UP, the focus is on providing mentors who can help middle school students begin to succeed in challenging courses that will prepare them for college (ED, 2005). Whereas, the TRIO programs identify

promising high school students from disadvantaged backgrounds, encourage them to strive for college, and prepare them to succeed once they begin (Riley, 2000).

The Higher Education Act of 1965, which created the Talent Search program, has been reauthorized six times since it was first enacted (1968, 1972, 1980, 1986, 1992, and 1998), with each reauthorization introducing some changes to TRIO and Talent Search (ED, 2005). The program identifies and assists individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds who have the potential to succeed in higher education. The participants are middle and high school students who wish to receive assistance in successfully matriculating in secondary school an education at a post-secondary institution. The program also offers support to high school dropouts by encouraging them to complete their high school diploma and to enroll in a post-secondary institution (Corbet, Wilson, & Williams, 2002). Two-thirds of the participants in each Talent Search Project must be low- income students who are potentially first-generation college students

Another successful program under the TRIO umbrella is entitled Project LINKS. Project LINKS was conceived after the U.S. Department of Education requested proposals for new TRIO initiatives that could serve students not in schools affiliated with TRIO. According to Mormon, this online approach was designed to expand the reach of Educational Talent Search's (ETS). The Educational Talent Search program has included instruction in one of the university's computer-equipped classrooms (Baum & Payea, 2004). The primary disadvantage of the program is that it required students to provide their own transportation. Therefore, Project LINKS was necessary. It is a web based software package that consists of custom design programming features, off-the-shelf

software programs, email, and whiteboard. This software package assumes that there is no prior computer experience on the part of the student using the program.

Through Project LINKS, the TRIO program can reach the students who are the most in need but have the fewest resources to prepare themselves for success in a competitive world (Baum & Payea, 2004). Many educators believe that Project LINKS is within the framework of what TRIO is about because it is a creative use of resources. The program targets middle school students who usually do not have much exposure to computers. The program initially began with 80 students in the Maryland area, and at the beginning of each school year 80 more students are brought into the Project LINKS initiative. The goal of the program is to expose young children to the world of computers, so they will be able to survive in a world where technology is constantly becoming more complicated (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005). Although all of the programs are valuable, for the purpose of this paper we will focus on Upward Bound, one of the largest and oldest TRIO programs.

### **Upward Bound Programs**

Upward Bound serves high school students from low-income families, in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree. In addition, Upward Bound serves families which have first-generation military veterans who are preparing to enter postsecondary education (ED, 2004a). As a result, the eligibility criteria for participation in Upward Bound includes that the students have a family income under 150 % of the poverty level, or first generation college students, have completed the eighth grade, demonstrate a need for the program, and demonstrate the potential to complete a four year college education

(Upward Bound, 2001). Moreover, Upward Bound provides fundamental support to participants in their preparation for college entrance (U.S. Department of Education [ED], 2004b). Primarily student-centered, it was initiated in 1967 to “maximize educational opportunities for low-income and first generation college students through direct services that provide access to education and encourage retention through education pipeline” (Upward Bound, 2001, p.1). Therefore, the program provides opportunities for participants to succeed in their pre-college performance and ultimately in their higher education pursuits (ED, 2004a).

The goal of Upward Bound is to increase the rate at which the participants complete secondary education and enroll in and graduate from institutions of postsecondary education (ED, 2004a). Upward Bound also stipulates specifically that one of its goals is to enhance participants’ cultural awareness, leadership, and critical thinking skills (Loza, 2003). Therefore, the Upward Bound Program provides academic instruction in mathematics, laboratory sciences, composition, literature, and foreign languages (ED, 2004b). Tutoring, counseling, mentoring, cultural enrichment, and work-study programs are supported within the Upward Bound Program (ED, 2005).

In sum, Upward Bound programs provide instruction in reading, writing, study skills, and other subjects necessary for success in education beyond high school; academic, financial, or personal counseling; exposure to academic programs and cultural events; tutorial services; mentoring programs; information on postsecondary education opportunities; assistance in completing college entrance and financial aid applications;

assistance in preparing for college entrance exams; and work study positions to expose participants to careers requiring a postsecondary degree (ED, 2005).

First-generation students, historically, are in need of encouragement from family, teachers, peers, and also available resources from outreach programs. Because of the difference in enrollment rates, students whose parents did not go to college are one of the most frequently targeted groups for outreach programs designed to raise the level of student preparations and readiness (Allison, 2002).

Outreach programs can play a vital role in working with schools to increase the limited number of successful students into a real systemic change; that benefits all students in need through the mission of preparing all students for success (McCants, 2004). Gandara and Bial (2001) explain that students and families report that these programs open both their eyes and doors to possibilities and appear to be the most effective when working with the following elements in common: providing a key person who monitors and guides the student over a long period of time, providing high quality instruction through access to the most challenging courses, making long-term investments in students rather than short-term interventions, paying attention to cultural backgrounds of students, providing a peer group that supports students' academic aspirations as well as giving them social and emotional support, and providing financial assistance and incentives. While the provision of education is a state responsibility, the role of the federal government has increasingly become one that equalizes the opportunity across the states by providing information to students and assistance to schools in accommodating students with special needs (Stinebrickner, 2002).

The current Upward Bound Program at many notable institutions consists of a variety of services including work-study programs at the campus and a summer residency academy. While at this academy, students live, study, and attend classes and lectures organized by high school teachers and college or university faculty members aimed to help prepare them for college entrance exams. The program includes a yearly field trip which is meant to be both educational and entertaining. The Upward Bound Bridge Program allows high school seniors to take college courses and receive credit for them. The Bridge Program is designed to prepare them for success in college by honing their skills in college writing, note-taking, time management, money management, speed reading, and dealing with roommates. The program is also an avenue to expose students to universities other than their home institution. Therefore, the directors schedule campus tours to most in-state public and private universities. When funding permits, they often travel outside of their home state to visit other prestigious institutions. Usually, if students begin the program during freshman year of high school and continue it through their senior year, they will have visited at least 20 institutions (McCants, 2006).

Arizona State University's Upward Bound college preparatory program is the oldest of its kind in Arizona, funded since its inception by the U.S. Department of Education as part of the federal TRIO programs. The Arizona State Upward Bound Program receives numerous applications but only has 50 available spots per year. Approximately three-fourths of the students go on to attend Arizona State, and nearly 20% enroll at other state universities and community colleges in the state of Arizona. At ASU, the program is credited with increasing student's academic achievement levels.

Coincidentally, 100 % of the students who have gone through the program in the last 5 years have graduated from high school, and 70 % are either currently enrolled in college or have already graduated (Van Houtte, 2004).

Students who completed the program at ASU attended the academic preparation and personal development classes for twenty-six Saturdays during their junior and senior years of high school. During the summer they lived on campus and attended various courses during a six to eight week stint. ASU's Upward Bound Director stays in touch with many of their program graduates and is able to monitor their success and assist them in planning their future career and academic goals. However, due to rising costs, increasing regulations, and the idea of federal funding cuts, the university has undertaken fund-raising efforts in order to continually support its highly successful program. All student services are free federal grants, and fundraising is necessary (Van Houtte, 2004).

At universities like UC Riverside, the Upward Bound Program is fairly new, yet it also boasts an impressive increase and growth in its participants. The University of California system has been in the forefront of finding new ways to solicit monies to help continue the growth of their program. Currently in its eighth year, their enrollment has gone from 50 to 170 area students. A new \$220,000 outreach grant from the US Department of Education allowed the university to expand its Upward Bound program. TRIO grants are distributed through competitive grants, according to the U.S. Department of Education (Byrd and MacDonald, 2005).

## **Academic Achievement**

Recent studies projecting the future demographic characteristics of the nation indicate that the nature of the at-risk population is growing and rapidly changing. Byrd and MacDonald (2005) state that there are five indicators associated with the educationally disadvantaged. They include being a member of a minority racial/ethnic group, socioeconomic status, single parent families, poorly educated mothers, and coming from a non-English speaking backgrounds.

On the basis of these criteria, Byrd and MacDonald (2005) further noted that the single most important factor in the school age population of the future is the expected increase in both the number and proportion of traditionally disadvantaged people. These findings are similar to those found by Choy (2001). The Texas educational system is at least near the national average in many key statistics and above average in others. Yet there is a growing concern over the state's ability to adequately prepare its children for the next century. While much of the anxiety reflects qualitative rather than quantitative dimensions of education, the issue will not disappear soon.

Although statistics on dropouts are collected under inconsistent conditions, and not in accordance with a standardized definition, some guidelines seem applicable to understanding the general problem of this population across the county (Gandara & Bial, 2001). Hispanic American students are members of the fastest growing minority group in America and have the highest dropout rate followed by all males and Anglo Americans. African American males have actually shown improvement over the years in their propensity to finish high school, but because the African American portion of the overall

population is increasing, their national dropout rate continues to rise as well (Gordon, Young, & Carlyle, 2001). Furthermore, the number of African Americans applying, attending, and completing higher education has actually declined over the last several years (Myers, Olsen, Seftor, Young Tuttle, 2004).

A study by Ogbu (1978, 2003) sought to explain why effort varies across various curricular tracks. Oppositional cultures have formed and are sustained by cultural differences across racial/ethnic and class boundaries. Anti-school norms that are fostered by these subcultures deter students from the learning process, thus sapping their desire to strive for academic success and could possibly undermine their levels of academic achievement (Thayer, 2007).

There is another group that leaves school without a critical analysis of schooling or economic benefits and with no immediate crisis. Adolescents in this group leave school because they live in conditions of unemployment and poverty, have experienced failure in school, have been held back at least once, and have had feelings of desolation and despair. Most of their friends are out of school also without diplomas. They express disappointment of the unfulfilled promises of schooling and believe education, being the key to success, is unattainable (Nadal, 2000).

A study focusing on retention and its application to ethnicity Riehl conducted (1994). He finds that the major factors causing students to drop out are confrontations, accelerated role taking, school factors, and background. However, the major predictors for students dropping out are participation in extracurricular activities, academic performance, and placement in an academic track.

According to Stokes and Hodge (2000), age proves to be an important predictor of dropping out for students; however, the cost of older students staying in school is higher because these students lose at least one additional year of income by doing so than students who are on schedule. Thayer (2000) concurs with these findings by stating that age and reading scores are the best predictors of students who would drop out of high school.

According to Swail and Perna (2000), language of instruction is positively related to at-risk characteristics because academic achievement in elementary and secondary school hinges on reading ability and on the results of standardized tests.

First-generation beginning students differ from non-first-generation students in age and family background. They are generally older. Thirty-one percent of first-generation students were 24 or older, compared to 13 % and 5 %, respectively, of students whose parents had some college experience or a bachelor's degree. They also have lower incomes: 42 % of those who were dependent were from the lowest family income quartile (less than \$25,000/year), compared to 22 % and 18 %, respectively, of the other 2 groups (Choy, 2001). This finding parallels that of Baum and Payea (2004) who found that over their working lives, typical college graduates earn about 73% more than typical high school graduates, and those with advanced college degrees earn two or three times as much as high school graduates. Annual average earnings in 1999 for those age 18 and over who had completed high school was only \$24,572; for those with a bachelor's degree it was \$45,678 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005).

A review of the statistical data obtained recently from a university Upward Bound Grant Proposal (2006) indicates that 13,581 (90.4 %) of adults residing in an urban area in southeast Texas, have educational attainment levels below a baccalaureate degree. High school graduation rates among the adult population range from a low of 21.1 % to a high of 40.8 %. Adults with no degree and some college range from a low of 12.7 % to a high of 23.2 %; while 1.6 % to 3 % has an Associates degree. Further, some 5,345 (36 %) of the target area adults did not earn a high school diploma. According to Jones & Watson, (1990); Mitchell, (1997); and Pardon (1992), first- generation college students often are members of ethnic minorities; moreover, they come from poor working class families. These students overcome the cultural disadvantage of having very few, if any, mentors at home and the academic disadvantage of having skills. Research from Forester (2006) indicates that there are few students able to attend college; yet, according to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2005, there were slightly more than four million young people who were the right age to be starting college for the first time. The US Department of Education (2002) reports that only 1.4 million students entered four-year colleges for the first time that year, a roughly 35 % rate of attendance.

Beginning students who are first-generation students are more likely than their non first-generation counterparts to be female 57 % versus 51 % of non-first-generation male students (Nunez and Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998). Between 1967 and 2000, the college participation rate for males was 18 to 24 % in the civilian and non-institutional population decreased from 33.1 to 32.6 %. The corresponding rate for females increased from 19.2 to 38.4 % during this same period. The increased rate for women occurred

steadily throughout the 34 years between 1967 and 2000, although the growth appears to have stagnated since 1997.

First-generation/low-income students are often reared in poverty-stricken areas, and they feel that if they attempt college, they will no longer fit in the surroundings of their upbringings. However, the most important support system for the student is the parent. While parents of first-generation/low-income college students may not have knowledge or college experience, their support for college entrance is important to their child's success (Dennis, 2005). Mitchell (1997) asserts that all students make adjustments when they enter college, but first-generation/low-income students face greater academic and social demands.

In a study by Carbonaro (2003), results show that there is correlation of academic achievement and higher track levels. Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (2005) found these level of track were reported by students and were not subject specific. The higher the track levels the greater the level of achievement. Another finding from this study is that students who were enrolled in vocational classes had the lowest achievement from all the track level students. According to Thayer (2007), students who are more engaged learn more in school. Further, time spent on homework has been commonly used to measure effort. As a result, effort has been positively related to achievement. The findings of this study were consistent with Carbonaro and Gamoran, (2002-03) where students who were in the college track spent more time on homework than students who were not on college track. Ogbu (2003) found that engagement measured by attendance, preparedness, and time spent on homework was positively related to track placement.

Carbanaro (2005) identifies three types of effort as rule oriented, procedural, and intellectual. Rule oriented effort is defined as students who comply with the school's norms of being in class on time and maintaining the school's code of conduct. Procedural effort requires the student to meet the specific demands of the teacher in a particular class, such as turning in assignments on time. Finally, intellectual effort requires the student to use cognitive skills to think through and understand the challenges that are presented by the curriculum.

Findings of the study "High School and Beyond", a national longitudinal study, reported higher dropout rates for students with mild to borderline handicaps than for non-handicapped students (19 % vs. 14 %, respectively) (Levacic & Vignoles, 2002). "High School and Beyond" dropout rates must be considered conservative estimates due to the timing of the survey. The dropout rate for specific handicapping conditions ranges from a low of approximately 19 % for students with orthopedic impairments to a high of 37 % for students with learning disabilities (The Teaching Commission, 2004). Kilpatrick-Johnson, Oesterle, and Mortimer (2001) report that 28 % of a random sample of high school special education students left school before age 18, and an additional 13 % left after age 18 without their diploma. In addition, Correll (2001) found that the dropout rate for students in Pittsburgh with learning disabilities approached 51 %, which far exceeded the 36 % reported for the general population during this period. The New Hampshire Special Education Information System (SPEDIS) revealed a differentiated pattern of attrition among students aged 15-21 with specific handicaps (Jaschik, 2005). Students identified as having an emotional handicap dropped out at a rate of 57 %, while students

classified as learning disabled left at a rate of 40 %. Students with hearing and speech impairments had an attrition rate of 38.5 % and 36.4 %, respectively. Among all students with handicaps, the rate was reported at 40 %. A study conducted recently in California (Thayer, 2007) found a wide variation in dropout rates for different disability groups, and according to the severity of a student's disability within the group.

Dennis (2005) conducted a study where the findings indicated that younger students were more open to support services while their older counterparts are more focused on peer approval and their need for independence. Researchers have identified three main risk factors that are associated with dropout to include poor academic performance, low-income, and deviant behavior. Regardless of the source of risk factors, it is noteworthy that multiple risk factors contribute to and accelerate the risk of dropping out of school (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005).

### **Self-Esteem**

Viewing retention as a causative agent on the at risk student in a study by Rice, Tolls, and Schuly (1989), found that being overage upon entry into high school was associated with dropout rates that were 25 to 30 percentage points higher than students who entered high school at a normal age. Researchers concluded that school districts should avoid retaining students because this practice increases the likelihood of students dropping out of school. A third source identified being overage as the number one characteristic of the potential dropout. The at-risk student seems to view it as an insurmountable problem which does as little for a child's self-esteem as it does for his academic development. Dropout rates were directly related to student to student test

scores on their Iowa Test of Basic Skills. More than two-thirds of those students scoring in the lowest quartile dropped out; only 18.8 % of those scoring in the high average or above average ranges dropped out. Two-thirds of the 12,804 students who eventually dropped out entered high school reading at below normal levels or lower.

The majority of research on gender, ethnicity, and family income as they influence student motivation to achieve academically found that there were differences in student motivation as it relates to gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, as measured by annual family income. However, the literature does show that students who complete Upward Bound are more motivated to complete high school and have higher graduation rates and college entrance rates than peers who did not complete Upward Bound. Although Upward Bound programs influence participants' motivation to matriculate to college, such influences are dependent upon specific program interventions. Those programs that have a parental component have higher high school graduation rates as well as college matriculation and retention rates than those without a parent involvement component (Nadal, 2000).

Early prevention is one of the most cited strategies for school completion. For example, child behavior researchers observed that early school age children with early assault conduct problems are at high risk for school dropout as well as substance abuse, violence, and delinquency in their later years. Consequently, developing strategies to reduce conduct problems when aggression is in its more malleable form prior to age 8, and thus interrupting its progression is of considerable benefit to both families and society (Crocker, et al., 2003).

Edmundson and White (1998) conducted a study in which the findings indicate that younger students were more open to support services while their older counterparts are more focused on peer approval and their need for independence. Researchers have identified three main risk factors associated with dropouts to include poor academic performance, low-income, and deviant behavior. Regardless of the source of risk factors, it is noteworthy that multiple risk factors contribute to and accelerate the risk of dropping out of school (Ekstrom, Goetz, Pollack, Rock, 1986).

Previous research has shown that self-esteem rises when people succeeds, are praised, or experiences another's love, making self-esteem dependent on not only one's perceptions of him or herself but also other's perceptions of them. It seems logical that adolescents who experience greater family challenge might also have higher levels of self-esteem. In fact, early studies by Coopersmith (1967) and Rosenberg (1965) showed that parental involvement and willingness to give adolescents autonomy and freedom are positively correlated to high self-esteem in adolescents. Rathunde, et al. (2000) also found that adolescents who saw their families as challenging had significantly higher self-esteem than teenagers with less challenging home environments. Such parental behavior conveys to the adolescent information about their self-worth, that his parent trusts them and has high expectations of them, which is likely to have positive consequences for an adolescent's self-esteem.

For many years, self-esteem has received a great deal of attention in research and theory. In the first psychology textbook, James spoke about the inherent desire to feel good about oneself as an important aspect of human nature. Indeed, the writings of James

are often held up as exemplary of the first writings on positive psychology (Rathunde, 2001; Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Taylor, 2001). James wrote that a person with high self-esteem has either accomplished a lot or expected very little from himself. In high school, accomplishment can be measured not only by academic grades, but also by more social, athletic, or interest-related pursuits. For this reason we follow the lead of other researchers to examine extracurricular participation as a nonacademic indicator of adolescents' accomplishments (Csikszentmihalyi & Schneider, 2000; Linton & Marriott, 1996; Marsh, 1992;). Towns (1996) found that self-esteem was associated with both academic achievement and extracurricular involvement. More recently, however, Linton and Marriott examined self-esteem and extracurricular participation using Rosenberg's self-esteem measure and found no significant association between self-esteem and extracurricular participation.

With respect to self-esteem, most of these studies suggest that adverse effects are associated with being in a lower track. Lower track students seem to have more negative attitudes toward themselves than students in higher tracks (Cheung & Rudowicz, 2003). According to Oakes (1985), the self-concept of low track pupils becomes more negative as years go by. Only rarely does research maintain a contrary conclusion: Steitz and Owen (1992), for example, recorded that girls in vocational schools have a higher self-esteem than girls in general schools, and a few researchers reported that tracking causes no discernible effect on the students' general self-concept (Brutsaert, 2001).

The same reasoning that may elucidate the poor achievement of pupils in lower tracks may apply to presume an effect of tracking on self-esteem. This reasoning goes

back to the work of Hargreaves at the end of the 1960s and is generally known as the differentiation-polarization theory (Ball, 1981; Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970). This theory states that the differentiation of pupils into different tracks or streams leads to a polarization of their school attitudes, such that one can speak of an anti-school culture with respect to lower track pupils and a pro-school culture with respect to higher track students. An explanation for this finding is that, for students in higher tracks, school is a positive experience because belonging to a higher track gives them some status. For students in lower tracks, it is the other way around; they lose status because their lack of ability pushes them into a lower track. So, it is not surprising that lower track students react against this system and the values it upholds, namely ability and hard work. As a consequence, an anti-school culture emerges in lower tracks. The lower track students oppose the system that makes them failures and look for an alternative basis for status (Gandara & Bial, 2001). The idea that lower track pupils suffer from status loss and feel like failures paves the way to the hypothesis that these pupils may also manifest a lower self-esteem. An impaired self-view may result from the frustration or embarrassment that follows the experienced failure (Swail & Perna, 2000).

The relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement has been well documented in the literature. While self-esteem is powerfully influenced by results achieved and appreciation shown by others from primary school on, it is also a good predictor of academic success. Adequate self-esteem is related to the capacity to cope with academic tasks by employing effective study methods and actively participating in

the learning process, both of which are involved in achieving set goals (Adelman, 2000; Crocker, Luhtanen, Cooper, & Bouvrette, 2003).

An adolescent's environment, especially school, can have a significant influence on self-esteem development, with junior and senior high being critical years (Marcotte, Fortin, Potvin, & Papillon, 2002; Crocker, et al; Taylor, 2001). Junior high school has shown to be an important transition time for an adolescent in terms of healthy self-esteem development (Bergman & Scott, 2001). In a relevant longitudinal study, it was found that adolescent self-esteem development may be disrupted by transition to a new school (junior high or high school) (Robins, Trzesniewski, Tracy, Gosling & Potter, 2002). This finding could be related to the interruption of students' social networks at a time when friends and peers are important to adolescent development. Another study found that adolescents who remained in a stable school environment had a greater increase in level of self-esteem over an 18-month period than did adolescents who changed school environments (Choy, 2001). Findings on age as a predictor of self-esteem have been inconsistent. Several longitudinal studies (Bergman & Scott, 2001) and a cross-sectional study (Mullis & Chapman, 2000) found that self-esteem levels remained constant with increased age, and, therefore, increased age was not a significant predictor of self-esteem. Other longitudinal research indicated a gradual increase in self-esteem across adolescence (Correll, 2001). Conversely, other studies have shown that self-esteem decreased over time during adolescence (Robins, et al.). Robins et al. reported that self-esteem is highest during childhood, drops significantly during adolescence, and then increases again into adulthood.

Most of the research on the relation between ethnicity and self-esteem has found that African Americans report a higher level of self-esteem than do other ethnicities. Because African Americans have consistently been shown to report the highest levels of self-esteem, Wade (1996) conducted a study to determine whether light or dark skin color among African Americans made a difference in their self-esteem. He hypothesized that females with light skin would report higher self-esteem but found that light or dark skin color did not relate to self-esteem scores. He proposed that these findings could be a clue to participants' sense of black consciousness or ethnic identity.

A few studies conflict with the majority of findings in terms of ethnicity and self-esteem (Robins et al., 2002). Thus, ethnicity may not be a significant predictor of self-esteem level in all cases. Wade et al. (1989), for instance, found that overall self-esteem remained fairly consistent between African Americans and European Americans; however, there were ethnic differences in social attitudes and behavior, which in turn may have influenced self-esteem. It may be that the sources of self-esteem are different for African Americans, and European Americans. For instance, for European Americans physical attractiveness is determined to be more important than self-esteem, while for African Americans, relationship with peers tends to be more important (Robins et al.).

### **Post-Secondary Success**

The Education Department funded study said that the federal TRIO program raises retention rates, grade-point averages, and credit hours earned by disadvantaged students. Retention rates increased 7-9 % through participation in the Student Support Services program. Grade point averages increased about .15 in the student's freshman

year of high school, for an average GPA of 2.29. Also, students in a TRIO program earned about 2 additional credit hours per school year than those who did not participate in the program. While peer tutoring seemed to be the service with the greatest effect, students also showed benefits from the cultural events, workshops, and special instructional courses (Dervarics, 1997). They believe that with more intensive student services, the improvement levels in student progress will greatly increase. Recent studies also show that students in TRIO programs are four times more likely to earn an undergraduate degree than those students from similar backgrounds who do not participate in TRIO (NCES, 1998).

Dohm and White (2002) agree by stating on average, college graduates enjoy advantages ranging from more job opportunities to better salaries over their non-college educated counterparts. Further, students working towards a college degree also have long term benefits which consist of better promotion opportunities and lower unemployment rates (Dohm & Wyatt, 2002). Yet, as statistical data indicates, a college or university education is not easily accessible to all, especially to poor and minority students (Loza, 2003).

Minorities represent only 4,889,705 of the United States college population, whereas there are nearly 10,641,522 white students amongst the entire college population (Cuyjet, 2006). Likewise, between 1991 and 2001, 40 % of African Americans and 34 % of Hispanics attended college, compared with 45 % of Whites. Moreover, regarding African Americans, a substantial gap in college and university enrollment exists when compared to their white counterparts. For instance, as of 2000, among high school

graduates aged 25 to 29, 68.2 % of whites compared to 60.8 % of blacks had completed some college (Mau & Kapischke, 2001). In addition, 47.3 % of white high school graduates ages 18 to 24 attend college, versus 41.1 % of black in 2003 (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Further, as of 2005, 34.1 % of all whites completed four or more years of college, while only 17.3 % of blacks did the same. Nevertheless, while there still remains a disparity among African Americans and an attainment of a college education; as of late, when viewed against their fellow counterparts, some improvements have been shown. In the last 20 years, the increases in college participation rates among African Americans have steadily increased to the point in which they now surpass their white counterparts. Between 1993-95 and 2003-05, the black participation rate increased from 35 % to 41 % (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). During this same period, college participation rates for whites increased from 43 % to 48 % (Zhang, 2005). Furthermore, African American students have grown from 5 % of the freshman class at four-year colleges 40 years ago to more than 11 % today (Zhang, 2005). Also, it is indicated that from 2004 to 2015, enrollment in degree-granting institutions is expected to grow from 27 % for black, non-Hispanic students. Several past researchers have suggested that these increases in African American achievement can be attributed outreach programs designed to increase the enrollment of under-represented groups, such as African Americans.

These findings support Forster's (2006) position that there is almost no gap between the number of college-ready high-school graduates and the number of students starting college. Virtually everyone who is academically qualified to go to college

actually goes to college. Moreover, Forster (2006) noted, college access is one of the most serious issues we face in reforming the transition from high school to college. Researchers agree that a college education leads to better life outcomes and that college access must be part of any serious approach to redressing social inequalities.

Academic support services such as Upward Bound, Educational Talent Search and Student Support Services (SSS) help participants both with specific courses and with their general academic progress (Student Support Services Report, 1999). These federally funded programs actually work together to help first-generation/low income student transition successfully. Student Support Services Programs are viewed as the college version of the Upward Bound and Educational Talent Search Programs. As stated, some Student Support Services Programs are implementing “learning community” type strategies. These learning communities help students form supportive peer groups that extend beyond the classroom (Thayer, 2000). Thus, the TRIO program is essential in the development of first-generation/low-income students. Additionally, staff from the other federally funded programs such as Upward Bound and Educational Talent Search helps to foster an environment that is conducive to the success factor of the first-generation/low income student. Student Support Services offers supplemental grants in addition to regular student financial aid offered through the Federal Aid and Grant Programs. Additionally, the program staff fosters an on-going relationship with each student as part of its intervention and retention methods. Striplin (1999) suggests it is clear that first-generation students run a high risk of not transferring to a four-year institution. Community colleges have a responsibility to respond to those students needs.

First-generation students' are over-represented in these institutions. In order for this group of students to reap the benefits of higher education, the community college systems should devise a tracking system whereby students are following an outlined degree plan for upward mobility.

Studies conducted by Carson-Warner and Carol (2003) found that students benefit more from the summer residential portion of the Upward Bound Program than the tutorial portion that happens six weeks during the academic year. Thayer's (2007) study found that Upward Bound students entering colleges and universities have higher retention rates. Research also supports that Upward Bound Programs are academically preparing students for college.

Another study found a positive relationship between Upward Bound participation and students academic performance at the secondary and post-secondary educational levels. These findings were further supported by Morgan and Hertzog (2001) who found that high school dropout rates were significantly lower in schools with Upward Bound. Academic preparation has been a strong predictor of academic success in college as was found by Adelman (2006). Tinto (1993) stated that students who find at least one adult on campus and develop a positive relationship with this individual are more likely to find academic achievement and retention.

Guidance and counseling have been at the core of student services since the earliest years. The contention has been that students need help in moving into the college and out again into careers and other schools and that individual instruction through counseling and other non-classroom based activities is essential (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

Academic guidance has always been intended to match students with the programs best suited to their own goals and abilities and to help students recognize their academic abilities and limitations in a caring and organized manner (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Student personnel workers also plan and operate student orientation programs designed to help students move more easily from old environments to their new environment and to guide them toward successful college careers.

Research on positive outcomes of college and on the diverse needs of students making up today's student population suggests that a new look at advising is needed. Findings link academic advising directly and indirectly to contact between faculty and students and persistence in college. For example, involvement influences learning and defines effective institutions as those having the capacity to involve students (Oaks, Quartz, Ryan, and Lipton, 2000). Research also indicates that frequent and meaningful contact with faculty members, especially contact focusing on intellectual or career-related issues, seems to increase students' involvement and motivation (Oaks, et al.) These results can be important to advisers, for the advisers to have the capacity to increase meaningful contact with students and to encourage them to persist in college. Advisers can also respond to students who are in stages of transition. Regardless of age or personal situation, some students do not "fit" easily into college life--freshmen, students with undecided majors, transfer students, and adult students, for example. Advising freshmen is especially important. Academic integration seems to influence freshmen's development of academic skills (Tinto, 1987). Advisers who facilitate assimilation to college understand factors affecting freshmen's fit and persistence. They share

responsibility for advising with students and begin educational and career planning. Perceptive advisors encourage all students in transition to focus first on exploring life, career, and educational goals. These students in transition seem better equipped to select educational programs, choose courses, and schedule classes (Tinto, 1987). Ideally, advising is first a means of exploring careers and majors and then a method for selecting courses and arranging schedules. As partners in the process, students can learn to discover options, frame questions, gather information, and make decisions, all of which can increase their involvement in college and encourage them to persist to graduation.

Institutions as well as individuals benefit from the efforts of administrators, coordinators, advisors, and support personnel working together to construct an advising system. When representatives from these groups plan, train for, implement, and evaluate advising, they can create a network of cooperation that can be transferred to other aspects of the college. These higher educational groups also model collaborative behavior for students. Program planning centered on the institution's mission and all students' needs can result in a dynamic advising system with the capacity to adapt to internal and external change (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

Financial aid for students has become a large and ever-increasing feature in higher education. Federal and state funds administered through Pell Grants, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, Guaranteed Student Loans, College Work-Study Aid, and State Student Incentive Grants, represent only a few of the current financial aid programs that have grown to the extent that any shift in their availability has an immediately discernible impact on enrollments. Federal financial aid to students began

with the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (GI Bill) in 1944 and was expanded with the National Defense Education Act in 1958, but the community colleges were slow to seek these funds (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). Not until passage of the Basic Educational Opportunity Grant (now called Pell Grants) program in 1972 (U.S. Department of Education, 2002) did the majority of community colleges organize financial aid offices. One reason for the slow start was the misperception that because of the comparatively low cost of community college education, students did not need financial assistance. However, students still had to spend money to live, commute to classes, and, by attending school, were foregoing income that they could otherwise have earned. Furthermore, because community college students were typically from lower-income groups, their needs were greater, even though the cost of attending the community college was generally less than attending a four-year college or university.

The Council for the Advancement of Standards for Student Services/Development Programs (Baum & Payea, 2004) advanced principles which specified that institutions of higher education were responsible for providing educational opportunities that challenged students to learn and develop while at the same time providing support to nurture the student's development. The higher education institutions also presupposed that students would search out relevant educational resources that were available, accessible, and relevant to their educational and developmental needs. Institutions of higher education have asserted that they make many provisions to provide the resources for student support and development.

In recent years, student satisfaction, especially its relation to student retention, has been of concern in colleges and universities across the nation. Once the student has been admitted, the next challenge for the college or university is to ensure student satisfaction, which plays an important role in student retention. Although there is not an extensive amount of research on student satisfaction with student services and its impact on retention, a few studies do discuss this issue. Astin (1993) found a positive correlation between satisfaction with student support services and persistence. He also found a direct positive correlation between student satisfaction and monies spent on student support services. Astin's findings further illustrated that students using support services, such as advisement and tutoring, reported satisfaction. However, students might not seek out such services if the services were perceived as being inadequate. His findings also emphasized and strengthened The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education's assertion that students would search out educational resources if they are truly relevant to students' educational and developmental needs. Similarly, Becker (1999) found that students who were satisfied with student services and academic areas on campus were retained at higher levels than those who were dissatisfied.

Even so, several of the students participating in these studies also indicated that they felt discouraged with student services. Many theories and models exist either to describe the out-of-classroom factors' impact on learning or strategies to remedy the negative influences. To review a few of these studies, Pascarella and Terenzini's Student Learning Model (1991) identified the importance of both classroom experience and out-of-class experiences. Edmondson & White (1998) in their study of the United States

Coast Guard Academy found that the lack of "fit" between the individual and his socializing environment was the major determinant in withdrawal from the Academy. Jones and Watson's model (1990) of undergraduate socialization demonstrated the impact of the college environment on students' growth while Morgan & Hertzog (2001) argued that lower attrition rates reported by prestigious private universities and state-supported universities with national reputations could be attributed to student self-selection. This self-selection increased the compatibility or "fit" between the students' interests and needs with those of the institution's environment. In another study, Stokes & Hodge (2000) found student dissatisfaction with academic life and dissatisfaction with student services a significant variable for a freshman leaving college. Levitz, Noel, and Richter (1999) found that student persistence was a key indicator of student satisfaction and success.

Tinto (1987) also asserted that admissions materials, personal contacts, and the expectations they build could play a major role in a student's adjustment to the institution. Information provided to students must be realistic; otherwise, students are going to be frustrated by the lack of congruence between themselves and the institution. This outcome is also supported by Marmon (2002), who stated that colleges should have outreach programs for both parents and students. These programs should make parents and students aware of college programs and services. The outreach programs should also serve to provide a supportive environment for students who are concerned about whether or not they made the right choice in coming to the college in the first place. If a prospective student's characteristics (aptitude, interests, expectations, and other

characteristics) are recognized by the institution of interest, the student will have greater satisfaction with the institution. Admissions officers should be educators in providing institutional information to prospective students to help ensure "best fit" (Carter, 2005). DiMaggio and Mohr (1985) said that matching students' needs with the institution's needs would lead to greater student satisfaction and success. There is a well-established empirical relationship between students' level of satisfaction with the postsecondary institution they are attending and their rate of retention at that institution (Carter). In other words, college satisfaction is a "primary predictor" of student persistence (Tinto, 1983). Furthermore, college satisfaction is an assessment outcome that has been found to be the least influenced or confounded by students' college-entry characteristics e.g., academic preparedness, educational aspirations, gender, and socioeconomic status (Astin, 1993). It seems clear that the greater the congruence between the student's values, goals, and attitudes and those of the college, the more likely the student will persist at the college (Astin, 1993; Carter, Forester, 2006; Morgan & Hertzog, 2001).

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study was to investigate the perceptions of African American students on the impact of an Upward Bound Program on their academic performance, self-esteem, and the attitudes toward post-secondary educational success. Specifically, this study was concerned with the following variables: gender, family structure, and age as they related to these students' perceptions. Discussion in this chapter is divided into eight major areas: (1) Type of Design, (2) Population and Sampling Procedure, (3) Instrumentation, (4) Validity of the Instrument, (5) Reliability of the Instrument, (6) Pilot Study, (7) Data Collection Procedure, (8) Statistical Analysis.

#### **Type of Research Design**

A methodological frame work, this survey was employed to collect and analyze the data. The survey design allowed the researcher an opportunity to assess the attitude, perceptions, opinions, behaviors, and motivations of individuals regarding a certain phenomenon or object (Sellitiz, Wrightsman, & Cook, 1996).

As Kerlinger (1996) notes, survey methodology includes a variety of procedures. Survey research can be conducted by use of personal interviews as well as mailed

questionnaires. More often than not, survey research tends to utilize more than one kind of method in order to increase the reliability and validity of the data collected. Survey designs, like other kinds of research paradigms, have their methodological weaknesses. One of the key weaknesses in the survey design is that information generated often lacks sufficient depth. Consequently, the descriptions obtained from the methodology tend to be circumscribed to its temporal location and thus lacks the strength that accompany protracted observations (Kerlinger).

Although the survey design has its methodological limitations, there are several advantages to its use that tend to outweigh its disadvantages. According to Sellitz, Wrightsman & Cook (1996), the researcher has the following advantages:

1. To collect detailed factual information that describes existing phenomena about a population;
2. To identify problems or justify current conditions and practices that are occurring within a population;
3. To make comparisons and evaluations of a population, and
4. To determine what others are doing with similar problems or situations, and thus benefit from their experience in making future plans and decisions.... (p 42-48)

In sum, as Kerlinger (1996) notes, the methodology of survey research, like that which was employed in this study, can be conceived of as an inquiry into the uniformity or regularity of some phenomena. The use of this survey design provided the most effective, efficient, and economical means of studying the perceived impact of an

Upward Bound Program in the academic achievement, self-esteem, and attitudes toward post-secondary educational success of African American students.

### **Population and Sampling Procedure**

The total population to be investigated was 353 first-generation/low-income high school students who were enrolled in an Upward Bound Program at institutions in the State of Mississippi. The Upward Bound Program is a federally funded activity designed to improve the academic performance and enhance the educational motivation levels of students to attend college.

The institutions that were targeted were located in the state of Mississippi. Institution A was a rural four-year historically black college/university. Institution B was a rural four-year historically black college/university. Institution C was a rural four-year historically black college/university, and institution D was a rural public community college. These institutions have housed Upward Bound Programs for more than 20 years. There are more than 400 hundred students being served by these institutions each program year.

### **Instrumentation**

The major data gathering scale used was the Middleton Upward Bound Survey. It was designed and developed by the researcher (see appendix D). The researcher developed the instrument because a thorough search revealed that no standardized instrument was available which could be used to ascertain the perception of African

American Students regarding the impact of Upward Bound Program on their academic achievement, self-esteem, and attitudes towards post-educational success.

The Middleton Upward Bound Survey consisted of two major sections. Scale one consisted of perceptions regarding the Upward Bound Program. There were fifteen items under three subscales. Part-one, entitled “Academic Achievement,” consisted of five items. Sub-scale two, which was entitled “Self-Esteem,” contained five items. Moreover, sub-scale three did contain five-items and was entitled “Post-Secondary Education.”

All of the items on scale one of the investigative instruments were in the form of a Likert-scale. The items in this section of the investigation required the participants to circle one of five fixed-alternative expressions. Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neither (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). The items in this section scored (1 to 5), with the highest score representing a favorable perception and lowest score representing an unfavorable perception with regard to the impact of an Upward Bound Program.

Additionally, the second scale of the survey contained three demographic items. Items one and two were scored one to two (1 to 2), respectively. Item three was scored one to four (1 to 4). Inasmuch as this section was composed of demographic items, the scoring one to three does not represent a perceptual sequence, only categories.

### **Validity of the instrument**

To test the validity of the Middleton Upward Bound Survey, the researcher administered the instrument to a group of professors in the fields of Research and Statistics. The panel of experts was asked to assess the content of each item and of the

test as a whole. Once the panel of experts agreed that the survey was a valid instrument for use in this study, the researcher conducted a pilot test of the instrument.

### **Reliability of the Instrument**

The reliability of the Middleton Upward Bound Survey was assessed through the application of Rational Equivalency Procedure. This type of reliability determines “how all items on a single test relate to all other items and to the test as a whole”. (Hinkle, Wiersma & Jurs, 1994, pp. 33-44). For determining the rational equivalency (internal consistency) reliability for the instrument, The Alpha Reliability Coefficient was used.

The operation of this procedure was to find the variances of all individuals’ scores for each item and then to add these variances across all items (Hull & Nie, 1981). The final tabulation of data from the study yielded internal consistency and reliability coefficients for the following dimensions (subtest) of the investigative instrument and the test as a whole.

1. Perception of academic performance	.43
2. Perception of Self-Esteem	.85
3. Attitudes toward Post-secondary Education	.86
4. Test as a whole	.84

Additionally, each of the above reliability coefficients was found to be significant at the .05 alpha level or higher. Based on the criteria the instrument was found to be reliable.

### **Pilot Study**

In the spring of 2008, a field study examined the appropriateness and clarity of the items as well as acquired an estimate of reliability of the investigative survey. Thirty African American students from a similar Upward-Bounded Program were randomly selected to participate in the pilot study. The field test surveys examined suggestions and criticisms. At that time, the necessary revisions and recommendations regarding the Middleton Upward Bound Survey were incorporated.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher mailed a letter to the Director of the Upward Bound Program at the target institutions. The letter summarized the theoretical framework of the study and outlined the methodology and procedures to be used. The researcher indicated to the program administrator that a copy of the results would be available to their organization. Finally, the authorization letter from the program administrator was received, and the researcher proceeded with the study.

The procedure for administering the survey involved a two-fold-process. First, the students and the parents were given a letter regarding the purpose of the research and requesting their consent and assent for participation. Secondly, the researcher administered the questionnaires to the students after proper instructions were given. The students were asked to respond honestly to all the items of the surveys to eliminate non-responses.

Moreover, to ensure anonymity of participant responses, their names were omitted. All completed surveys were logged and examined for non-responses and errors.

Instruments not properly completed were discarded. Once the foregoing was completed, the researcher coded the data from the questionnaire. Likewise the researcher entered the codes into the computer. For statistical purposes, the researchers used the applications from the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to treat the data.

### **Independent and Dependent Variables**

The independent variables for the present study were age, gender, and family structure. These variables were assumed to have some effects on the dependent variable which was the perceptions of African American high school students regarding the impact of Upward Bound Programs on their academic performance, self-esteem and attitudes toward educational success.

### **Statistical Analysis**

Inasmuch as the instrument yielded interval scaled data for the dependent variable and nominal or ordinal scale data for the independent variable, a parametric procedure will be used. The parametric procedure employed in this study was the One-Way Analysis of Variance. According to Kerlinger (1986), the One-Way Analysis of Variance is a statistical technique which examines the effects of one independent variable on a dependent variable.

Finally, if a difference were found among the sample means, the researcher would employ the Scheffe' Method, a Post Hoc test used to determine whether it can be attributed to random sampling fluctuations (Hinkle, Wiersman & Jurs, 1994). All hypotheses were tested at the .05 Alpha level or better.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of first generation/low-income African American High School students regarding the impact of Upward Bound Programs on their academic achievement, self-esteem and attitudes toward post-secondary educational success. Specifically, the researcher was concerned with the following variables: gender, family structure and age as they related to the students perceptions of their own academic achievement, self-esteem and attitudes pertaining to post-secondary educational success. Answers to the following questions were sought:

1. Does African American student age influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement?
2. Does African American student gender influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement?
3. Does African American student family structure influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement?
4. Does African American student age influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student self esteem?

5. Does African American student gender influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student self esteem?
6. Does African American student family structure influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student self esteem?
7. Does African American student age influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student attitude toward post-secondary success?
8. Does African American student gender influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student attitude toward post-secondary success?
9. Does African American student family structure influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student attitude toward post-secondary success?

The sample consisted of 353 first-generational/low-income African American High School students enrolled in Upward Bound Programs in Mississippi. The data for this study were collected from a locally devised questionnaire entitled “Middleton Upward Bound Survey.” The data analysis for this study was accomplished under two major sections. The first section continued the demographic profile of the participants in the study. The second section examined the major research questions formulated for this investigation. The data were tested using the One-Way Analysis of Variance and the Scheffe’ Test.

### Demographic Profile of the Participants in the Study

There were 353 students who participated in this study. They were described descriptively by age, gender and family structure.

#### *Age*

The sample was divided into four different age groups of students for this empirical study. There were 100 students 15 years of age, 106 students 16 years of age, 86 students 17 years of age and 61 students 18 years of age. The percentage of the students who fell in the aforementioned age levels was 28.3, 30.0, 24.4 and 17.3, respectively. See Table 1 for these results.

Table 1

Frequency Distribution Participants in the Study by Age

Age	Number	Percent
15 years	100	28.3
16 years	106	30.0
17 years	86	24.4
18 yrs	61	17.3
Total	353	100.0

#### *Gender*

Regarding the gender of the students who participated in the study, 131 (37.1 %) were male, and 222 (62.9 %) were female. See Table 2 for these findings

Table 2

## Frequency Distribution Participants in the Study by Gender

Gender	Number	Percent
Male	131	37.1
Female	222	62.9
Total	353	100.0

*Family Structure*

The variable family structure was categorized into four distinct groups for the present study. There were 35 (9.9 %) who reported they resided with a grand parents and 23 (6.5 %) indicated they resided with a guardian. On the other hand, 155 (43.9 %) students revealed they lived in a single-parent setting, and 140 (39.7 %) expressed they resided in a two-parent family structure. See Table 3 for these analyses.

Table 3

## Frequency Distribution Participants in the Study by Family Structure

Family Structure	Number	Percent
Grandparent	35	9.9
Guardian	23	6.5
Single Parent	155	43.9
Two Parent	140	39.7
Total	353	100.0

### **Examination of Research Question One**

Does African American student age influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Program on student academic achievement?

Reported in Table 4 are the Analysis of Variance results the age of students and their obtained perception scores with respect to the impact of Upward Bound Programs have on student academic achievement. Statistically significant differences were found between the perception scores regarding the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement ( $F=2.770$ ,  $df=3/349$ ,  $p<.05$ ) with regard to the four age groups of students at the .05 level.

Further data analysis using the Scheffe' as a Multiple Comparison Test (See Table 5) revealed that students who were 15 years old had significantly more favorable perceptions toward the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement than their 18 years old counterparts. No other mean differences were observed.

Table 4

Analysis of Variance Summary Table Regarding the Perceptions of African American Students toward the Impact of Upward Bound Programs on Student Academic Achievement by Age

Source of Variance	Source of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	117.121	3	39.040	2.770	.042*
Within Groups	4918.018	349	14.092		
Total	5035.139	352			

\*significant at the .05 level

Table 5

Scheffe' Results Regarding the Perceptions of African American Students toward the Impact of Upward Bound Programs on Student Academic Achievement by Age

Mean 1 15 yrs	Mean 2 16 yrs	Mean 3 17 yrs	Mean 4 18 yrs	Observed Mean Difference	<i>p</i>
22.83	22.28			.55	.779
22.83		22.01		.82	.533
22.83			21.10	1.73	.046*
	22.28	22.01		.27	.969
	22.28		21.10	1.18	.279
		22.01	21.10	.91	.550

\*significant at the .05 level

### Examination of Research Question Two

Does African American student gender influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Program on student academic achievement?

Reported in Table 6 are the One-Way Analysis of Variance results regarding the perceptions of Male and Female students toward the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement. A statistically significant difference was not found between the perceptions of male and female students with regard to the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement ( $F=.007$ ,  $df=1/351$ ,  $p>.05$ ) at the .05 level

Table 6

Analysis of Variance Summary Table Regarding the Perceptions of African American Students toward the Impact of Upward Bound Programs on Student Academic Achievement by Gender

Source of Variance	Source of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	.102	1	.102	.007	.973
Within Groups	5035.037	351	14.345		
Total	5035.139	352			

### Examination of Research Question Three

Does African American student family structure influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Program on student academic achievement?

Presented in Table 7 are the One-Way ANOVA findings regarding the family structure of the students and their obtained perception scores with respect to the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement. The difference in the obtained scores regarding the impact of Upward Bound Programs on students academic achievement by the four family structure groups of students ( $F=10.714$ ,  $df=3/349$ ,  $p<.001$ ) were significant at the .001 level.

Further data analysis utilizing the Scheffe' as a follow-up test (See Table 8) revealed that students who resided with a guardian possessed significantly more favorable perceptions than their peers who resided with a grandparent, in a single parent setting, or a two-parent setting with regard to the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement. No other mean differences were observed.

Table 7

Analysis of Variance Summary Table Regarding the Perceptions of African American Students toward the Impact of Upward Bound Programs on Student Academic Achievement by Family Structure

Source of Variance	Source of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	424.627	3	141.542	10.714	.000***
Within Groups	4610.511	349	13.211		
Total	5035.139	352			

\*\*\*significant at the .001 level

Table 8

Scheffe' Results Regarding the Perceptions of African American Students toward the Impact of Upward Bound Programs on Student Academic Achievement by Family Structure

Mean 1 Grandparent	Mean 2 Guardian	Mean 3 Single Parent	Mean 4 Two Parent	Observed Mean Difference	<i>P</i>
22.20	26.04			-3.84	.002**
22.20		21.46		.74	.760
22.20			22.30	-.10	.999
	26.04	21.46		4.58	.000***
	26.04		22.30	3.74	.000***
		21.46	22.30	-.84	.276

\*\*significant at the .01 level

\*\*\*significant at the .001 level

#### Examination of Research Question Four

Does African American student age influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Program on student self-esteem?

The Analysis of Variance was computed between the four age groups of students and their perceptions with regard to the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student self-esteem. As shown in Table 9, no significant differences were found in the obtained perception scores regarding the impact of Upward Bound Programs ( $F=1.672$ ,  $df=3/349$ ,  $p>.05$ ) on student self-esteem at the .05 level.

Table 9

Analysis of Variance Summary Table Regarding the Perceptions of African American Students toward the Impact of Upward Bound Programs on Student Self-Esteem by Age

Source of Variance	Source of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	42.511	3	14.170	1.672	.173
Within Groups	2957.959	349	8.476		
Total	3000.470	352			

#### Examination of Research Question Five

Does African American student gender influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Program on student self-esteem?

Indicated in Table 10 are the Analysis of Variance findings regarding the gender of students with respect to their obtained perception scores toward the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student self-esteem. No significant differences were found between the perceptions of male and female students pertaining to the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student self-esteem at the .05 level ( $F=.437$ ,  $df=1/351$ ,  $p>.05$ ).

Table 10

Analysis of Variance Summary Table Regarding the Perceptions of African American Students toward the Impact of Upward Bound Programs on Student Self-Esteem by Gender

Source of Variance	Source of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	3.728	1	3.728	.437	.509
Within Groups	2996.743	352	8.538		
Total	3000.470	352			

**Examination of Research Question Six**

Does African American student family structure influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Program on student self-esteem?

Illustrated in Table 11, are the Analysis of Variance results regarding the students' family structure and their perceptions with respect to the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student self-esteem. The differences in the obtained perception scores regarding the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student self-esteem by the four family structure groups of students ( $F=4.983$ ,  $df=3/349$ ,  $p<.01$ ) were significant at the .01 level.

Further data analysis employing the Scheffe' as a Post Hoc Test (See Table 12) revealed that students who resided with a guardian exhibited significantly more favorable perceptions than those who resided within a single parent structure regarding the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student self esteem. No other mean differences were observed.

Table 11

Analysis of Variance Summary Table Regarding the Perceptions of African American Students toward the Impact of Upward Bound Programs on Student Self-Esteem by Family Structure

Source of Variance	Source of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	123.247	3	41.082	4.983	.002**
Within Groups	2877.223	349	8.244		
Total	3000.470	352			

\*\*Significant at the .01 level

Table 12

Scheffe' Results Regarding the Perceptions of African American Students toward the Impact of Upward Bound Programs on Student Self-Esteem by Family Structure

Mean 1	Mean 2	Mean 3	Mean 4	Observed Mean Difference	P
Grandparent	Guardian	Single Parent	Two Parent		
21.80	23.78			-1.98	.087
21.80		21.39		.41	.899
21.80			22.02	-.22	.983
	23.78	21.39		2.39	.003**
	23.78		22.02	1.76	.061
		21.39	22.02	-.63	.311

\*\*significant at the .01 level

### Examination of Research Question Seven

Does African American student age influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Program on attitudes toward post-secondary success?

The One-Way Analysis of Variance was calculated between the four age groups of students and their obtained perception scores with respect to the impact of Upward

Bound Programs on student attitudes toward post-secondary success. As reported in Table 13, no differences were found in the obtained perception scores regarding the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student attitudes toward post-secondary success ( $F=.828$ ,  $df=3/349$ ,  $p>.05$ ) at the .05 level.

Table 13

Analysis of Variance Summary Table Regarding the Perceptions of African American Students toward the Impact of Upward Bound Programs on Attitudes toward Post-Secondary Success by Age

Source of Variance	Source of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	26.289	3	8.763	.828	.479
Within Groups	3693.943	349	10.584		
Total	3720.232	352			

### Examination of Research Question Eight

Does African American student gender influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Program on attitudes toward post-secondary success?

Shown in Table 14 are the Analysis of Variance findings regarding male and female students' perceptions with respect to the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student attitudes toward post secondary success. Statistically significant differences were not found between the perceptions of male and female students ( $F=.433$ ,  $df=1/351$ ,  $p>.05$ ) with regard to their perceptions toward attitudes regarding post secondary success at the .05 level.

Table 14

Analysis of Variance Summary Table Regarding the Perceptions of African American Students toward the Impact of Upward Bound Programs on Attitudes toward Post-Secondary Success by Gender

Source of Variance	Source of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	4.581	1	4.581	.433	.511
Within Groups	3715.651	351	10.586		
Total	3720.232	352			

**Examination of Research Question Nine**

Does African American student family structure influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Program on attitudes toward post-secondary success?

The Analysis of Variance was computed between the four family structure groups of students and their perceptions with regard to the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student attitudes toward post-secondary success. As revealed in Table 15, no differences were found in the obtained perception scores regarding the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student attitudes toward post-secondary success at the .05 level ( $F=2.609$ ,  $df=3/349$ ,  $p>.05$ ).

Table 15

Analysis of Variance Summary Table Regarding the Perceptions of African American Students toward the Impact of Upward Bound Programs on Attitudes toward Post-Secondary Success by Family Structure

Source of Variance	Source of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	81.613	3	27.204	2.609	.051
Within Groups	3638.619	349	10.426		
Total	3720.232	352			

### Summary of Research Questions

There were nine research questions formulated and tested in this investigation. All nine were tested for differences between the variables. Of the nine questions tested in this study, three were found to have significant differences. They were research questions one, three and six. (See Table 16 for these results)

The results from research question one revealed that students who were 15 years old or less had significantly more favorable perceptions regarding the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement than those who were 18 years old. Moreover, regarding research question 3, students who resided with a guardian possessed significantly more favorable perceptions than those who resided with a grandparent, in a single parent setting or a two-parent setting with respect to the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement.

Furthermore, similar results were revealed in research question six with regard to the influence of family structure on the perceptions of students toward the impact of

Upward Bound Programs on student self-esteem. It was also found that students who resided with a guardian exhibited significantly more favorable perceptions than those who resided in a single-parent setting with respect to the impact of Upward Bound Programs on self-esteem.

Table 16  
Summary of Research Questions

Research Question	F	DF	P	Conclusion
1	2.770	3/349	.042*	Significant
2	.007	1/351	.933	Non Significant
3	10.714	3/349	.000***	Significant
4	1.672	3/349	.173	Non Significant
5	.437	1/351	.509	Non Significant
6	4.983	3/349	.002**	Significant
7	.828	3/349	.479	Non Significant
8	.433	1/351	.511	Non Significant
9	2.609	3/349	.051	Non Significant

\*Significant at the .05 level  
 \*\*Significant at the .01 level  
 \*\*\*Significant at the .001 level

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of African American students on the impact of an Upward Bound Program on their academic achievement, self-esteem, and attitudes toward post-secondary educational success. Specifically, this study was concerned with the following the variables: gender, family structure, and age as they related to the students perceptions of their own academic achievement, self-esteem, and attitudes toward post-secondary educational success.

A survey design was employed in this investigation to collect and analyze the data. Three hundred fifty-three (353) African American high school students participated in this empirical study. An instrument entitled “The Middleton Upward Bound Survey” was used to gather the data. The investigative instrument was validated by a group of Upward Bound professionals and university research professors. The instrument had an alpha coefficient of .84 for the test as a whole.

Moreover, the data was tested through the application of the One-Way Analysis of Variance and the Scheffe’ Multiple Comparison Test. The following research questions were tested at the .05 significance level or better in this empirical investigation:

1. Does African American student age influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement?
2. Does African American student gender influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement?
3. Does African American student family structure influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement?
4. Does African American student age influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student self esteem?
5. Does African American student gender influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student self esteem?
6. Does African American student family structure influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student self esteem?
7. Does African American student age influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student attitude toward post-secondary success?
8. Does African American student gender influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student attitude toward post-secondary success?
9. Does African American student family structure influence their perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student attitude toward post-secondary success?

## **Findings**

Based on the results of this study, the following findings were observed:

1. The perceptions of African American high school students regarding the impact of an Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement were significantly affected by their age.
2. African American high school students' gender did not produce a significant influence on their perceptions regarding the impact of an Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement.
3. The family structure of African American high school students did produce a significant effect on their perceptions regarding the impact of an Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement.
4. The age of African American high school students did not produce a significant influence on their perceptions regarding the impact of an Upward Bound Programs on student self-esteem.
5. African American high school students who resided with a guardian had a significantly higher mean perception score than their single parent counterparts regarding the impact of an Upward Bound Programs on student self-esteem
6. The perceptions of African American high school students regarding the impact of an Upward Bound Programs on high school student self-esteem were not significantly affected by their gender.

7. African American high school students' age did not produce a significant effect on their perceptions regarding the impact of an Upward Bound Programs on student attitudes toward post-secondary educational success.
8. The variable gender did not produce a significant influence on the perceptions of African American high school students toward the impact of an Upward Bound Programs on student attitudes toward post-secondary educational success.
9. African American high school students' family structure did not produce a significant influence on their perceptions regarding the impact of an Upward Bound Programs on student attitudes toward post-secondary educational success.

### **Conclusion**

One of the most interesting findings of this study pertained to the impact of an Upward Bound Program on student academic achievement. To be sure, the results from the present study revealed that African American high school students' age and family structure had a significant influence on their perceptions regarding the impact of an Upward Bound Program on student academic achievement.

Moreover, regarding the variable age, data revealed that younger African American high school students, those who were 15 years old, were more favorable regarding the impact of an Upward Bound Program on student academic achievement than their counterparts who were 18 years old. These findings were consistent with those of Carbonaro and Gamoran (2002-2003) and Dennis (2005). These researchers found

that age was associated with academic achievement. A plausible explanation for the prevailing findings might be that younger African American high school students are more open to support services such as academic tutoring while their older counterparts are more focused on peer approval and a need for independence.

Additionally, regarding the variable family structure and academic achievement, data revealed that African American high school students who resided with a guardian as a parent exhibited more favorable perceptions with respect to the impact of an Upward Bound Program on student academic achievement than the other three family structure groups. The present findings are supported by the work of Dennis (2005). Dennis stated that the parents of first-generation/low-income students are important to their child's academic success. A reasonable explanation for these findings probably could be found in the work by Nadal (2000). Nadal found that programs that have a strong parental component have higher academic achievement than those without a parent involvement component.

Another notable finding of the current study was the impact on an Upward Bound Program on student self-esteem. Particularly, the variable family structure was found to have a significant influence on the perceptions of African American high school students with regard to the impact an Upward Bound Program had on student self-esteem. These findings correspond with those of Rathunde, et al. (2000). Rathunde and his associates found that parental involvement and willingness to give high school students autonomy and freedom are positively correlated to their self-esteem. A subjective explanation for these findings might be that African American high school students who resided with a

guardian faced a more challenging home environment than their peers in other family settings. In these types of family structures, the parents must be able to trust and expect more which seem more likely to have positive consequences for student's self-esteem.

Finally, another significant finding of the present study was the lack of influence that an Upward Bound Programs, had on student attitudes toward educational success as perceived by African American high school students. The variables age, gender, and family structure had no influence on the perceptions of African American high school students regarding the impact that the Upward Bound Program had on their attitudes toward educational success. These current findings were similar to those of NCES (1998). Regardless of the social category of an African American high school student who participates in the TRIO programs such as Upward Bound, he or she is four times more likely to earn an undergraduate degree than students from similar backgrounds who do not participate in TRIO. An understanding of the impact of an Upward Bound program on the academic success of African American students as perceived by African American students can explain why no differences occurred with these variables. Based on the findings derived from the results of this empirical study, the following conclusions were reached:

1. In general, it appeared the younger African American high school students were more favorable in their perceptions regarding the impact of an Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement.

2. It appeared that male and female African American high school students seem to have similar perceptions with regard to the impact of an Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement.
3. African American high school students who resided with a guardian tended to have more favorable perceptions regarding the impact of an Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement.
4. It appeared that African American high school student's age or gender had no influence on their perceptions toward the impact of Upward Bound Programs on student self-esteem.
5. In general, African American high school students who resided with a guardian seemed to have more favorable perceptions regarding the impact of an Upward Bound Programs on student self-esteem.
6. Regardless, of African American high school students' age, gender or family structure, they tended to have similar perceptions regarding the impact of an Upward Bound Programs on student attitudes toward post-secondary educational success.

### **Implications**

The findings of this study provided several implications for Upward Bound Programs.

1. The variables age and family structure and their influence on the impact of an Upward Bound Programs on student academic achievement suggest that educators who are responsible for this type of program need to be

cognizant of how this program is perceived by all parties, especially older African American high school students and those from various family structures. The major component of this program is to improve the academic success of all students. There is an apparent need to reassess how the Upward Bound Program is perceived not only by students but parents and community leaders.

2. The influence of family structure on the perceptions of students regarding student self-esteem suggest that educators who are responsible for implementing the various components of this program need to be aware of the significant influence that family settings play on students' self-worth. Thus, a cohesive effort needs to be made to include parental involvement into the various aspects of Upward Bound Programs.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Based on the findings of this study, the following are suggestions for further research:

1. A study focusing on the relationship between the academic success and self-esteem of African American high school students.
2. The attitudes/perceptions and behaviors of teachers involved with the Upward Bound Programs, with regard to the impact of this program on the success of first-generation/low-income students.
3. An examinations of the perceptions of African American students versus other students of color regarding the impact of an Upward Bound

Programs on students' academic achievement, self-esteem and attitudes toward educational success.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER TO DIRECTORS OF UPWARD BOUND

March 19, 2008

Lucille Donaldson, Director  
Upward Bound Program  
1000 ASU Drive 240  
Alcorn State, MS 39096

Dear Mrs. Donaldson,

I am currently enrolled in the Community College Leadership Doctoral Program at Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, Mississippi. In my dissertation, I plan to examine the student perception of an Upward Bound Program on their academic achievement, self-esteem, and attitudes toward post-secondary educational success. In order to complete my research, I need your permission to conduct a survey involving the Upward Bound students at Copiah-Lincoln Community College.

This letter is to request permission to conduct my research. I will need a confirmation letter from you giving me permission to survey the Upward Bound students. You can email or mail the confirmation letter back to me. I assure you that the responses of the participants will remain anonymous and that their names will not be mentioned through general conversation or in print.

Should you have any questions concerning this research study, please call me at 601-849-0126 (office) or 601-382-0694 (cell) or by email at [dewayne.middleton@colin.edu](mailto:dewayne.middleton@colin.edu).

Sincerely,

*Dewayne Middleton*  
Director of Student Services  
151 Co-Lin Drive  
Mendenhall, Ms 39114  
Phone: 601-849-0126  
Fax: 601-849-0694

APPENDIX B  
PARENT PERMISSION LETTER

Dear Parents,

My name is Dewayne Middleton; I am a Doctoral student at Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, Mississippi. I would like your child to take part in a research study. During the first of June, I will be surveying all Upward Students at Copiah-Lincoln Community College. If you and your child agree that your child may participate in the study I will ask your child to complete a questionnaire about his/her perceptions of the Upward Bound Program on their academic achievement, self-esteem, and attitudes toward post-secondary education. Completion of this survey should take no more than fifteen to twenty minute.

All of the information I obtain from your child will be kept confidential. The students name will not be used on any of the forms. The survey that your child completes will be marked with a number I select, but no one who will know this number or the responses of your child.

The information collected from this study will be compiled into a report that will be available for everyone to see at Mississippi State University Instructional Systems Office. The report will not contain any INDIVIDUAL information about the students. It will describe the answers to the survey but it will not use any names. I will use the information from this study to show the importance of the Upward Bound program and the impact it has on young students. Again, I will never report individual information.

The Director of the Upward Bound Program has approved the survey. However, the student does not have to participate in the survey. As the investigator I will be present during the survey. The Upward Bound staff will be present during the survey. However, they will not be involved in the student survey process. There are no benefits to you or your child for participating in this study. The information from the survey should help us learn more about the effectiveness of the program regarding academic achievement, self-esteem, and attitudes toward post-secondary education. There are no known risks associated with participation in this study, and most students enjoy the opportunity to express their opinions.

Mississippi State University appreciates the participation of people who help it carry out its function of developing knowledge through research. If you have any questions about the research, you may call me at 601-849-0126 (office), 601-382-0694 (cell) or by email at [dewayne.middleton@colin.edu](mailto:dewayne.middleton@colin.edu).

If you and your child agree that your child may take part in the research please return a signed copy of this form to me in the enclosed envelope. You may keep the other copy for future reference. You have read the permission form and agree to have your child take part in the research.

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name of Parent: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX C  
STUDENT ASSENT LETTER

**Upward Bound  
Minor Assent Form**

Your parent knows we are going to ask you to participate in this survey. We want to know what impact you believe Upward Bound program has on your academic achievement, self-esteem, and attitude toward post-secondary education. It will take about fifteen minutes of your time to complete the task. Your name will not be written anywhere on the research instrument. No one will know these answers came from you personally.

If you do not want to participate, you can stop at any time. You can ask questions if you do not understand any part of the study.

Do you understand? Is this OK?

Name (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX D  
IRB CERTIFICATION LETTER



March 27, 2008

Dewayne Middleton

RE: IRB Study #08-072: A Survey in Rural Colleges and Universities on the perception of African American students on an Upward Bound program

Dear Middleton:

The above referenced project was reviewed and approved via expedited review for a period of 3/27/2008 through 3/15/2009 in accordance with 45 CFR 46.110 #7. Please note the expiration date for approval of this project is 3/15/2009. If additional time is needed to complete the project, you will need to submit a Continuing Review Request form 30 days prior to the date of expiration. Any modifications made to this project must be submitted for approval prior to implementation. Forms for both Continuing Review and Modifications are located on our website at <http://www.orc.msstate.edu>.

Any failure to adhere to the approved protocol could result in suspension or termination of your project. Please note that the IRB reserves the right, at anytime, to observe you and any associated researchers as they conduct the project and audit research records associated with this project.

Please refer to your docket number (#08-072) when contacting our office regarding this project.

We wish you the very best of luck in your research and look forward to working with you again. If you have questions or concerns, please contact [irb@research.msstate.edu](mailto:irb@research.msstate.edu) or by phone at 662-325-3294.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katherine Crowley".

Katherine Crowley  
Assistant IRB Compliance Administrator

cc: Dr. James Davis

**Office for Regulatory Compliance**

P. O. Box 6223 • 70 Morgan Avenue • Mailstop 9563 • Mississippi State, MS 39762 • (662) 325-3294 • FAX (662) 325-8776

APPENDIX E

SURVEY

### Middleton Upward Bound Survey

This survey is an attempt to assess the impact of an Upward Bound Program on the behavior of students. Part-one of the survey solicits answers to questions concerning academic achievement, part-two solicits answers to questions concerning self-esteem, and part-three solicits answers to questions concerning attitudes toward post-secondary education.

#### Scale One: Perceptions Regarding Upward Bound Programs

Directions: Please indicated you opinions concerning the impact of an Upward Bound Program on academic achievement, self-esteem and post-secondary education by placing a circle around the number to the right of each statement. (5) in the first column indicates you strongly agree, (4) in the second column indicates you agree, (3) in the third column indicates undecided you neither agree or disagree, (2) in the fourth column indicates you disagree and (1) in the fifth column indicates you strongly disagree with the statement.

#### Part I: Academic Achievement

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Upward Bound Programs provide experiences for students to raise their grade point averages.	5	4	3	2	1
2. Upward Bound Programs helps prepare students for the Mississippi subject area test.	5	4	3	2	1
3. Upward Bound Programs provide supplemental instruction to improve the academic success of students.	5	4	3	2	1
4. The Upward Bound Program tutoring program provides the students the tools necessary to be more successful in the classroom.	5	4	3	2	1
5. The Upward Bound Program assist students in preparing for the American College Test (ACT).	5	4	3	2	1

#### Part II: Self-Esteem

6. Upward Bound Programs provide experiences to help students improve the way they view themselves.	5	4	3	2	1
7. Upward Bound Programs provide opportunities for students to enhance their decision making skills and leadership abilities.	5	4	3	2	1
8. Upward Bound Programs provide students the opportunity for extracurricular participation which showcases their personal accomplishments.	5	4	3	2	1
9. Upward Bound Programs provide experiences in working with others to enhance self-worth.	5	4	3	2	1
10. Upward Bound Programs motivate students to achieve success academically as well as personally.	5	4	3	2	1

#### Part III: Post-Secondary Education

11. Upward Bound Programs provide students with the academic skills necessary to be successful at the post-secondary level.	5	4	3	2	1
12. Upward Bound Programs encourage parental involvement at every level of post-secondary education.	5	4	3	2	1
13. Upward Bound Programs provide students with necessary skills to meet the social demands as they transition into post-secondary education.	5	4	3	2	1
14. Upward Bound Programs provide academic support to increase the students' chances of attending post-secondary institutions.	5	4	3	2	1
15. The residential portion of the Upward Bound Program assists students with the transition to post-secondary education.	5	4	3	2	1

#### Scale Two: Background Information

16. What is your age?    \_\_\_ 15 years old    \_\_\_ 16 years old    \_\_\_ 17 years old    \_\_\_ 18 years old
17. What is your gender?    \_\_\_ Male    \_\_\_ Female
18. What is your family structure?    \_\_\_ Grandparent    \_\_\_ Guardian    \_\_\_ Single parent    \_\_\_ Two parent

APPENDIX F

VITA

## VITA

1975..... Born-Natchez, Mississippi

1996 .....A.A., Copiah-Lincoln Community College  
Wesson, Mississippi

2000 ..... B.S., University of Southern Mississippi  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi

2003 ..... M.S., Alcorn State University  
Lorman, Mississippi

2000 – 2005 ..... Upward Bound Coordinator  
Copiah-Lincoln Community Center  
Wesson, Mississippi

2005 – 2006 ..... Academic Advisor/Instructor  
Copiah-Lincoln Community College  
Mendenhall, Mississippi

2007 – Present ..... Director – Student Services  
Copiah-Lincoln Community College  
Mendenhall, Mississippi

Major Field ..... Community College Leadership