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BROKEN AND DEFERRED...BUT I’M HERE: AN EXPLORATION OF RESILIENCE AND STUDENT INVOLVEMENT OF NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS AT A HISTORICALLY BLACK UNIVERSITY

By
Adrell Lawrence Pinkney

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Mississippi State University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Counseling in the Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology and Special Education

Mississippi State, Mississippi

August 2007
BROKEN AND DEFERRED...BUT I'M HERE: AN EXPLORATION
OF RESILIENCE AND STUDENT INVOLVEMENT
OF NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS AT A
HISTORICALLY BLACK UNIVERSITY

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This study was an exploration of the relationship of the resilience of nontraditional, African American, commuter undergraduates and their academic and social involvement at a historically Black university. The researcher used the \textit{Personal Resiliency Questionnaire (PRQ)}, and a \textit{Student Demographic Questionnaire (SDQ)}. The \textit{PRQ} measured seven characteristics linked to resilience: (a) “Positive–The World,” (b) “Positive–Yourself,” (c) “Focused,” (d) “Flexible–Thoughts,” (e) “Flexible–Social,” and (e) “Organized” and (f) “Proactive.” The \textit{SDQ} included ten indicators of academic involvement and ten indicators of social involvement.

The researcher defined nontraditional students as those having three of the following characteristics: (a) having children; (b) being married; (c) being a commuter student; (d) working full-time; and (e) being 24 years of age or older at the time of graduation from college.
Indicators of academic involvement that linked indicators of resilience were: (a) taking detailed notes in class, (b) using a computer or word processor to prepare reports or papers, (c) asking an instructor for information related to a course, (d) contributing to a class discussion (e) using a computer lab or center, and (f) asking a librarian or staff member for help in finding information. Indicators of social involvement that significantly predicted indicators of resilience were: (a) living in an apartment or dormitory if the university provided on-campus housing, (b) making friends whose interest are different from yours, (c) supporting classmates’ fundraisers, and (d) visiting the university center.

The researcher recommends that college professors and university personnel encourage nontraditional students to use the six indicators of academic involvement and the four indicators of social involvement. These indicators of academic and social involvement have been linked to indicators of resilience which may enhance the development of resilience in nontraditional students. The researcher developed a model of resilience for nontraditional students that encourages the use of these indicators of academic and social involvement. These indicators of involvement could be used by college professors and student affairs administrators to enhance the resilience of nontraditional students.

Key words: resilience, nontraditional student, student involvement, African Americans, HBCUs, Personal Resilience Questionnaire, commuter students, resilience model
DEDICATION

Emma Harrison Lawrence

I love you.

This is for you.

Oh, Momma, I miss you so much!

Nolan Pinkney; My Hero; My ‘Husbunny’: No libretto has ever been put to music that could express my love. You have captured my dreams and made them your dreams. You are by far the best husband, father and lover any woman could ever pray for. I wonder what God saw in me, to make me worthy of you. Nolan, your encouragement and commitment made this success possible. I am deeply in love with you.

Javier D’mitri Pinkney, my gift from God: You taught me how to love God, because in loving you son, I can only imagine how much our Heavenly Father loves me, to sacrifice his only son. You give my life meaning, I am so proud of you. You are an incredibly wise and sensitive man. I love you son.

Emerald Noell “Pickles” Pinkney: You make me happy. In your laughter I feel my momma’s warmth and I remember how we laughed and shared ‘girl secrets’. I jokingly laugh and say, “I re-created my own best friend”. God in all his infinite wisdom filled a void in my life, with you. I love you “Pickles”.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I know resilience. In fact, I AM RESILIENT. It has taken me nearly 15 years to complete the requirements for this terminal degree. It was during this experience that I encountered many valleys, and mountains seemed to encompass every turn. I have laughed under the twinkling stars in barren lands, tasted snow from rippling streams, and eaten fruit from virgin trees. I have been places my friends may only read about and dined with those who park yachts and private planes in their backyards.

One word makes this journey possible. That word is “PEOPLE!” Yes “PEOPLE”, wonderful caring, encouraging, “PEOPLE” make dreams possible. “PEOPLE” make valleys bearable, “PEOPLE” point out the rainbows in the storm, and “PEOPLE” provide the pat on the back that allows you to want to stay the course. This wildness experience has provided me great insight into who I am, and more importantly, whose I am. I have journeyed to some incredible places, and I have met some wonderful lifetime acquaintances. I wouldn’t trade anything for my journey!

There are so many people to acknowledge for the inspiration to complete this chapter of my life. I will start with my parents, Noles A. Lawrence, Jr., “Da” you are perhaps the most resilient person I know. Throughout the years you have managed to endure many serious health crises, but you promised to be there for my graduation. I greatly appreciate your tenacity. Gwendolyn Lawrence, without your care and support my
daddy would not be here to participate in this celebration. Thank you for the words of encouragement and cards throughout the years. I love you both.

My fondest memory as a child was standing on the front porch calling for my brothers. With lyrical tones I would shout, “June ‘n Lenny, momma said to come home”, and the neighbors would pick up the chant and call, “June ‘n Lenny, it’s time to go home.” 

Noles A. Lawrence, III, Leonard J. Lawrence, and Lawrence N. Hartzog, I love you more than words could ever acknowledge. You are the best brothers a girl could ever hope for. 

My two sons, Conrad and Nolan, Jr., I love you. Sandra Ponson, you kept your promise to care for my kids while I was in school. I bet you never thought it would take 15 years. Thanks Barbara Black for loaning me your many novels as a child and cultivating a love for knowledge. Jacqueline “J” Henry, I have felt your prayers throughout this journey. 

To my life long friends, Jacqueline Charles, Shirley Lundy-Connors, Gwendolyn Frazier, Carmen “G” Jenkins, Cynthia B. B. McIntyre, Emma Paul, and Patricia Woodfork, I love you. My second daughter, Maite Rodrigues, I’ll be cooking soon. 

I love the wonderful people at Southern University at New Orleans. Capercenia Harris-Roberts, I will never forget the sacrifice you made in supporting me. I also know you’ve been waiting a long time to say “my friend is a Dr.” thanks for “having my back.” Enola Boudreaux, “My Enola”, I appreciate your text messages and your support. Congratulations on your graduation. I must acknowledge the Student Government Association officers and especially the presidents who were the inspiration for this research: Kevin Howard, the Honorable Quinten Atkins, Avis White, and the Honorable Christopher K. Jackson, you are my extended family. I am thankful to the library staff at SUNO, your kindness and assistance was greatly appreciated. I extend appreciation to Dr.
Joseph Bouie, Dr. Ellsworth Harris, Dr. Brenda Jackson, Dr. Janice Winder, and Roger Zohr for the support I received that made it possible to pursue my studies.

My exposure to resilience came from my involvement with the ASPIRE Training Institute. Ida Braveheart, Lynn Carlson, Joe Dragavich, Connie Hollingsworth-Bronson, Jerry Galloway, Stephani Hicswa, Sidney Mitchell, Rob Montobano, Jami Nordmark, Mike Tuitasi, Barry Yocom, and you baabbbby, Michial Gill (I kept the oath we made to each other to complete our degree requirements). If I am resilient, it is because you wonderful “PEOPLE” helped me to recognize my strengths.

I must acknowledge my church family, under the awesome ministry of Bishop J. Douglas Wiley of Life Center Cathedral. It was under your spiritual guidance that I strengthened and was able to find my way during this wilderness experience. I love you Maria W. McWilson my sister in Christ, and Momma Delphine Haynes who proclaimed “the victory is already yours, my child.” I want to thank all of the members of Hands of Life Deaf ministry for giving me the confidence to serve God while serving you.

I extend my deepest appreciation to the great people of ConnerPartners for allowing me to use the *Personal Resiliency Questionnaire*, scoring the questionnaire, and their immediate response each time I called. Special appreciation goes to my two data analysts, Williams Guillory, of Southern University at New Orleans and Angela Taylor of Mississippi State University. I must say thank you to Dr. Bob Wolverton, Jr. whose warm smile and encouraging words always made me feel safe during my visits to MSU. Dr. April Heiselt, your kindness and support goes beyond measure. I thank other members of my doctoral committee for their support and encouragement: Dr. Donna Browning Gainer, and Dr. Debbie Wells.
There are angels on earth, and I have met one, his name is Dr. Joe Ray Underwood. Dr. Underwood your kindness and hospitality will never be forgotten. Without hesitation, I know emphatically, I could never have completed this journey without you. You are the angel God sent to assist me in this wilderness experience. I will forever keep you in my prayers and whenever my story of resilience is mentioned, your name will head the list of those who made this dream a reality.

I have been Broken and Deferred...BUT I’M HERE!

With humility, I am Adrell Lawrence Pinkney, Ph.D.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Their optimism about the future and their ability to imagine what life would be like if conditions were better seemed to keep them going, struggling and surviving, albeit precariously, against the odds and without the support of the society to which they belong. (Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988, p. 192)

Higher education took a new direction following the enactment of the G. I. Bill in the mid 1940’s (Lintner, 1997; Kasworm, 1980). Prior to that time, campuses included a fairly homogenous traditional group of eighteen to twenty-four-year-old students. The G.I. Bill transformed higher education and provided space for a new group of educational contenders. This new group of learners was different from their predecessors as many of these students were over the age of 24, married, had children, commuted to campus, and or worked more than 30 hours per week (Kasworm, 1980; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998; Tinto, 1993). These students would come to be known as nontraditional as they were different from traditional students.

Choy (2002) determined that in the year 2000, “seventy-three percent of all undergraduates were in some way nontraditional” (p. 1). The term nontraditional was not succinct, which was a concern for many researchers; however it generally referred to any
student who delayed enrollment to college, enrolled part-time, worked full time while enrolled, had dependents, was a single parent, completed high school with a general education degree and may have been financially independent for purposes of financial aid. Whatever conditions defined this student, it was clear that nontraditional students faced greater concerns unlike their traditional student counterparts. Horn (1996) reported:

nontraditional students are less likely than traditional students to attain a degree or to remain enrolled after five years: one in three ‘minimally’ nontraditional students (had only one nontraditional characteristic), left school without a diploma, in contrast to one in five traditional students (p. 2).

Kasworm and Pike (1994) indicated that the analytical models which were of undergraduate academic achievements were typically based on traditional students, which may have distorted the observation of the adult undergraduate population. These scholars acknowledged that many older adults entered higher education from family milieus that generally placed them at an academic drawback. The nontraditional student also displayed insufficiencies in academic skills, and were less involved in academic and social aspects of campus life. Accordingly, academic achievement models that depicted traditional students would not give true insight into the logic of nontraditional students’ needs. As such, these models were not truly reflective as to why nontraditional students were less involved on campus. Corrected achievement models were needed to add to the body of research and provide a true diagnostic representation of the nontraditional undergraduate student.
Kasworm (1990) alleged that there was a concealed, if not blatant, prejudice towards the adult student. Nontraditional students entered a traditionally youth-oriented culture where it was assumed “the adult student would not be readily able to adapt to the undergraduate collegiate environment” (p. 358). The skills of the nontraditional student may have been rusty, but they were not necessarily inferior. Naturally, such prejudices placed additional stressors on nontraditional students and could eventually widen the gap between persistence and dropping out.

Despite the additional stress on nontraditional students, many remained resilient during their college years and completed their degrees. Although at the time of this research, resilience was a relatively new concept, the researcher felt understanding resilience would provide educators with a greater knowledge of the life conditions of nontraditional minority students. Stumphfer (2001) determined that resilience was a series of mental events which came from a desire to be strong in the face of numerous struggles, and finding the energy to bounce back.

Resiliency research was connected in mental health studies, student retention, and organizational management, to better understand how individuals and organizations managed disruption. Resilience provided an explanation to how individuals and organizations persisted and successfully recovered despite life’s many disruptions and major changes. Elements of resilience can be traced throughout human development as it can be recognized in early childhood, adolescence, and throughout adulthood. Bernard (1999) referred to this element of survival as inherent to human existence as resilience is an innate human quality. Further, Conner (1993) attributed resilience to an individual’s ability to successfully absorb life’s constant changes and disruptions. In social science
and education the term resilience refers to the ability to bounce back or to weather major multiple stressors.

African Americans have demonstrated innate resiliencies throughout history. Life changed instantly for the slave who was kidnapped from the shores of his native land. Change was instant and cruel. Hundreds of men, women and children were packed into the bellies of ships and denied basic human needs. African Americans learned to absorb the implications of change. They managed to heal from the scars of the master’s whips and to support each other and forge relationships that were nurturing in an alien environment. The innate resiliencies of African Americans allowed them to withstand the many painful disruptive changes and increased their determination to succeed. Resiliency theory is based on the principle that humans have an innate self-righting spirit (Werner & Smith, 1992). Resilience research points to the importance of caring and supportive relationships to help individuals during stress. Burns (1996) illustrated, “the nurturing provided by one caring adult reduces alienation because nurturing is the basis of bonding” (p. 92).

Astin (1984) found that student involvement was reflective of the energy a student exerted in his or her college experience and was key in a student’s retention. A highly involved student devoted lots of energy to studying, extracurricular activities, and interacted with the faculty both in and out of the classroom. However, Astin conducted his student involvement research with traditional undergraduate students attending largely White higher education institutions and did not take into account nontraditional students.
Tinto (1993) stated that student involvement is the only method of retention that insures a students’ survival as the persistence of a college student is related to his/her level of involvement within the university. While several researchers agreed that student involvement was an important component of retention, African American students had disproportional under representation in the mainstream of campus life (Sergent & Sedlacek, 1990). This under representation was attributed to feelings of alienation and racism that Black students encountered at historically White institutions (Jacoby, 1991; Lau, 2003; Sedlacek, 1999; Winder, 1995).

Jacoby (1991) indicated Black students were less likely to participate in campus events that were not reflective of their culture. He attributed this under representation of African American students to feelings of isolation and alienation to the campus environment. Premises for African American students’ dissatisfaction with their college experience were: (a) few African American faculty and role models, (b) lack of preparation for college both academically and financially, (c) poor assortments of campus events as they related to the African American student’s life experiences, and finally (d) indications of racism within the campus community (p. 286). Students, regardless of race, whether they were traditional or nontraditional, who felt alienated with their campus environment, did not put forth any effort to enhance their college experience.

Black students on White campuses faced many challenges in their efforts to become involved in what appeared to be a hostile environment. Sedlacek (1999) stated, “Blacks needed a supportive group that could give them the advice, counsel, and orientation to sustain them as they confronted the larger, often hostile systems they must negotiate” (p. 488). Black students on White campuses often found their support during
their college years off campus, in the community and in Black churches and it was often through these off campus connections that Black students directed their energy. Sedlacek (1999) stated “when Blacks showed leadership on campus it was often through informal or Black-oriented channels, which were less likely to be validated” (p. 489).

African Americans’ innate resiliencies did, in fact, allow them to withstand many painful disruptive changes. The researcher was interested in what role this innate resiliency played in the nontraditional African American undergraduates’ decision to continue their education, and their involvement both academically and socially during their matriculation at the university. The researcher felt educators needed a better understanding of the nontraditional African American students’ personal development as it related to their commitment to their education.

**Justification for Study**

Terenzini, Pascarella, and Blimling (1999) indicated that most of what was known about the influence of students’ out-of-class experiences on their academic, intellectual, and cognitive development was based on studies of White, traditional-aged students attending four-year, residential institutions on a full time basis. Thomas and Hill (1987) suggested that perhaps one reason for the lack of research concerning African Americans at HBCUs resulted from the fact that persons employed at historically Black universities were more focused on teaching and service-oriented activities than producing analytical research. This researcher, who is employed at a historically Black university, intended to fill this theoretical gap related to these concerns by: (a) describing the history of the Historical Black College and Universities (HBCU); (b) defining the characteristics of a
resilient individual, and (c) looking at the various obstacles of the nontraditional undergraduates as these students re-entered college.

The researcher discovered that studies which focused on the resilience of nontraditional African American students are limited. Miller (1999) stated, “While the concept of resiliency and factors that promote it have received considerable attention in the social science literature, far fewer studies have examined the development of resiliency among members of racial minorities” (p. 493). The researcher also learned there are few studies of commuter students at an HBCU and very little research concerning their level of campus involvement. Research is limited on the experiences of African American students in postsecondary education in general (DeSousa & Kuh, 1996). The researcher attempted to determine if there is a relationship between resilience and student involvement of nontraditional, African American college students. The research is important as it adds to the scholarly literature in the field by providing verification of the Personal Resilience Questionnaire (PRQ) as a tool to study the resiliency of African American college students.

Further, since the questionnaire is applicable to African American college students at an HBCU, it could be used to provide invaluable insight into planning strategies for student affairs administrators as they look to increase student involvement on their campuses. Also, this research may prove valuable in developing an awareness of faculty members’ own personal resilience and thus encourage faculty to engage with their students out of the classroom. If HBCUs are committed to helping the nontraditional African American student succeed, it is imperative that they understand variables that would influence that success.
Statement of the Problem

Research on student involvement and higher education has primarily focused on traditional student population at predominantly White higher education institutions. As such, there is little research regarding how student involvement is related to the resiliency of nontraditional students. The researcher determined that there is a significant gap in terms of analytical data and information concerning the nontraditional undergraduate students’ involvement both academically and socially.

Resilient individuals bounce back from difficult situations, often more aware of their personal strengths. The researcher suggests that history has proven that African Americans are innately resilient. As such, the researcher desired to explore if nontraditional African American students also maintained this resiliency. The researcher desired to determine if this innate resilience is related to their involvement in the university. The present research was conducted in order to ascertain if there is a relationship between resilience and student involvement with nontraditional, African American, commuter students at a historically Black university.

Research Questions

The variables the researcher used in the study were resilience and involvement. Resilience, the dependent variable, consisted of seven indicators associated with the Personal Resiliency Questionnaire: (a) “Positive: The World,” (b) “Positive: Yourself,” (c) “Focused,” (d) “Flexible: Thoughts,” (e) “Flexible: Social,” (f) “Organized,” and (g) “Proactive.” Involvement, the predictor variable, consisted of ten academic involvement and ten social involvement indicators. Classification/demographic variables included (a)
gender, (b) age, (c) ethnic background, (d) marital status, (e) dependents, (f) enrollment status, (g) completion of 12 or more semester hours, (h) if a student worked more than 30 hours per week, (i) enrollment in college immediately after high school, (j) classification in school, and (k) if one of the student’s parents had earned a four year college degree.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship among ten indicators of academic involvement and seven indicators of resilience of nontraditional students at a historically Black university?
2. What is the relationship among ten indicators of social involvement and seven indicators of resilience of nontraditional students at a historically Black university?

**Organization of the Study**

In the first chapter, the researcher introduces the research problem and presents the theoretical framework and the philosophical perspective upon which the study was based. The second chapter includes an extensive review of literature, which enhances the understanding of selected research related to the problem. The third chapter, methodology, presents the sampling and data collecting procedures used in the study. The results and the analysis of the data are presented in the fourth chapter. Finally, the fifth chapter discusses the results of the study and the implications for future research.

The complexity of college campuses has indeed changed. Research must also change to reflect the attitudes and needs of the current student populations. This research is important as it provides valuable information concerning the impact of academic and social involvement on the resiliency of nontraditional, African American, commuter students. This research also provides insight for student affairs administrators and faculty
in addition to other university professionals that will be instrumental in making programming and policy decisions for nontraditional students.

**Limitations**

The researcher would like to point out that while similar studies have been conducted, few have examined the relationship of resiliency and student involvement of nontraditional, African American, commuter students at an HBCU. The researcher also recognizes that while the results reported in this study are helpful in providing a better understanding of the issues confronting nontraditional, African American students at an HBCU, caution should be used in any attempt to generalize the results to all nontraditional African American students, other nontraditional students, and other public or private HBCUs.

The researcher, who is an African American, recognizes that there may have been some researcher bias which influenced the responses of the subjects through informal out-of-class conversations. Also, since the researcher is an employee of the institution where the research was conducted, the researcher obtained permission to conduct the study from instructors who were eager to assist, rather than through random selection of classrooms. This does not however, invalidate her work. The length of the questionnaire may also have been a factor contributing to why so many surveys were not fully completed. Finally, the researcher administered the survey to evening students, and fatigue may have played a role in the students’ responses; they may not have finished the entire survey or they may have not accurately responded to every question.
Definition of Terms

To provide a common theoretical framework from which empirical exploration and interpretation would proceed, the researcher used the following definitions.

African American/Black: terms were used interchangeably to refer to Americans of African ancestry. For the purpose of this study the term denotes students who identified their ethnic background as Black/African American on the Student Demographic Questionnaire (SDQ).

Commuter College: the university where this research was conducted provided no on-campus housing for students. As such, all students were local residents who commuted to campus.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU): institutions of higher learning founded prior to 1964 for the purpose of providing postsecondary education to African Americans during the period of segregation. The Historically Black University where this study was conducted, the Southern University of New Orleans (SUNO), was a predominantly Black institution in which at least 85% of enrolled students are African American.

Hope: the belief that an individual could make a better life from those around them, particularly when others seemed trapped in misery (Young-Eisendrath, 1996).

Nontraditional Student/Adult Student: terms were used interchangeably, a student who filled three of the following characteristics; single or married with children; married; commuter student; worked full-time; and was 24 years old or older at the time of graduation. For purposes of this study, participants’ responses to the Student Demographic Questionnaire determined a student’s nontraditional status.
Organizational Development Resources, Inc. (ODR): the company that developed the Personal Resilience Questionnaire; hereafter referred to as ODR.

Personal Resilience™ Questionnaire (PRQ): copyrighted questionnaire used in the study to measure student resilience.

Resilience: the ability to bounce back from difficult situations and become stronger by so doing. For the purposes of this study, participants’ responses to the PRQ determined if a student was resilient. The following attributes were used as indicators: “Positive: The World,” “Positive: Yourself,” “Focused,” “Flexible: Thoughts,” “Flexible: Social,” “Organized,” and “Proactive.”

Spirituality: a belief of a higher power than self; which gives life meaning (Burns, 1996).

Student Involvement: the quantity and quality of energy students invested in the college experience, such as absorption in academic work, participation in extracurricular activities, and interaction with institutional faculty and personnel (Astin, 1985). Student involvement was measured by student scores on the Student Demographic Questionnaire with 12 representing little to no involvement and 36 indicating high involvement.

Storytelling: an intuitive form of communication that transmits values and culture from generation to generation (Fredericks, 2000).
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A review of the literature revealed the following themes as relevant toward obtaining an understanding of resiliency and student involvement: (a) historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs); (b) commuter colleges; (c) nontraditional students; (d) student involvement; and (e) resiliency.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

There was little opportunity for formal education for African Americans prior to the Civil War with strong opposition coming from Southern Whites (HBCU Network, 2003). African Americans taught each other to read and write in the still darkness of the night. Their clandestine knowledge could have meant certain death. A slave who could read and write may have posed serious problems for his master who believed the education of slaves was neither prudent nor profitable. The Thirteenth Amendment’s abolition to slavery and reconstruction of the South provided new educational opportunities for former slaves. The Freedmen Educational Movement of 1865-1877 was instrumental as it “worked to establish a system of universal public education, which included poor Whites as well as Blacks, in a region where education had largely been the privilege of the White upper class” (Allen & Jewell, 2002, p. 243). African Americans
seized this as an opportunity to broaden their education.

In 1862, Senator Justin Morrill led an interest group that organized institutions to train Americans in the applied sciences, agriculture, and to states to educate farmers, scientists, and teachers. This act also proposed that institutions teach military tactics. Several institutions were established under this act, but African Americans were not allowed to attend. In 1890, the second Morrill Land Grant Act “stipulated that no appropriations would go to states that denied admission to the colleges on the basis of race unless they also set up separated but equal facilities” (Rudolph, 1990, p. 254). The 1890 land grant funds created the opportunity for establishing sixteen exclusively Black institutions in each of the southern and border states (HBCU Network, 2003). These Black institutions grew out of the desire of African Americans striving for formal educational opportunities (Allen & Jewell, 2002).

White paternalism between 1865 and 1920 was instrumental in establishing nearly 100 colleges and universities for African Americans, (Allen & Jewell, 2002). Colleges and universities were founded by the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church for African Americans, some were operated by African Americans, and a large number were lead by White philanthropic missionaries. “Northern philanthropists and missionary associations were not prohibited from developing private Black Colleges so long as these institutions would accommodate the dominate/subordinate relationship between Whites and Blacks in the South” (LeMelle, 2002, p. 191). The purposes of these institutions were to educate Black youth, train teachers, and to maintain the work of the missionary by educated Blacks.

Evans, Evans, & Evans (2000) argued that “HBCUs were not designed to
succeed; rather they were established to appease Black people or to serve as ‘holding institutions’ so that Black students would not matriculate to Historically White Colleges and Universities (HWCUs)” (p. 3). HBCUs have succeeded with the assistance of the United States Supreme Court. The first decision, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, provided policy for public schools, which called for a separated but equal doctrine. *Plessy v. Ferguson* stipulated that if a state provided a graduate or professional school for White students one must be provided for Black students; Black and White students must receive the same treatment; and facilities must be of equal quality (U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights, 1991). The U.S. Supreme Court decision of 1954, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* reversed the separate but equal policy, establishing that, “school settings restricted by race were unconstitutional” (Brown, 2002, p. 265), yet many HBCUs continued to be segregated.

HBCUs functioned as multifaceted institutions, providing not only education, but also social, political, and religious leadership for the African American community (Allen & Jewell, 2002; LeMelle, 2002; LeMelle & LeMelle, 1969; Thomas & Hill, 1987). HBCUs provided social and psychological benefits to African American and White undergraduates (Brown, 2002; Fredrick D. Patterson Research Institute, 1997; Freeman, 1998; 1999). The HBCU environment provided higher intellectual gains, greater self-images, stronger racial pride, and higher aspirations to undergraduates (Allen & Jewell, 2002; Brown, 2002; Flemings, 1984; Gurin & Epps, 1975). HBCUs were successful in educating their undergraduates largely because they provided a climate in which the students felt welcomed, supported, and encouraged to take part in the social and academic life of the campus (Outcalt & Skewes-Cox, 2002). HBCUs appreciated
and valued the uniqueness of the diverse backgrounds of their students (Paulsen & St. John, 2002), and they understood that if their students were to be engaged in campus activities, the campus should replicate what the students valued. HBCUs provided campus activities with the diversity of their students in mind, thus aiding in the development of positive self-esteem for their students (Berger & Milem, 2000).

Affirmative action legislation was the catalyst that called for equal protection of the law, and provided millions of dollars in “set asides” earmarked for HBCUs. Blacks and other minority students were permitted admission into very selective universities. However, the reversal of affirmative action put an end to the assurance that universities must admit a specified percentage of a particular group based on race or ethnic origin (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2005). The elimination of affirmative action encouraged more African Americans to seek admission in universities and colleges with substantial and supportive African American communities (Outcalt & Skewes-Cox, 2002). Once again, HBCUs were likely to have a greater role in the lives of African Americans. The end of affirmative action was a reminder to African Americans that the missions of HBCUs need continuing support and strengthening.

Despite great opposition, HBCUs have continued to survive. HBCUs continued to prove their worth, and defend the quality of the undergraduate academic experience which had been questioned, suggesting it was inferior compared to those at predominantly White colleges and universities (Pascarella, Whitt, Nora, Edison, Hagedorn & Terenzini, 1996). LeMelle (2002) illustrates:

When one goes beyond the surface of the often misguided criticism of the “quality” of these institutions, what is often found is either the inferiority complex
analysis of some “integrationists” or the fear-based analysis of those who see the reality of the threat that the HBCUs pose for those who seek to maintain the dominant/subordinate power relationships that still inform black/white relations in the U. S. The successful HBCU is the racist’s worst nightmare. (p. 194)

LeMelle and LeMelle (1969) argued “through its long and challenging history the HBCU has struggled to achieve what every system of education must be about, and this is to fulfill its tooling and socializing functions for the community it serves” (p. 194). HBCUs have fulfilled this challenge through the courageous leadership of the students and faculty, who through their unmitigated tenacity, helped to redefine America by way of nonviolent sit-ins, marches, and boycotts. HBCUs were not funded the same way as peer White institutions, therefore the relevance and success of these institutions must be measured by their total performance; academically, socially and politically.

**Commuter College**

Commuter colleges were not highly renowned as larger, prominent colleges and universities. Commuter colleges did not have on campus housing and they often provided fewer opportunities for social involvement and integration, therefore forcing commuter students to be integrated both socially and academically (Chapman & Pascarella, 1983; Chickering 1974; Pascarella, Duby & Iverson, 1983; Winder, 1995). Commuter college students spent little time on campuses and interacting with their professors outside of the classroom; instead these students fled from the classroom to the parking lot. The common assembly location for the commuter undergraduate was the classroom, which was largely the only place their involvement with college occurred. The
library was perhaps the second most common meeting place for commuter students (Astin, 1985). Further, the part-time student, student with less than 12 semester hours, spent fewer hours in the classroom and even less time in the library or other support facilities, while on campus.

Lichtman, Bass, and Ager (1989) explored the difference in attrition patterns of Black and White students and reported that although academic factors influenced the retention of students, for Black students, other variables were influential in the persistence of Black students. Pascarella, Duby, and Iverson (1983) posited that culture and personal experiences were also factors which influenced the commuter students’ level of social involvement. Their level of social involvement was also defined by what the students expected of the university. African American undergraduates’ decisions to continue at a university were directly related to the strength of connection they felt for the university. Their level of connection influenced their intentions to stay or leave. The commuter campus environment provided less opportunity for social integration for the African American undergraduates. Accordingly, Winder (1995) suggested that “commuter campus characteristics influenced the experiences of African American students and contributed negatively to their attrition rate” (p. 49).

The retention of students requires interaction between students and their environment (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Kuh, 1994; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Strategies for student interaction on a commuter campus are difficult and creative methods are necessary to insure contact with students. Tinto (1993) determined commuter institutions needed a method of connecting individuals to the college environment both socially and intellectually. Administrators make every effort to contact
students who only visit the campus sporadically. Telephone calls, mail, email, and campus activities are methods used to stay in contact with students. However, these strategies are no substitute for personal contact.

To meet the demands of the commuter student, Commuter College administrators found that outreach programs are needed to help bridge the gap between the college and the external community. Classes are held off campus, information is distributed in the community, community events are held on campus, and online courses are offered. Flexible forms of educational participation allow students to attend classes at night and on the weekends. Colleges offer on-the-job, satellite locations, on-line enrollment, and degrees earned through correspondence programs (Tinto, 1993).

“Microenvironment intervention” allow for creative methods of meeting the students’ needs (Schroeder & Hurst, 1996). Commuter institutions design retention programs which provide extended services for their part-time, evening, and weekend students. The commuter colleges make their classrooms and meeting areas available throughout on campus, including setting up offices in the cafeteria and in building hallways (Tinto, 1993). Computers and advanced technology make it possible for many campuses to provide on-line advising. Learning communities provide an opportunity for students and professors to conduct meetings off campus or in residential halls and promote interaction that might not happen under traditional classroom arrangements (Gabelnick, MacGregor, Matthews, & Smith, 1990).

This researcher defined the trends which are pervasive in the commuter campus to highlight the creative and strategic planning that is necessary to bridge the social and academic challenges for commuter college administrators and students. These include
the need for more flexible classroom hours, meeting locations that do not always conform to the traditional university environment, and using emails to rapidly respond to students’ needs. These nontraditional methods of reaching students are compounded when addressing the needs of nontraditional students who, according to Kasworm (1990), are “a major subset” of the commuter college (p. 345).

**Nontraditional Students**

Hughes (1992) attempted to define the nontraditional student by answering three questions in his research. Who are nontraditional students? What do they want from higher education? How can student personnel professionals respond? These questions are not simple to answer as making generalizations about nontraditional students was not acceptable. Evans, Bonner, and Burns (2002) stated that defining the nontraditional student is a difficult job, and the terms used in early definitions were limited or incorrect. Although defining the nontraditional student is difficult, Eriksen, LeClaire, Murray, Mann, Webb, and Polson (1986) offered a broad definition which the researcher found particularly interesting: “a nontraditional student is any student, regardless of age, whose primary life roles and responsibilities exist separately from the university and took precedence over the role of student in times of crises or stress” (p. 1).

Colleges and universities saw an increased number of nontraditional students with the enactment of the G.I. Bill in the mid 1940s (Kasworm, 1980). The appearance of nontraditional students on campus brought significant changes to undergraduate education as thousands of veterans enrolled in daytime classes. Throughout 1960-1972, “reentry women” that were reentering the workforce gained admission into colleges and
universities, thereby causing a second significant change in enrollment (Clayton & Smith, 1987; Donaldson & Graham, 1999; Kasworm, 1980). With these changes, older adult undergraduates began a subculture within the traditional undergraduate environment (Klein, 1990; Krager, Wrenn & Hirt, 1990; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998).

Although nontraditional students have been a part of the college culture for more than sixty years, there remains little research on their retention and resiliency. Stokes (2006) argued that in America “the adult student was hidden in plain sight, with 46% of the [adult] population participating in some form of adult education” (p. 2). Further, he stated that the small amount of data available regarding the adult learner hampered the “for-profit postsecondary institutions in their efforts to effectively identify, target, and reach these students, as well as other prospective students like them” (p. 2).

Adult learners faced problems of derogatory labeling and suggestions of their being inferior to traditional students. Dennis (1998) negatively defined nontraditional undergraduates as adults who were under prepared, under financed, and worked too many hours. Kasworm (1980) stated, “Some faculty suspect that older students are not well qualified for undergraduate education because of age, lapse of time from academic learning activities or declining intellectual capacities” (p. 32). Further, faculty of nontraditional undergraduates suggested that older students did not perform as well as their younger counterparts in the academic environment (Kasworm, 1980). Tinto (1993) reported nontraditional undergraduates “felt marginal to the social and intellectual climate of the university” as they had concerns about their academic skills (p. 187).

Recognizing these unique differences, Kasworm (1990) stated that “adult students are not the same creatures as young adult undergraduates” (p. 366). Nontraditional
undergraduates bring educational histories that are complex (Apps, 1981). Some nontraditional undergraduates are attending college for the first time, while others are making a second attempt at completing their education. Many adult learners are part-time, evening, or commuter students, who generally have limited involvement in campus activities. Employment as well as health issues, financial struggles, legal concerns, and family problems are factored into the nontraditional student’s world (Belzer, 1998; Frank & Gaye, 1997; Wonacott, 2001). Due to these burdensome factors, the nontraditional student spends very little time on campus.

Despite daily life burdens many nontraditional students make the decision to return to school. Warner (1992) indicated the decision to return to school is not easy; in many instances it is difficult and painful. She stated: “nontraditional students admitted to approaching the educational setting timidly, lacking self-confidence, harboring feelings of hopelessness, but clung to the hope that their move back into the educational system would guarantee that the quality of their lives would improve” (p. 58). The hopeful, nontraditional student returned to the classroom and in some cases became involved outside of the classroom.

**Student Involvement**

Astin (1985) stated student success is directly related to involvement with the university. Research indicates that students who have some sort of attachment to the university are less likely to vanish from the campus. Students with a “connection” feel some obligation to remain connected, and before they withdraw they discuss their departure with someone on campus, thus providing an opportunity to review all options
which might prevent their withdrawal. Connection is essential, both in-class and out-of-

class (Tinto, 1998; Kasworm, 2003; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1994). Student involvement

both academically and socially, increases the likelihood that they will become more

involved in their own learning (Lau, 2003, Terenzini, Springer, Pascarella & Nora, 1995;

Tinto, Goodsell & Russo, 1993,). Thus the key “to enhancing learning and personal
development is not simply for faculty to teach more and better, but also to create
conditions that motivate and inspire students to devote time and energy to educationally

Student affairs administrators understand the importance of their role in creating
an environment that motivates students to become involved, so they join forces to work
collectively with faculty in planning out-of-class activities to create a seamless
environment (Blimling & Alschuler, 1996; Mayo, Murguia & Padilla, 1995; McLaughlin,
Brozovsky & McLaughlin, 1998). This seamless environment is evident when student
affairs staff and others who routinely interact with students help them “make meaning of
the academic experience by connecting classroom learning with their lives” (Kuh, 1996,
p. 136). This interaction is best achieved when students are empowered as they work
side by side in the planning and governance of student events. The effective delivery of
student services outside of the classroom is a primary concern for student affairs
professionals. Campus organizations provide students with the opportunity to become
involved in planning activities, making new friends, developing leadership qualities, and
receiving recognition for a job well done.

Outcalt and Skewes-Cox (2002) found that student involvement is strongly
correlated to student success, but they felt the literature did not contain many studies
examining the relationship between student involvement and satisfaction for African American students at HBCUs. Instead, the literature primarily focused on the involvement of Blacks and minorities at predominately White campuses. Sutton & Kimbrough (2001) reported that the lack of student involvement of Black males on White campuses resulted in “Black men suffering developmentally, as compared to their peers at Black institutions” (p. 33). Research is needed concerning the academic and social connections that Black students experience at HBCUs to help “improve not only their college experience but their degree attainment rates” (Fries & Britt, 2002, p. 317). Sutton & Kimbrough (2001) stated that additional research is needed to “describe the types of activities or organizations in which Black students are involved” (p. 33).

HBCUs and TWIs have the continuous task of seeking methods that provide meaningful participation for all students. Nontraditional students do not have the time to remain on campus for social events like their counterparts, but their need for social involvement is equally important. University administrators at HBCUs and TWIs encourage informal out-of-class contact with their students which creates feelings of attachment. Through informal contact, faculty and staff have an opportunity to get to know their students better and are able to recognize the resilience of these students.

Living on campus provides a great opportunity to foster meaningful participation and informal contact. Astin (1998) stated residents are more likely than commuters to achieve in areas of “student friendship, faculty-student relationships, institutional reputation, and social life” (p. 302). Campus residential communities provide opportunities for membership in housing organizations, such as residential assistants and peer mentoring programs. Campus residence halls provide an environment that
encourages diversity, increases tolerance and are overall positive in student development (Blimling, 1993; Chickering, 1975; Hughes; 1994, Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

**Resiliency**

Numerous studies report the triumph of individuals, families, and organizations, over many of life’s disruptions (Bernard, 1999; Conner, 1993; Henderson, 1999; Werner, & Smith, 1992; Wolin & Wolin, 1993). Individuals have been transformed by life’s disruptions and used this transformation to reposition themselves from at-risk to at-promise: from hopelessness to anticipation, from a drop-out to becoming a nontraditional student. These personal triumphs are the focus of research to understand the degree of resilience, individual resilience, what fostered that resilience, and if resilience can be taught.

Richardson (2002) suggested that what we know about resiliency was formulated from three waves of resiliency research. The first wave of resilience identified the qualities of resiliency that young survivors held living in high-risk environments (Werner & Smith, 1992). The second wave examined how people obtained qualities of resiliency (Henderson, 1999; Wolin & Wolin, 1993), and the third wave looked at an individual’s motivational energy as he or she experienced adversity (Richardson, 2002).

Blum (1998) claimed that individuals experienced feelings of excitement when they overcame tremendous odds. He stated this excitement came from knowing they had been though a difficult period, but they found an inner strength that propelled them beyond what they thought they could endure. Higgins (1994) believed “resilience emphasizes that individuals do more than merely get through” (p. 1); they develop a
stronger faith and deeper satisfaction in themselves. Resiliency is not established by a single trait but results from multiple triumphs over several life experiences. These experiences are considered life changing events. Resilient individuals learn to value their life’s disruptions and sustain normal personal development (Garmezy, 1993; Rutter, 1985). Conner (1992) stated that “people who demonstrate resilient characteristics most often prosper during disruption and disorder” (p. 65).

The term resiliency is applied to the nontraditional undergraduates who make the decision to return to school. The female nontraditional students have often raised families, worked full-time, and have now returned to pursue a college degree. There are numerous reasons why nontraditional students return to school. Their reasons to reenter school may include: getting employment, securing a better job, upgrading their skills, or satisfying a personal interest. Whatever the reason for returning to school, nontraditional students are hopeful that they can meet the challenges that awaited them.

Hope

Young-Eisendrath (1996) defined hope as the belief that one can move from being trapped inside a life of misery. Unfortunately, when nontraditional, African American students face challenges, hope seems fragile and they feel trapped in the misery with which they are surrounded (Hicswa, 2001). Fragile feelings of hopelessness can be buffered by creating environments of social involvement which develop relationships and community and by providing opportunities for leadership development (Berry & Asamen, 1998; McLaughlin, Irby & Langman, 1994; Wang & Gordon, 1994). Hicswa’s Hope Theory illustrates a system (see Figure 1) that describes how to create hope through
enhancing capacity and agency to implement outcomes through leadership and involvement (Hicswa, 2001).

![Hicswa’s Hope Model](image)

**Figure 1.** Hicswa’s Hope Model

The essence of hope is recognized in the character and attitude of resilient individuals. The innate belief that life is not totally bad, and that good news is just around the bend allows individuals to withstand the chaos that disrupts their lives. Hope manifested itself in the resiliency theory, which resulted from a longitudinal study conducted by Werner and Smith (1992). This study started in 1955 and lasted for nearly 40 years, followed the development of 698 children on the island of Kauai. They were considered high risk, based on several risk factors; however, they grew up to be responsible adults.

Higgins (1994) stated that resilient individuals are hopeful for a “better life” for without the essence of this belief, individuals would not find the strength to seek something outside of their present existence. The essence of hope is the only thing that many nontraditional undergraduates can focus on at the end of the day, after they spend eight hours at work, take care of their families and sit through three or more hours of intense lecture. There is the hope that the sacrifices would produce the cherished degree.
Their sacrifices were intricately tied to the hope of a better existence. They had experienced many hopeless situations, which may have included low paying jobs, welfare, abusive relationships and personal losses. As Frankl points out,

> We must never forget that we may also find meaning in life even when confronted with a hopeless situation, when facing a fate that cannot be changed. For what then matters is to bear witness to the uniquely human potential at its best, which is to transform a personal tragedy into a triumph, to turn one’s predicament into a human achievement. (Frankl, 1984, p. 135)

For nontraditional undergraduates that triumph means graduation; it is the declaration to them that they have moved beyond several personal tragedies and now they can start to address other dreams and passions that have not been realized. They are no longer trapped.

**Seven Resiliencies**

Wolin and Wolin (1993) stated that “resilience and vulnerability were in steady opposition, one holding you up and the other threatening to pull you down” (p. 6). Survivors of life’s disruptions have learned to replace their pain by remembering their strengths. Siebert (1993) stated that “the best survivors were those who found a way to convert misfortune into good luck” (p. 11). The survivors are those who have developed an attitude of survival. They recognize the pain they have experienced and decided to move past that pain. They have created in themselves a resilient attitude. Henderson (1998) suggested “it is the critical first step” (p. 15) to becoming resilient.
Wolin and Wolin (1993) suggested this resiliency attitude was a badge of courage or “survivor’s pride” which came from taking pride in rising above difficult circumstances. Wolin and Wolin stated there are seven resiliencies that assist in reversing pain so that individuals rise above adversity. The seven resiliencies are: (a) insight, asking difficult questions, accepting honest answers; (b) independence, establishing boundaries between yourself and troubled individuals; (c) relationship, the close connections to other people who gave balance to your life; (d) initiative, taking control of your problems; (e) creativity, defining order, beauty, and purpose out of troubling experiences; (f) humor, searching for the comic in the tragic; finally, (g) morality, an a personal peace that extended goodwill to others (p. 5). These seven resiliencies are essential in developing individuals’ resilience because they are strengths that continue to expand over a lifetime, creating a greater awareness of self and a desire to contribute to others.

In 1998, the ASPIRE Training Institute under a grant from the U. S. Department of Education employed eight TRIO professionals to explore the applications of resiliency concepts to the work that TRIO personnel did with educationally disadvantaged students and clients. The workshops used elements from resiliency, retention, and adult education. Carlson (1998) stated the training team felt compelled to add an eighth resiliency which they felt the other seven did not address that of spirituality. Strumpfer (2001) suggested “resilience manifests itself at all levels of human functioning, from the molecular to the spiritual” (p. 1). Accordingly, spiritual development is a contributing variable to maturity (Styles, 1985).
**Spirituality**

Burns (1996) explained that the Greek word “psyche” meant spirit, defining psychology as the study of spirit or spirituality in human terms. Burns used Glenn’s (1989) definition for spirituality as the foundation for his work: “Spirituality is an active sense of identification with a power greater than self which gives our lives a sense of meaning, significance, and purpose” (1996, p. 43). Resilient individuals often cite spirituality or religious beliefs as vehicles for transcending hate, bitterness, and envy (Young-Eisendrath, 1996).

Hughes (1987) stated the Afrocentric culture is deeply rooted in spirituality resulting from many hardships and oppressive conditions. African Americans are able to endure many hardships and absorb the implications of drastic changes only because of their strong spiritual heritage (Dantley, 2005; Lewis, Hankin, Reynolds & Ogedegbe, 2007). Spirituality plays a significant role in their family ties, work environment, personal decisions, and music. African American undergraduates rely on their spirituality to aid them in completing their education (Dennis, 2005). African American students depend on religion and spirituality to aid them in coping; in fact, they “integrate religious and culture-specific coping strategies into their everyday life experiences” (Constantine, Winton, Gainor, & Lewis, 2002, p. 606). Noddings (1992) stated that spirituality is possibly the greatest missing link in schools, thus accounting for many of the public schools social ills. This researcher suggested life’s sufferings do not end when students enter the classroom. For students who are in pain, a return to spirituality in schools may address some of the difficulties students face in the home or on the job. If
students are able to address some of their pain in more positive, acceptable ways, they may become more focused and direct their energies to achieving their goals.

**Relationships**

Peer connections are essential to student involvement. Students are comfortable with people who share their interest and views. Students who have been successful at accomplishing their goals have at some point established successful relationships which helped them through their painful experiences. Students cannot succeed if they are suffering. Therefore, if administrators understood the suffering of their students, they would be inclined to become more sensitive and more personally involved to help reduce the student’s pain. This involvement would create a relationship that is a key protective factor in an individual’s resilience.

Blum (1998) stated the way to face life’s disruptions was not to experience it alone: “most people don’t do it alone – in fact, they don’t even try” (p. 36). Those individuals successful at getting through tough times often recruited the aid of another caring person. Frankl (1984) witnessed this type of caring and sharing in World War II concentration camps, where comrades supported each other by giving away their last piece of bread. Vanderpol (2002) noted resilient individuals developed closeness with those they trusted. The resilient were not seeking pity; they were merely seeking support for the difficulties they encountered in life’s journey.

Hughes (1987) stated Black students’ cultural heritage centers on the support and encouragement from their immediate family, their extended family, and friends from their local community. The strength of this support plays a vital role in the student’s
retention. Hughes also stated this relationship suggests patterns of individuation unique to Black students and families.

**Storytelling**

A clever and compelling method of communication is through sharing stories. Cultures for centuries have realized the value of sharing stories from generation to generation (Fredericks, 2000). Fredericks believed stories knit people, families, and culture together. Stories transcend cultures. According to Taylor (1994), stories have a uniting power in which “people let down their barriers for a simple story and allow themselves to learn from others” (p. 3). The resilient characteristics of individuals are supported in storytelling, because the very act of sharing the stories fosters a caring and supporting relationship between the storyteller and the listener. Bowman (1999) felt storytelling gives value to a person’s existence. Individuals may experience anguish or disenfranchised grief when they share their stories. Bowman defined this grief as sorrow that could not be shared publicly.

Hollingsworth and Pinkney (2001) recounted the story of a TRIO professional experiencing disenfranchised grief during a training workshop. The participant sat and watched as others were busy working on their personal portfolio projects. When asked why she was not involved, she replied there was nothing in her life that she cared to remember. The trainers were able to point to her remarkable courage, her endurance, her perseverance, and her ability to make something of herself by obtaining a college education despite the tragedies which she had experienced as a child; and how these achievements were worthy of a celebration. She finally decided to share her story.
Gill (2005) suggested that African Americans’ stories were expressed in terms of a tragedy, often highlighting failure and negative occurrences. He felt compelled to explore the resiliency factors that contributed to the maturation of the African American male. He described his resiliency research as “giving birth to a new story” (p. 2).

**Summary of the Literature Review**

After reviewing the literature, several points became clear. One of the most important factors in educating nontraditional African American undergraduates was to understand their unique heritage, their strengths, and their resilient qualities. Resiliency theory described an attitude of hope and tenacity. Nontraditional, African American students exhibited this attitude by their commitment to continuing their education. The struggle for equality of the nontraditional, African American college student paralleled the struggle and development of HBCUs. The students and the university have experienced many challenges, yet they continue the mission for achievement.

A second point surmised from the review of literature was that there are distinct differences between traditional and nontraditional students related to challenges they encounter in their efforts to obtain a degree. Nontraditional students have less time for the social and cultural events that promote campus involvement, which has proven to be essential in the retention of the traditional, college-age student. The nontraditional students are more likely to experience feelings of alienation and inferiority in the classroom, based on their long absence from the academic arena. The basis of these differences seem to lie in the student’s life experiences and personal responsibilities.
Based on differences between traditional and nontraditional students, a third point in the literature review suggested that alternative methods of campus involvement were necessary. Campus events need to accommodate the traditional student but should also include the busy lifestyle of the older adult. Campus events for the nontraditional student should be brief and whenever possible should include activities which accommodate the student’s family. Informal, out-of-class activities should provide opportunities for story sharing and a celebration of the student’s accomplishments.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the methodology of the current study. Data were collected using two survey instruments, the *Personal Resilience Questionnaire (PRQ)* and the *Student Demographic Questionnaire (SDQ)*. The researcher utilized six headings to organize this chapter: (a) research design, (b) participants, (c) instrumentation, (d) data collection, (e) data analysis, and (f) limitations.

**Research Design**

**Description of Research Methodology**

The researcher investigated the relationship of the resilience of nontraditional, African American commuter undergraduates, and their academic and social involvement at a historically Black university. The researcher used correlational statistics to determine the strength and direction of the relationship among the two student involvement indicators and the seven resilience indicators. The most widely used coefficient was the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, whose symbol was $r$ (Patten, 1997). Pearson’s $r$ was a measure of association that varied from -1.00 relationships to +1.00 relationships, with a coefficient of 0.00 indicating no relationship.
When the relationship between the independent and dependent variables increased, a higher degree of predictability existed between the variables.

The researcher used two survey instruments in the collection of data: the \textit{SDQ} and the \textit{PRQ}. The researcher also employed the services of two analysts, one from Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO) and one from Mississippi State University (MSU), to assist with data entry. The researcher and the data analysts reviewed the data collected from the \textit{SDQ} and the \textit{PRQ} and conducted statistical analysis to determine if there was a significant relationship between (a) items comprising each of two indicators of student involvement and (b) the seven indicators of student resiliency.

\textbf{Independent Variables}

The researcher used the \textit{SDQ} (a) to collect data classification/demographic data and (b) to assess the two indicators of student involvement. Classification/demographic data included (a) gender, (b) age, (c) ethnic background, (d) marital status, (e) having children, (f) enrollment status, (g) completion of 12 or more semester hours, (h) working more than 30 hours per week, (i) when the student enrolled in college, and (j) classification in school. To obtain data about student involvement, the researcher collected student responses to (a) ten academic involvement indicators and (b) ten social involvement indicators.

\textbf{Dependent Variables}

The researcher defined the dependent variables for this study as the seven scores on the \textit{PRQ}. The researcher utilized these seven scores on the \textit{PRQ} as indicators of resilience of the nontraditional, African American commuter undergraduates who
participated in this study. The seven indicators were: (a) “Positive: The World,” (b) Positive: Yourself,” (c) “Focused,” (d) “Flexible: Thoughts,” (e) “Flexible: Social,” (f) “Organized,” and (g) “Proactive.”

**Development of Instruments and Pilot Administration**

**Planning**

The researcher developed the *SDQ* to be used with the *PRQ*. The researcher wrote questionnaire items to solicit descriptive information from the participants. To determine items to ascertain information about student involvement, the researcher reviewed several existing questionnaires recommended by the Director of Institutional Research at MSU. The researcher was careful to select indicators of academic and social involvement that best reflected the environment of the commuter university in this study. The researcher presented several versions of the *SDQ* to the dissertation committee for consideration. The committee offered editorial suggestions about the number of items, the format of the items, and the grouping of items. The original versions of the *SDQ* were lengthy and some versions were not easy to read. During the development of the final form of the *SDQ*, the researcher eliminated repetitive questions along with items that the researcher felt were not essential to determine student involvement.

The researcher successfully completed the MSU online training in Protection of Human Subjects, which was a requirement prior to initiation of research with human subjects. The researcher completed the application to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of both MSU and SUNO for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research. Both MSU (see Appendix A) and SUNO (see Appendix B) approved the proposed research.
The researcher administered a pilot study of the research instruments to 20 students at SUNO, to determine the clarity of instructions and established an estimation of the time needed for completion of both the SDQ and the PRQ. The researcher invited 20 students who were members of a volunteer organization in a classroom on campus to remain for the pilot study following one of their regular monthly meetings. Following the assessment, the researcher served the students refreshments and invited reactions to the assessment. The students shared their thoughts about the procedure and about the content of the survey. The researcher made revisions to the wording of the SDQ instructions and to the SDQ items to improve clarity. Based on the suggestions of those students participating in the pilot study on the SDQ, the researcher repositioned some items to add continuity and to improve organization. The researcher used a Protocol Checklist (see Appendix G) to insure appropriate sequencing of activities during the administration of the survey. The researcher refined the steps necessary to complete the SDQ and the PRQ after the administration of the pilot study.

**Participants**

The researcher conformed to the MSU and SUNO IRB human subjects’ requirements in obtaining participants for the study. The researcher administered the SDQ and the PRQ to 407 African American undergraduates enrolled in the colleges of Education, Business, Arts and Social Sciences, and Sciences at a historically Black public institution. To include a larger number of nontraditional students in the study, the researcher administered the survey to many of the students enrolled in evening classes at the university. The students provided the last four digits of their social security numbers
and the last four digits of the cell phone numbers, those students who did not have a cell
phone filled in 0000. The researcher sought students who previously had completed one
semester of study at the university. The researcher informed the students that
participation in the study was voluntary. The researcher administered the SDQ and the
PRQ to 407 students.

**Institution**

The researcher conducted the study at a four-year post secondary institution that
was established in 1956. The enrollment of nearly 3500 students was 98% African
American, and 80% of the students were nontraditional. The university was located in an
African American middle-class subdivision. The students that attended the university
were from primarily low-income families and communities throughout a large
metropolitan city in Louisiana. At the time the study began in 2005, many students grew
up in and inhabited the low-rent housing projects that were within close proximity to the
university. In 2005, the university had an open admission policy and tuition was
comparatively low. Warner (1992) stated that Southern University at New Orleans
champions a mission of enriching the disenfranchised student.

The researcher notes that the survey was conducted prior to Hurricane Katrina in
August of 2005. As Director of Student Activities & Organizations at SUNO, the
researcher observed, first hand, the following occurrences. The devastation and the
aftermath of Hurricane Katrina forever changed the landscape and fiber of New Orleans.
The campus of Southern University at New Orleans was destroyed with over 12 feet of
water in many of its buildings. Many of those who lived in the community and who were
enrolled at the university were displaced and did not return to the city. At the time the researcher wrote this chapter, pre-Hurricane Katrina students who formerly lived in the New Orleans low-rent housing projects now lived in trailers because the low-rent housing projects did not reopen. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provided the trailers to eligible students. Students who were not eligible for FEMA-assisted housing-trailers and who did not return to the university because their homes were destroyed, continued their education through on-line programs.

It is important to note that the university center at SUNO is not representative of the typical university center of most campuses. The university center does not have a television for commuter students to watch between classes. There were no quiet areas where commuter students might find solitude between classes. The university center has one large open room on the first floor, an indoor pool, a four lane bowling alley, and a game room with two pool tables.

**Instrumentation**

**Student Demographic Questionnaire**

With the approval of the dissertation committee, the researcher designed the SDQ to be a brief demographic survey. The SDQ included questions about (a) gender, (b) age, (c) ethnic background, (d) marital status, (e) presence of children, (f) enrollment status, (g) completion of 12 or more semester hours, (h) working more than 30 hours per week, (i) enrollment in college immediately after high school, (j) classification in school, and (k) whether either parent graduated from a four-year college/university. The
instrument included ten academic involvement indicators and ten social involvement indicators (see Appendix F).

**Personal Resiliency Questionnaire**

Conner developed the *PRQ* in 1990 as he observed signs of resilience in organizations. He also was interested in learning “how to help individuals, organizations, and societies manage major change successfully” (Organizational Development Resources, Inc. 1993, p. ii). Conner began noting the uniqueness that differentiated people who were able to endure disruption. These individuals appeared to become stronger as a result of the disruptive changes to their lives. Conner designed the *PRQ* to assess several characteristics of these “individuals who navigated change successfully in areas of perception, thinking, and behavior” (p. ii). Individual scores on the *PRQ* represent a view of a person’s predilection and typical style when approaching new situations.

Conner’s questionnaire provided a method of assessing resilience while minimizing potential elements of bias. Conner wrote the *PRQ* on a seventh grade reading level. Students typically completed the *PRQ* in minimal time. Conner designed the instrument with no “right” or “wrong” answers. Hence, the students answered the questionnaire based on what they believed to be true. The students filled in the response that best showed how much they agreed or disagreed with each item according to the six item Likert-Type Response Scale.

For the current research project, the researcher used a version of the *PRQ* (see Appendix J) that contained 75 items and measured seven characteristics linked to
resilience. The seven characteristics were (a) “Positive: The World,” (b) “Positive: Yourself,” (c) “Focused,” (d) “Flexible: Thoughts,” (e) “Flexible: Social,” and (e) “Proactive.” Conner (2003) employed the following definitions to better understand the resilience qualities outlined in the PRQ.

1. Positive—The World: Individuals who focused on the positive view of their environment were able to see opportunities and possibilities in situations that initially appeared to be problems. Those who viewed things as negative were filled with anxiety and depression, which could prevent them from seeking value and opportunity. Positive thinkers were better able to create situations and environments that were positive (ODR, 2003, p. 9).

2. Positive—Yourself: A positive belief in oneself could be an empowering factor for an individual. Individual’s empowered by their abilities were more likely to achieve their goals and these individuals felt confident to take action while weathering failure without losing their feelings of self-worth. A positive view of self created a feeling that one could influence the environment and those things that happened in life, rather than the other way around (ODR, 2003, p. 10).

3. Focused: The challenges and stresses of life caused feelings of ambiguity and uncertainty. Individuals who had a strong sense of direction and had set priorities were more likely to be resilient. Their sense of direction would help them get back on track after a major disruption. These individuals were better managers of confusing situations because they tended to sort out the important issues, weigh the alternatives and used their energy wisely (ODR, 2003, p. 10).
4. Flexible-Thoughts: Individuals who were characterized by flexible thoughts and view situations from multiple viewpoints often suspended judgment until they considered all perspectives, and they accepted life’s paradoxes and contradictions. These individuals generally had a broader understanding of a problem, allowing them to be more creative in seeking resolution (ODR, 2003, p. 11).

5. Flexible-Social: Individuals who had the ability to draw on the resources of others and valued others' input. These individuals recognized there was a connection between humans, which created a social bond. This social bond gave them the confidence to rely on the support of others during difficult situations. They formed relationships and were mutually supportive of friends, recognizing that other people’s skills complemented their own (ODR, 2003, p. 12).

6. Organized: Organized individuals could find order in chaos and structure in ambiguity and they could move beyond thought to action. Their organizational skills allowed them to assess the situation, choose a course of action, and make preparations to move forward. During chaos they remained focused on that which was important and used these elements to logically structure a workable plan (ODR, 2003, p. 12).

7. Proactive: The final characteristic of a resilient individual was the willingness to move decisively in the midst of uncertainty rather than reacting to circumstances. This individual was a risk taker and was willing to endure some discomfort because he believed the outcome would be positive, leading to growth, personal development, and the achievement of important goals. Proactive individuals
didn’t avoid challenges, and they responded to disruption by investing their energy into problem solving (ODR, 2003, p. 13).

Reliability of Instrument

Conner calculated a number of commonly used measures of scale reliability and provided information about the relationships between individual items on the scale (Aron & Aron, 1997). The publisher of the questionnaire employed the Cronbach Alpha model of internal consistency. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficients indicated that the items that made up each scale had a high level of covariance, indicating people tended to respond similarly to the various questions in each scale (Aron & Aron, 1997). This indicated that the questions constituting a given sub-scale measured the same concept. The following were Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for each sub-scale of the PRQ: (a) “Positive: The World” had .83; (b) “Positive: Yourself” had .81; (c) “Focused” had .81; (d) “Flexible: Thoughts” had .71; (e) “Flexible: Social” had .74; (f) “Organized” had .68; and (g) “Proactive” had .65 (ODR, 2003, p. 85).

Data Collection

The researcher submitted a proposal to conduct the study to the IRB human subjects committee of MSU and SUNO. The researcher made personal contacts with the college deans and faculty at SUNO and requested their approval to administer the surveys to their classes (see Appendix E). Permission to administer the survey was sought from participants (see Appendix I). The researcher explained that there would be neither monetary gains nor any extra credit given for the course for those students who elected to participate in the study. The researcher also explained that participation in the study was
not mandatory as part of the course requirements. In addition, the researcher assured prospective participants that, whether or not they participated in the study, it would not affect their grades. The researcher assured students that all responses would remain strictly confidential and that the responses would only be used for research purposes.

The researcher selected evening classes because of the large population of nontraditional students. She also selected those classes with large student enrollments to provide greater numbers of student participation. The researcher met with the instructors to discuss the process that she would follow to recruit volunteers and to administer the survey. To each group of potential participants, the researcher read verbatim the instructions (see Appendix H) for completing the survey. The researcher then administered a paper and pencil version of the PRQ to the participants. Students marked their answers on an Information/Data Sheet. Once the students completed the two surveys, the researcher collected the SDQ, the PRQ, and the Information/Data Sheet.

**Data Analysis**

The researcher, with the assistance of a statistical analyst employed by SUNO, reviewed the completed questionnaires. When organizing the questionnaires, the researcher and the statistical analyst carefully verified that each pair of PRQ’s and SDQ’s contained matching student identification numbers. The researcher and the SUNO statistical analyst entered the results of the students’ responses into SPSS 12.0 files. The researcher created a different data set, one for the SDQ data and another data set for the PRQ data. To protect the identity of the students, the researcher assigned a new anonymous ID to each entry in the data set. The researcher submitted the PRQ data file
to Organizational Development Resources, Inc. (ODR) for processing. ODR returned the results in PDF format. The researcher along with the statistical analyst merged the SDQ data file with the PRQ data file by matching identification numbers.

The researcher and the SUNO statistical analyst could not review the results of the study as in 2005. Hurricane Katrina hit the city of New Orleans and it would be four months before the researcher was allowed to return to the university to retrieve the research (which fortunately was housed on the second floor of the university center.)

The researcher and the statistical analyst from SUNO were displaced from their native city and there was no way they could meet to analyze data. Undeterred the researcher contacted her major professor who put her in touch with a data analyst from MSU.

The researcher and the MSU data analyst discovered that ODR had reported the scores as percentiles, which would not allow the use of multiple regression procedures. The researcher contacted ODR and requested the results be provided in raw scores. ODR had made changes in staff and the original files were no longer available. The researcher contacted the statistical analyst from SUNO and together they reviewed the original files. The researcher provided ODR with the students’ responses to the PRQ. Eighteen months later ODR again provided the results of the students’ scores on the PRQ. This time ODR returned the results as raw scores in an SPSS 14.0 file.

The researcher and the MSU data analyst merged the more recent SPSS 14.0 files with the PRQ and the SDQ using the coding the students provided at the time of the survey. The researcher defined nontraditional students as those who indicated three of the following characteristics: (a) was single or married with children; (b) married; (c)
was a commuter student; (d) worked full-time; and (e) would have been 24 years of age or older at the time of graduation. The researcher identified which students were classified as nontraditional based on the responses provided by the students that completed the survey.

The researcher provided descriptive statistics of the students who participated in the study and summarized the data into a manageable form (Lang & Heiss, 1984). The researcher found regression analysis procedures useful in predicting common variance on some dependent variables (Mertler & Vannatta, 2001). Multiple regressions provided a clear method of looking at the linear combination of independent variables that were closely correlated with the dependent variable. The researcher used stepwise multiple regression procedures (Aron & Aron, 1999) as she wanted to analyze the contribution of the 10 items for each of the two predictor variables, to determine which items made meaningful contributions to the overall prediction. The researcher began the stepwise method by entering into the model the items with the strongest correlation, either negative or positive with the dependent variable. Each level of entry tested an item for inclusion in the model. The procedure stopped when there were no more items that contributed significantly (Abu-Bader, 2006).
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between resilience and student involvement of nontraditional, commuter students at a historically Black university. This section provides descriptive statistics to highlight relevant characteristics of the students who participated in this study. The researcher used inferential statistics to address the research questions. The statistical analyses of the research questions follow.

Statistical Procedures

The researcher used correlational statistics to determine the strength and direction of the relationship of the two student involvement indicators and the seven resilience indicators. The most widely used coefficient was the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, whose symbol was $r$ (Patten, 1997). Pearson’s $r$ was a measure of association which varied from -1.00 (negative/inverse relationships) to +1.00 (positive relationships), with 0.0 indicating no relationship. When the correlation between independent and dependent variables increased, a higher degree of predictability existed between the variables.

Regression analysis procedures were useful in predicting common variance on some dependent variables (Mertler & Vannatta, 2001). Multiple regressions provided a
clear method of looking at the linear combination of independent variables that were closely correlated with the dependent variable. The researcher used stepwise multiple regression procedures (Aron & Aron, 1999) because she wanted to analyze the contribution of (a) the ten indicators of student academic involvement, and (b) the ten indicators of student social involvement, in predicting (c) each of the seven indicators of resilience. The researcher began the stepwise method by entering into the model the item with the strongest correlation, either negative or positive with the dependent variable. Each level of entry tested an item for inclusion in the model. The procedure stopped when there were no more items that contributed significantly (Abu-Bader, 2006). The researcher then reviewed the models that were generated by the multiple regression procedures.

**Student Population**

The researcher administered the SDQ and the PRQ to 407 undergraduate, nontraditional, commuter students who were enrolled at a historically Black university in 2005. For this study the researcher defined nontraditional students as those who had indicated three of the following characteristics: (a) was single or married with children; (b) married; (c) was a commuter student; (d) worked full-time; and (e) would have been 24 years of age or older at the time of graduation.

The researcher, with the assistance of a data analyst from SUNO and MSU, entered the students’ responses into SPSS 12.0 (2003) and determined which students were nontraditional (see above definition of nontraditional). The researcher reviewed the results and 162 students were eliminated from the initial data pool because they either did
not fit the requirements of being nontraditional as defined in this study, or they did not fully complete the survey instruments. The researcher retained 245 subjects. The researcher fully understood Weiss (2006) when he said “Every now and then the best laid plans of rats and sophomores go awry, and a carefully designed study ends up with missing scores” (p. 161).

Results of Analysis

The descriptive characteristics of SUNO students who participated in the study are reported in Table 1. A larger percentage of the students (n=173) were females (70.6%) and 54 of the students (22.1%) were males. No information regarding the sex was provided for 18 (7.3%) of the students. The subjects’ ages were 20 years of age and older. Of the students, (a) 11 (4.5%) were 20 years old, (b) 24 (9.8%) were 21 years old, (c) 8 (3.3 %) of the students were 22 years old, (d) 12 (4.9%) were 23 years old, and (e) 188 (76.7%) were 24 years or older. No information regarding age was given for 2 (.8%) students. The older group of students represented the largest percentage of the students who participated in the study. The majority of the students (n = 231, 94.3%) were African Americans. A small proportion of the students indicated other ethnic backgrounds (n = 13, 5.3%). One student (0.4%) did not respond to this variable. Students who indicated that they were married, separated, widowed, or divorced, represented the majority of the students (n = 158, 64.5%). Three-quarters of the students (n = 185, 75.5%) in this study indicated that they had children. Nearly one-quarter of the students (n = 60, 24.5%) indicated that they did not have children. Enrollment status of students was also reported. The majority of the students (n = 216, 88.2%) indicated that
they were enrolled full-time. A smaller number (n = 29, 11.8%) indicated that they were enrolled part-time.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of SUNO Students Who Participated in the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>70.6</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 and older</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>76.7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Background</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>94.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>5.3</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single</td>
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<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married/Separated/Widowed/Divorced</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>64.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
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</table>
Table 1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>( f )</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do You Have Children</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>75.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Enrollment Status</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>88.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Have You Completed 12 or More Semester Hours</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>95.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do You Work More Than 30 Hours Per Week</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>84.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>38</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Did You Enroll in College Immediately After High School</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>71.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Information</td>
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<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</table>
Table 1 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classification</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>40.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Information</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Did Either Parent Finish College</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>69.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Information</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequency of nontraditional student responses to each of the ten indicators of academic involvement is as follows: (a) 68.6% of the nontraditional students used a computer or word processor to prepare reports or papers very often; (b) 54.7% of nontraditional students took detailed notes during class very often; (c) 51.8% of nontraditional students contributed to class discussions very often; and (d) 58.4% of nontraditional students searched the world wide web or internet for information related to a course very often. Detailed information about academic involvement of nontraditional students is presented in Table 2.
Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Academic Involvement Indicators of SUNO Students Who Participated in the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Involvement Indicator</th>
<th>$f$</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>asked Instructor for Information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Information</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use Computer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>68.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Information</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use Computer Lab</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>33.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Information</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Involvement Indicator</th>
<th>( f )</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memorize Formulas, Definitions, Concepts, Etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Information</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask Librarian for Help</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Information</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked in a Group on Class Assignment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Information</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Involvement Indicator</th>
<th>$f$</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Take Notes in Class</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>54.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Information</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contribute to a Class Discussion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>51.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Information</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explain Course Material to Anyone</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>33.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>44.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Information</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Search the Internet</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>58.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Information</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The frequency of nontraditional student responses to each of the ten indicators of social involvement is as follows: 46.5% of the nontraditional students indicated that they would consider living in an apartment or dormitory if the university provided on-campus housing very often. The researcher also found that 40% of the nontraditional students indicated that they often supported classmates’ fundraisers (purchased raffle tickets, candy, etc.) and 36% of the nontraditional students made new friends whose interests were different from theirs. Detailed information about social involvement of nontraditional students is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Student Involvement Indicators of SUNO Students Who Participated in the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Involvement Indicator</th>
<th>$f$</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dated a Classmate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Information</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Involvement Indicator</th>
<th>$f$</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Communicated with a Classmate Outside of Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Counts</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>37.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Information</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Participated in SUNO’s Homecoming

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Counts</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>33.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Information</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Attended a Greek Organization Party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Counts</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Information</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Involvement Indicator</th>
<th>$f$</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Met with a Campus Organization or Student Government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made New Friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported Fundraisers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Information</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited the University Center</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Information</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Involvement Indicator</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Had Lunch with a Classmate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Information</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would Live in a Dormitory if Available</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Information</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean scores of nontraditional students in this study, when compared with working adults, were at the 50th percentile for two indicators of resilience: (a) “Positive−Yourself” and (b) “Organized”. The mean scores for indicators of resilience of nontraditional students in this study fell within the typical range of scores when compared with working adults for four indicators of resilience: (a) “Positive−The World” at the 33rd percentile; (b) “Focused” at the 35th percentile; (c) “Flexible−Social” at the 21st percentile; and (d) “Proactive” at the 32nd percentile. The mean score of nontraditional students in this study was at 14th percentile for one resilience indicator; “Flexible−Thoughts,” which placed them well outside of the typical range of scores for
working adults. Detailed information about social indicators of resilience of nontraditional students is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Resilience Indicators Assessed in the Personal Resiliency Questionnaire of Students* Who Participated in the Research Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resiliency Indicators</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Percentiles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive: The World</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>15.87</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive: Yourself</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>14.57</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>17.72</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible: Thoughts</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>11.09</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible: Social</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>11.99</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organized</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>12.71</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactive</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>10.54</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* n = 245

Research question one was “What is the relationship among ten indicators of academic involvement and seven indicators of resilience of nontraditional students at a historically Black university?” Research question two was “What is the relationship among ten social involvement indicators and seven resilience indicators of nontraditional students at a historically Black university?” Multiple regression procedures were performed by the researcher to address these questions. Pearson correlation coefficients were computed for all variables. These findings are reported in the Pearson Correlation Matrix in Table 5.
Table 5. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Matrix with Seven Personal Resiliency Questionnaire Scores and Two Involvement Scores of Students Who Participated in the Research Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resiliency Indicators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Positive: The World</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Positive: Yourself</td>
<td>.665*</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Focused</td>
<td>.714*</td>
<td>.758*</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Flexible: Thoughts</td>
<td>.400*</td>
<td>.371*</td>
<td>.340*</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Flexible: Social</td>
<td>.594*</td>
<td>.519*</td>
<td>.558*</td>
<td>.335*</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Organized</td>
<td>.391*</td>
<td>.467*</td>
<td>.561*</td>
<td>.113</td>
<td>.267*</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Proactive</td>
<td>.416*</td>
<td>.396*</td>
<td>.413*</td>
<td>.398*</td>
<td>.335*</td>
<td>.191*</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Involvement Indicators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Academic</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td>.110</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Social</td>
<td>-.036</td>
<td>-.012</td>
<td>-.112</td>
<td>-.012</td>
<td>-.054</td>
<td>-.092</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>.360*</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.01
Research question one addressed the following question: “What is the relationship among ten indicators of academic involvement and seven indicators of resilience of nontraditional students at a historically Black university?” The researcher conducted a stepwise multiple regression using the ten academic student involvement indicators to predict the resilience indicator “Positive–Yourself.” Results of the analysis are found in Table 6.

Table 6. Significant Stepwise Regression Models Predicting the Resilience Indicator “Positive–Yourself” From Academic Student Involvement Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Involvement Indicator</th>
<th>$R$</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1 – Take Detailed Notes in Class</td>
<td>.196</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>9.243</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher found a single-item statistical model that significantly predicted the indicator of resilience “Positive–Yourself.” The indicator of academic involvement “Take detailed notes in class” explained 3.8% of the variance in the dependent variable “Positive–Yourself,” ($F(1, 228) = 9.243, p = .003$).

The researcher conducted a stepwise multiple regression using the ten indicators of academic student involvement to predict the indicator of resilience “Focused.” Results of the analysis are found in Table 7.
Table 7. Significant Stepwise Regression Models Predicting the Resilience Indicator “Focused” From Academic Student Involvement Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Involvement Indicator</th>
<th>$R$</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1 – Use a Computer</td>
<td>.217</td>
<td>.047</td>
<td>11.397</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2 – Use Computer Ask Instructor for Information</td>
<td>.246</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>8.092</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Use a computer or word processor to prepare reports or papers. Ask instructor for information related to a course you are taking (grades, make-up assignment, etc.)

The researcher found a two-item statistical model that significantly predicted the indicator of resilience “Focused.” This two-item statistical model contained the items “Used computer or word processor to prepare reports or papers” and “Asked an instructor for information related to a course you are taking (grades, make-up assignment, etc.).”

The combination of these two indicators explained 6.6% of the variance associated with the resilience indicator “Focused,” ($F(2, 220) = 8.092, p = .000$).

The researcher conducted a stepwise multiple regression using the ten indicators of academic student involvement to predict the indicator of resilience “Flexible–Thoughts.” Results of the analysis are found in Table 8.
The researcher found a three-item statistical model that significantly predicted the indicator of resilience “Flexible–Thoughts.” This 3-item statistical model contained the items “Contributed to a class discussion,” “Use a computer lab or center to improve study or academic skills (reading, writing, computer lab, etc.),” and “Take detailed notes in class.” The combination of these three indicators explained 8.6% of the variance associated with the resilience indicator “Flexible–Thoughts,” ($F(3, 229) = 7.165, p = .000$).

The researcher conducted a stepwise multiple regression using the ten indicators of academic student involvement to predict the resilience indicator “Organized.” Results of the analysis are found in Table 9.

### Table 8. Significant Stepwise Regression Models Predicting the Resilience Indicator “Flexible–Thoughts” From Academic Student Involvement Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Involvement Indicator</th>
<th>$R$</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1 – Contribute to a Class Discussion</td>
<td>.218</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>11.577</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2 – Contribute to a Class Discussion Use Computer Lab</td>
<td>.256</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>8.080</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 3 – Contribute to a Class Discussion Use Computer Lab Take Detailed Notes in Class</td>
<td>.293</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td>7.165</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Use a computer lab or center to improve study or academic skills (reading, writing, computer lab, etc.)
Table 9. Significant Stepwise Regression Models Predicting the Resilience Indicator “Organized” From Academic Student Involvement Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Involvement Indicator</th>
<th>$R$</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1 – Ask Librarian for Help</td>
<td>.146</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>5.009</td>
<td>.026</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Model 2 – Ask Librarian for Help  
  Take Detailed Notes in Class   | .202 | .041  | 4.914  | .008 |

Note: Asked a librarian or staff member for help in finding information on some topic.

The researcher found a two-item statistical model that significantly predicted the indicator of resilience “Organized.” This 2-item statistical model contained the items “Asked the librarian or staff for help in finding information or some topic,” and “Taking detailed notes in class.” The combination of these two indicators explained 4.1% of the variance associated with the resilience indicator “Organized,” ($F(2, 230) = 4.914, p = .008$).

The researcher conducted a stepwise multiple regression using the ten indicators of academic student involvement to predict the indicator of resilience “Proactive.”

Results of the analysis are found in Table 10.

Table 10. Significant Stepwise Regression Models Predicting the Resilience Indicator “Proactive” From Academic Student Involvement Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Involvement Indicator</th>
<th>$R$</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1 – Take Detailed Notes in Class</td>
<td>.206</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>10.286</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The researcher found single-item statistical model that significantly predicted “Proactive.” The indicator of academic involvement “Take detailed notes in class” explained 4.3% of the variance in the dependent variable “Proactive,” \( F(1, 231) = 10.286, p = .002 \).

Research question two addressed the following question: “What is the relationship among ten indicators of social involvement and seven indicators of resilience of nontraditional students at a historically Black university?”

The researcher conducted a stepwise regression using the ten indicators of social student involvement to predict indicator of resilience “Positive–The World.” Results of the analysis are found in Table 11.

Table 11. Significant Stepwise Regression Models Predicting the Resilience Indicator “Positive–The World” From Social Student Involvement Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Involvement Indicator</th>
<th>( R )</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>( F )</th>
<th>( p )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 2 – Would Live in Dorm if Available Make Friends</td>
<td>.249</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>7.525</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Would you consider living in an apartment or dormitory if the university provided on-campus housing?
Make friends whose interests are different from yours.

The researcher found a two-item statistical model that significantly predicted the indicator of resilience “Positive–The World.” This two-item statistical model contained the items “Would you consider living in an apartment or dormitory if the university provided on-campus housing,” and “Make friends whose interests are different from
yours.” The combination of these two indicators explained 6.2% of the variance associated with the indicator of resilience “Positive–The World,” \( (F (2, 228) = 7.525, p = .001) \).

The researcher conducted a stepwise regression using the ten indicators of social student involvement to predict indicator of resilience “Positive–Yourself.” Results of the analysis are found in Table 12.

Table 12. Significant Stepwise Regression Models Predicting the Resilience Indicator “Positive–Yourself” From Social Student Involvement Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Involvement Indicator</th>
<th>( R )</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>( F )</th>
<th>( p )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1 – Would Live in Dorm if Available</td>
<td>.187</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>8.300</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Would you consider living in an apartment or dormitory if the university provided on-campus housing?

The researcher found a single-item statistical model that significantly predicted the indicator of resilience “Positive–Yourself.” The indicator of social involvement “Would you consider living in an apartment or dormitory if the university provided on-campus housing,” explained 3.5% of the variance associated with the resilience indicator “Positive–Yourself,” \( (F (1, 228) = 8.300, p = .004) \).

The researcher conducted a stepwise regression using the ten indicators of social student involvement to predict indicator of resilience “Focused.” Results of the analysis are found in Table 13.
The researcher found a single-item statistical model that predicted the indicator of resilience “Focused.” The indicator of social involvement “Would you consider living in an apartment or dormitory if the university provided on-campus housing” and explained 6.4% of the variance associated with the resilience indicator “Focused,” \((F(1, 228) = 15.508, p = .000)\).

The researcher conducted a stepwise regression using the ten indicators of social student involvement to predict the indicator of resilience “Flexible—Thoughts.” Results of the analysis are found in Table 14.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Involvement Indicator</th>
<th>(R)</th>
<th>(R^2)</th>
<th>(F)</th>
<th>(p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1 – Would Live in Dorm if Available</td>
<td>.252</td>
<td>.064</td>
<td>15.508</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Would you consider living in an apartment or dormitory if the university provided on-campus housing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Involvement Indicator</th>
<th>(R)</th>
<th>(R^2)</th>
<th>(F)</th>
<th>(p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1 – Supported Fundraisers</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>6.650</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Supported classmates’ fundraisers, (purchased raffle tickets, candy, etc.).
The researcher found a single-item statistical model that predicted the indicator of resilience “Flexible—Thoughts.” The social indicator “Supported classmates’ fundraisers, (purchased raffle tickets, candy, etc.)” explained 2.8% of the variance associated with the indicator of resilience “Flexible—Thoughts,” \( (F (1, 228) = 6.650, p = .011) \).

The researcher conducted a stepwise regression using the ten indicators of social student involvement to predict the indicator of resilience “Flexible—Social.” Results of the analysis are found in Table 15.

Table 15 Significant Stepwise Regression Models Predicting the Resilience Indicator “Flexible—Social” From Social Student Involvement Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Involvement Indicator</th>
<th>( R )</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>( F )</th>
<th>( p )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1 – Would Live in Dorm if Available</td>
<td>.190</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>8.506</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Would you consider living in an apartment or dormitory if the university provided on-campus housing?

The researcher found a single-item statistical model that predicted the indicator of resilience “Flexible—Social.” The indicator of social involvement “Would you consider living in an apartment or dormitory if the university provided on-campus housing” explained 3.6% of the variance associated with the resilience indicator “Flexible—Social,” \( (F (1, 228) = 8.506, p = .004) \).

The researcher conducted a stepwise regression using the ten indicators of social student involvement to predict the indicator of resilience “Organized.” Results of the analysis are found in Table 16.
The researcher found a single-item statistical model that predicted the indicator of resilience “Organized.” The social indicator “Would you consider living in an apartment or dormitory if the university provided on-campus housing” explained 4.2% of the variance associated with the resilience indicator “Organized,” \( (F(1, 228) = 10.027, p = .002) \).

The researcher conducted a stepwise regression using the ten indicators of social student involvement to predict the indicator of resilience “Proactive.” Results of the analysis are found in Table 17.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Involvement Indicator</th>
<th>( R )</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>( F )</th>
<th>( p )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1 – Would Live in Dorm if Available</td>
<td>.205</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>10.027</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Would you consider living in an apartment or dormitory if the university provided on-campus housing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Involvement Indicator</th>
<th>( R )</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>( F )</th>
<th>( p )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1 – Supported Fundraisers</td>
<td>.234</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>13.200</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2 – Supported Fundraisers Visited the University Center</td>
<td>.286</td>
<td>.082</td>
<td>10.073</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Supported classmates’ fundraisers, (purchased raffle tickets, candy, etc.) Visited the university center’s (bowling alley, pool, game room).
The researcher found a two-item model that significantly predicted the indicator of resilience “Proactive.” This two-item model contained the items “Supported classmates’ fundraisers, (purchased raffle tickets, candy, etc.)” and “Visited the university center’s (bowling alley, pool, game room.)” The combination of these two indicators explained 8.2% of the variance associated with the resilience indicator “Proactive,” \( (F (2, 227) = 10.073, p = .000) \).

**Discussion of Major Findings**

**Academic Involvement Indicators and Resilience Indicators**

The researcher’s initial analysis of the relationship between the indicator of overall academic involvement and each of the seven indicators of resilience yielded no significant correlations. However, when the researcher employed the use of stepwise multiple regressions with the ten indicators of academic involvement to predict indicators of resilience, she found significant relationships between some of the indicators of academic involvement and five indicators of resilience.

1. The researcher found a single item statistical model that significantly predicted the indicator of resilience “Positive−Yourself.” The indicator of academic involvement “Take detailed notes in class” explained 3.8% of the variance in the dependent variable “Positive−Yourself,” \( (F (1, 228) = 9.243, p = .003) \). The researcher interpreted this significant relationship as an indication that nontraditional students who took notes in class had resilient characteristics based on the resilience indicator “Positive−Yourself.” Students with higher scores on “Positive−Yourself” had a more positive view of themself and were more likely to achieve their goals (ODR, 2003).
2. The researcher found a two-item statistical model that significantly predicted the indicators of resilience “Focused.” This two-item statistical model contained the items “Used computer or word processor to prepare reports or papers” and “Asked an instructor for information related to a course you are taking (grades, make-up assignment, etc.).” The combination of these two indicators of academic involvement explained 6.6% of the variance associated with the resilience indicator “Focused,” ($F(2, 220) = 8.092, p = .000$). The researcher interpreted this significant relationship as an indication that nontraditional students who used a computer and who asked an instructor for assistance had resilient characteristics based on the resilience indicator “Focused.” Students with higher scores of “Focused” reported that they had a strong sense of direction and had set priorities (ODR, 2003).

3. The researcher found a three-item statistical model that significantly predicted the indicators of resilience “Flexible—Thoughts.” This three-item statistical model contained the items “Contributed to a class discussion,” “Use a computer lab or center to improve study or academic skills (reading, writing, computer lab, etc.),” and “Take detailed notes in class.” The combination of these three indicators of academic involvement explained 8.6% of the variance associated with the resilience indicator “Flexible—Thoughts,” ($F(3, 229) = 7.165, p = .000$). The researcher interpreted this significant relationship as an indication that students who contributed to a class discussion, used the computer lab and took detailed notes in class had resilient characteristics based on the resilience indicator “Flexible—Thoughts.” Students with higher scores of “Flexible—Thoughts” viewed situations from various perspectives.
and often withheld judgment until they had an opportunity to consider all aspects of the situation (ODR, 2003).

4. The researcher found a two-item statistical model that significantly predicted the indicators of resilience “Organized.” This two-item statistical model contained the indicators of academic involvement “Asked the librarian or staff for help in finding information or some topic,” and “Taking detailed notes in class.” The combination of these two indicators of academic involvement explained 4.1% of the variance associated with the resilience indicator “Organized,” ($F(2, 230) = 4.914, p = .008$). The researcher interpreted this significant relationship as an indication that nontraditional students who asked a librarian for help and who took detailed notes in class had resilient characteristics based on the resilience indicator “Organized.” Students with higher scores of “Organized” had skills that allowed them to assess the condition, choose a path of action, and made provisions to move beyond life’s disruptions (ODR, 2003).

5. The researcher found a single-item statistical model that significantly predicted the indicators of resilience “Proactive.” This single-item statistical model contained the indicator of academic involvement “Take detailed notes in class” explained 4.3% of the variance in the dependent variable “Proactive,” ($F(1, 231) = 10.286, p = .002$). The researcher interpreted this significant relationship as an indication that this type of nontraditional student had resilient characteristics based on the resilience indicator “Proactive.” These students create opportunities to stretch for personal development (ODR, 2003).
Social Involvement Indicators and Resilience Indicators

The researcher’s initial analysis of the relationship between the indicator of overall social involvement and each of the seven indicators of resilience yielded no significant correlations. However, when the researcher employed the use of stepwise multiple regressions with the ten indicators of social involvement to predict resilience indicators, she found significant relationships between some of the academic involvement indicators and all seven resilience indicators.

1. The researcher found a two-item statistical model that significantly predicted the indicator of resilience “Positive−The World.” This two-item statistical model contained the items “Would you consider living in an apartment or dormitory if the university provided on-campus housing,” and “Make friends whose interests are different from yours.” The combination of these two social indicators explained 6.2% of the variance associated with the resilience indicator “Positive−The World,” \( F(2, 228) = 7.525, p = .001 \). The researcher interpreted this significant relationship as an indication that these nontraditional students had resilient characteristics based on the indicator of resilience “Positive−The World.” Students with higher scores of “Positive−The World” were able to see opportunities and advancement in situations that presented themselves as problems (ODR, 2003).

2. The researcher found a single-item statistical model that significantly predicted the indicator of resilience “Positive−Yourself.” The indicator of social involvement “Would you consider living in an apartment or dormitory if the university provided on-campus housing” explained 3.5% of the variance associated with the resilience indicator “Positive−Yourself,” \( F(1, 228) = 8.300, p = .004 \). The researcher
interpreted this significant relationship as an indication that this type of nontraditional student had resilient characteristics based on the resilience indicator “Positive−Yourself.” Students with higher scores of “Positive−Yourself” were empowered by their sincere belief in self and were more likely to reach their life ambitions (ODR, 2003).

3. The researcher found a single-item statistical model that predicted the indicator of resilience “Focused.” The indicator of social involvement “Would you consider living in an apartment or dormitory if the university provided on-campus housing” explained 6.4% of the variance associated with the resilience indicator “Focused,” ($F$ (1, 228) = 15.508, $p = .000$). The researcher interpreted this significant relationship as an indication that this type of nontraditional student had resilient characteristics based on the resilience indicator “Focused.” Students with higher scores of “Focused” had an unwavering sense of direction and understood the need to have personal priorities (ODR, 2003).

4. The researcher found a single-item statistical model that predicted the indicator of resilience “Flexible−Thoughts.” The indicator of social involvement “Supported classmates’ fundraisers, (purchased raffle tickets, candy, etc.)” explained 2.8% of the variance associated with the resilience indicator “Flexible−Thoughts,” ($F$ (1, 228) = 6.650, $p = .011$). This was a significant level which indicated this type of nontraditional student had resilient characteristics based on the resilience indicator “Flexible−Thoughts.” The research from the ODR (2003) indicated that these individuals viewed situations from numerous angles; they withheld their decisions
until they had considered all possible angles, and they accepted life’s mysteries and uncertainties.

5. The researcher found a single-item statistical model that predicted the indicator of resilience “Flexible–Social.” The indicator of social involvement “Would you consider living in an apartment or dormitory if the university provided on-campus housing” explained 3.6% of the variance associated with the resilience indicator “Flexible–Social,” \((F(1, 228) = 8.506, p = .004)\). This was a significant level which indicated this type of nontraditional student had resilient characteristics based on the resilience indicator “Flexible–Social.” ODR (2003) suggested this individual recognized there was a connection between humans which formed a social bond. This social bond allowed the individual to depend on the encouragement and support of others during life’s disruptions.

6. The researcher found a single-item statistical model that predicted the indicator of resilience “Organized.” The indicator of social involvement “Would you consider living in an apartment or dormitory if the university provided on-campus housing” explained 4.2% of the variance associated with the resilience indicator “Organized,” \((F(1, 228) = 10.027, p = .002)\). This was a significant indication that this type of nontraditional student had resilient characteristics based on the resilience indicator “Organized.” The research from the ODR (2003) indicated that this type of individual had organizational skills which allowed them to examine a situation, work out a plan and give them a direction to get past a challenging situation.

7. The researcher found a two-item statistical model that significantly predicted the indicator of resilience “Proactive.” This two-item model contained the items
“Supported classmates’ fundraisers, (purchased raffle tickets, candy, etc.,)” and “Visited the university center’s (bowling alley, pool, game room).” The combination of these two indicators of social involvement explained 8.2% of the variance associated with the resilience indicator “Proactive,” \( F(2, 227) = 10.073, p = .000 \). These were significant levels which indicated the “Proactive” nontraditional student had resilient characteristics based on the resilience indicator “Proactive.” ODR (2003) considered this individual a risk taker and described this individual as a person willing to endure difficulties because he believed the end result would provide positive personal development and would assist them in reaching their goals.

Two indicators of academic involvement did not produce any links to indicators of resilience. The two indicators of academic involvement were: (a) “Memorized formulas, definitions, technical terms and concepts,” and (b) “Worked on a class assignment, project, or presentation with other students.” Five indicators of social involvement did not produce a link to indicators of resilience. The five indicators of social involvement were: (a) “Have you been on a date or group outing with a member of your class away from the University (movie, bowling, concert, dance, etc.),” (b) “Communicate with classmates outside of the classroom (telephone, email, visits),” (c) “Serve as a participant in the homecoming coronation and/or attended any homecoming events,” (d) “Attended a Greek organization interest meeting, stomp show, or party,” (e) “Attend meeting of a campus club, departmental organization, or student government group.”
The purpose of this study was to assess the relationship between resilience and involvement of nontraditional, commuter students at a historically Black university. Two research questions were: (a) “What is the relationship among ten indicators of academic involvement and seven indicators of resilience of nontraditional students at a historically Black university?” and (b) “What is the relationship among ten indicators of social involvement and seven indicators of resilience of nontraditional students at a historically Black university?” guided the study. This final chapter contains a brief overview of the study, followed by a discussion of results, implications, and recommendations for future research.

Overview

The researcher examined the relationship among two indicators of student involvement and seven indicators of resilience of nontraditional, commuter undergraduates at a historically Black university. There were 245 nontraditional undergraduates enrolled in historical Black university in southeastern Louisiana who participated in the study. This university was a commuter university at the time of this study.
This study employed Pearson’s product moment correlation to determine if there was a strong or meaningful relationship among indicators of student resilience, academic involvement, and student involvement. The researcher used Pearson’s correlation procedures as the predictor, and criterion variables were at the interval level of measurement and were normally distributed within the population. The researcher used multiple regression analyses to obtain a clearer understanding of the amount of variance that was explained by the relationship among the ten indicators of academic involvement and the ten indicators of social and each of the seven indicators of resilience.

**Implications**

The results of this study supported the position that there was a linkage among resilience and indicators of academic involvement and there was also a linkage among resilience and indicators of social involvement of nontraditional, commuter students at a historically Black university. The information gleaned from this study has implications for institutions of higher education, student affairs administrators, faculty, and staff. The information is particularly important for those who serve a large population of nontraditional undergraduates. Some of the major implications of the study are discussed below.

**Implications for Higher Education**

The researcher found the indicator of academic involvement, “Take Detailed Notes in Class” which was linked to two indicators of resilience: (a) “Positive—Yourself” and (b) “Proactive.” Based on these findings the researcher suggests that universities inform nontraditional students of the importance of taking detailed notes. Freshman
orientation courses could provide materials with instructions on note taking. Speakers could be invited to the campus to conduct workshops on hints to master the art of note taking. These activities may improve nontraditional students’ resilience and positive view of self by increasing their confidence and self worth. The nontraditional students’ proactive efforts in taking detailed notes may require some extra energy, but the study shows the outcome will be positive.

The researcher found the indicator of academic involvement, “Use a computer or word processor to prepare reports or papers” which was linked to two indicators of resilience: (a) “Focused” and (b) “Flexible-Thoughts.” Based on these findings the researcher suggests that universities inform nontraditional students of the importance of using the computer or word processor when working on their class assignments. Freshman orientations could provide nontraditional students with the location of all computer labs on campus. Seminars could be held for nontraditional students to acquaint them with the current computer innovations. Workshops could be held to introduce nontraditional students to the software that is geared to their majors. These activities may improve nontraditional students’ resilience as they become more focused and improve their sense of directions and set priorities. The nontraditional students’ flexible thinking in using the computer and learning about the various software designed to enhance their studies may improve their willingness to seek solutions from multiple view points.

The researcher found the indicator of academic involvement, “Ask an instructor for information related to a course you are taking (grades, make-up assignment, etc.)” which was linked to one indicator of resilience: “Focused.” Based on this finding the researcher suggests that universities inform nontraditional students of the importance of
communicating with their instructors, both in and out-of the classroom. Freshman orientations could provide nontraditional students with the location of their instructors’ offices, telephone numbers and email addresses. Informal gatherings could be held where students can talk with their instructors. These activities may improve nontraditional students’ resilience as they become more focused and improve their sense of directions and assist them in setting priorities.

The researcher found the indicator of academic involvement, “Contributed to a Class Discussion” which was linked to one indicator of resilience: “Flexible Thoughts.” Based on this finding the researcher suggests that universities inform nontraditional students of the importance of engaging in classroom discussions. Active participation in classroom discussions may improve nontraditional students’ flexible thinking in their willingness to openly express their thoughts among their peers and to seek solutions from multiple view points.

The researcher found the indicator of academic involvement, “Use a computer lab or center to improve study or academic skills (reading, writing, computer lab, etc.)” which was linked to one indicator of resilience: “Flexible Thoughts.” Based on this finding the researcher suggests that universities inform nontraditional students of the importance of using a computer lab, reading lab, and writing lab. Active participation with support staff at the university may improve nontraditional students’ flexible thinking in their willingness to openly express their thoughts and to seek solutions from multiple view points.
The researcher found that the indicator of academic involvement “Asked a librarian or staff member for help in finding information on some topic” was linked to one indicator of resilience: “Organized.” Based on this finding the researcher suggests that universities encourage nontraditional students to visit the library and ask members of that staff to assist them on locating information for their assignments. Freshman orientations could provide nontraditional students with the location of all libraries and resource centers on campus. Seminars could be held for nontraditional students to acquaint them with how the library system is designed. Librarians could conduct seminars to introduce nontraditional students to the various methods of researching a topic in the library. Engaging library staff for assistance may improve nontraditional students’ resilience as they become more organized and improve their abilities to assess a situation and choose a course of action.

The researcher found that the indicator of social involvement, “Would you consider living in an apartment or dormitory if the university provided on-campus housing?” was linked to five indicators of resilience: (a) “Positive−The World,” (b) “Positive−Yourself,” (c) “Focused,” “Flexible−Social,” and (d) “Organized.” The researcher found it interesting that the nontraditional students at this university indicated an interest in living on campus. At the time the study was conducted, the university did not provide on campus housing. Prior to Hurricane Katrina all students commuted to the university.

Based on these findings the researcher suggests that commuter campuses consider providing on-campus housing for their students. University administrator could contact local apartment owners for a block of apartments and ask that they provide a group
discounts for students enrolled at the university. Campus housing may improve nontraditional students’ resilience as they view their world as positive and seek ways to improve that environment. Living on campus may create a positive view of self for nontraditional students and improve their confidence and self esteem. By living on campus, nontraditional students may increase their resilience and become more focused as they develop a stronger sense of direction and set priorities. Resilience may increase for the nontraditional student whose social bonds develop and they can rely on the support of others. The nontraditional residential student may increase their resilience and develop better organizational skills which allow them to assess a situation, choose a course of action, and make preparations to move forward.

The researcher found that the indicator of social involvement, “Make friends whose interest are different from yours” was linked to one indicator of resilience: “Positive—The World.” Based on this finding the researcher suggests that universities encourage nontraditional students to develop new friendships with members of their campus community. Nontraditional students could exchange name, telephone numbers and email addresses of their classmates at the start of their college careers. Learning communities could be developed to encourage the nontraditional student to have out-of-classroom experiences. These informal gatherings may increase resilience in the nontraditional student as they become positive thinkers who are better able to create situations and environments that are positive.

The researcher found that the indicator of social involvement, “Support classmates’ fundraisers, (purchased raffle tickets, candy, etc.)” was linked to two indicators of resilience: (a) “Flexible—Thoughts,” and (b) “Proactive.” Based on this
finding, the researcher suggests that universities encourage nontraditional students to support their classmates in fundraiser events. This small effort of support may increase resilience in nontraditional students as their thoughts move from themselves and they start to see other students’ efforts, this positive action is evidence of the nontraditional student’s personal development.

The researcher found that the indicator of social involvement, “Visited the university center’s (bowling alley, pool, game room)” was linked to one indicator of resilience: “Proactive.” Based on this finding the researcher suggests that university administrators encourage nontraditional students to support visit the university center. Visits to the university center could provide opportunities for informal meetings of classmates and provide out-of-class interaction with instructors. These visits to the university center could increase the resilience of nontraditional students as they become proactive risk takers, and, although their first efforts of going to the university center may be awkward, the outcome could be positive.

**Implications for Student Affairs Administrators**

Student affairs professionals share the responsibility with faculty and academic administrators for providing conditions that engage students in purposeful activities such as using the library, laboratories and joining student organizations. Concerning nontraditional students, the researcher found that each of the seven indicators of resilience was linked to one or more of the following indicators of social involvement: (a) “Would you consider living in an apartment or dormitory if the university provided on-campus housing?,” (b) “Make friends whose interest are different from yours,” (c)
“Support classmates’ fundraisers, (purchased raffle tickets, candy, etc.),” and (d) “Visited the university center’s (bowling alley, pool, game room).” Student affairs professional have a role in the developing the resilience of nontraditional students. Winfield (2003) stated, “When we view resilience as a developmental process that can be fostered, than strategies can be directed toward practice, policy, and attitudes” (p. 3).

Based on the findings of the current research, student affairs administrators could encourage nontraditional members of student organizations to provide detailed minutes of their meetings, thus contributing to the development of student resilience. Student affairs could consider developing policies which recommend that nontraditional students participate in at least one campus activity or organization. Such participation could provide an opportunity for nontraditional students to make friends whose interest is different from their own. Student affairs administrators could encourage nontraditional student groups to sponsor fundraisers in an effort to increase their resiliency. Student events could be held in the university center at times when nontraditional student could participate in such activities as bowling. On-campus housing could be made available to nontraditional students as a vehicle to develop new friends and enhance their social skills.

Implications for College Professors and University Personnel

Concerning nontraditional students, the researcher found that five indicators of resilience was linked to one or more of the following indicators of academic involvement: (a) “Take Detailed Notes in Class,” (b) “Use a computer or word processor to prepare reports or papers,” (c) “Ask an instructor for information related to a course you are taking (grades, make-up assignment, etc.),” (d) “Contribute to a Class
Discussion,” (e) Use a computer lab or center to improve study or academic skills (reading, writing, computer lab, etc.), “(f) “Asked a librarian or staff member for help in finding information on some topic.”

The researcher suggests that college professors could enhance the resilience of their nontraditional students by encouraging them to take detailed notes during class lectures. Assignments could be given which require nontraditional students to use the computer or word processor when preparing reports. The researcher suggests that instructors encourage their nontraditional students to visit them during their office hours to discuss their grades and other assignments. Perhaps college professors and university personnel could encourage nontraditional students to participate in class discussions. Perhaps more active class discussions could lead to an increase their resilience. College professors and university personnel could give nontraditional students assignments which require them to visit the library and computer labs. Increasing library visits and the use of computers may create opportunities for interaction with the campus staff, which was found to increase measures of resilience. Tinto (1993) stated “the more frequent and rewarding interactions are between students and other members of the institution, the more likely students are to stay” (p. 166).

**Recommendations**

Based on the finding of this study the researcher recommends that college professors and university personnel encourage nontraditional students to: (a) take detailed notes in class, (b) use a computer or word processor when preparing reports or papers, (c) ask instructors for information related to a course, (d) contribute to a class discussion, (e)
use a computer lab or center, and (f) ask a librarian or staff for help in finding information on some topic. The recommendations of the researcher are based her findings that these indicators academic involvement were linked to indicators of resilience.

Figure 2, describes the researcher-developed model which illustrates the nontraditional students academic and social involvement in an environment that is committed to building their personal resilience. The model assumes that nontraditional students who are living a comfortable life may have a desire to continue their college education. Based on their personal resiliency, some nontraditional students are able to return to college, continue their education, and graduate with little disruption or difficulty. However, for other potential nontraditional students, life’s disruptions may force them to make some very tough decisions once their lives become out of balance. The potential nontraditional student may have fall into a place of unbalance, and some may have choose to remain there. Yet some potential nontraditional students may have prospered from their life’s disruption gaining new personal insight.

Connor (1992) states, “rather than becoming a victim of change, people who demonstrate resilient characteristics most often prospered during disorder” (p. 65). The prosperous individual decides to go beyond their previous unsatisfied existence of being a potential college student, and makes the decision to return to college. Siebert (1994) states “people seldom tap into their deepest strengths and abilities until forced to do so by major adversity” (p. 7). The potential nontraditional students who use adversity to their advantage may decide to face the challenges of a college education.
Figure 2  Pinkney’s Resiliency Model for the Nontraditional Student
Based on the findings of this study, universities that are committed to developing the resilience of nontraditional students could encourage them to: (a) ask their instructor for information related to a course; (b) use a computer or word processor to prepare reports or papers; (c) use a learning lab or center to improve study or academic skills, (d) ask a librarian or staff member for help in finding information on some topic; and (e) take detailed notes during class. These indicators of academic involvement were linked to indicators of resilience in nontraditional students.

Based on the findings of this study, universities that are committed to developing the resilience of nontraditional students could encourage them to: (a) live in an apartment or dormitory if available, (b) make friends whose interests are different from theirs, (c) support their classmates fundraisers, and (d) visit the university center. These indicators of social involvement were linked to indicators of resilience in nontraditional students.

The researcher suggests that nontraditional students who are academically and socially involved on the campus are provided an opportunity to develop greater personal skills and continued resiliency enhancement. This greater personal awareness and recognition of personal resilience helps the nontraditional student in the event of other disruptions. Nontraditional students may return to an unbalanced existence but will have developed a stronger awareness of self and would be more likely to return to their studies. Once nontraditional students have graduated from and have benefited from the resilient community, they may have a desire to give back to the their community. One way in which nontraditional students may give back may be to share their personal stories of resilience.

This researcher strongly believes that once nontraditional students have an understanding of their personal resilience, they may have a greater appreciation for life’s
disruptions. This awareness may come from understanding their personal resilience strengths. The college degree serves not only as a symbol of their educational accomplishments but also as a badge of their personal development.

**Future Research**

Universities are seeing an increase in enrollment of nontraditional students “this shift in the composition of the collegiate student population necessitates a reciprocal shift in the services” (Evans, Bonner, & Burns, 2002, p. 84). Future research should be conducted to study the services needed to assist nontraditional students in developing their resiliency and increasing their academic and social involvement.

This study did not include African American students on predominantly White and historically Black private college campuses. Other research is needed to explore the traditional student at a historically Black university, a historically White university, a historically Black private university, or a community college. Future studies should also include campuses that provide on-campus housing. The dynamics of the residential environment might well play a significant role in understanding the relationship between resilience and student involvement.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the complex construct of resiliency, research that includes a qualitative component would be advantageous. In addition to analyzing the data from a quantitative perspective, subjects who scored extremely high or low on the *Personal Resilience Questionnaire* could be interviewed for the purpose of clarifying and/or verifying their levels of resilience and student involvement. The
combination of the quantitative and qualitative approach could augment the research in this area.

The researcher also suggests that other resiliency questionnaires be considered for future studies. The length of this questionnaire was a concern for many of the respondents, which may have contributed to the fact that so many were discarded. Other academic and social involvement indicators may be considered. The indicators used in this study were selected because the university in this research was a commuter campus and involvement indicators were customized for that campus environment.

Additional research should include a study based on the gender of the nontraditional student. Are nontraditional females more resilient than males and if so in which of the seven resilience indicators do males and females differ most? In understanding how males and females differ based on their resiliency characteristics and their academic and social student involvement, university administrators can develop recruitment and retention strategies for their nontraditional students. Statistical analysis of the resilience indicators in regard to gender would also provide a framework for student affairs administrators in planning optimum programming for their female and male nontraditional students.

A final recommendation for future research is to expand the study by including White students and other ethnic groups. Other areas of study might investigate the relationship of resiliency and student involvement among international students. The inclusion of other groups would increase the generalization of the results.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL FROM

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY
May 5, 2005

Adrell Pinkney
3817 Timberview Lane
Harvey, LA 70058

Re: IRS Docket #05-086: A Study of the Correlation of Personal Resiliency and Student Involvement of Nontraditional Commuter Students at a Historically Black University

Dear Ms. Pinkney:

The above referenced project was reviewed and approved via administrative review on May 3, 2005 in accordance with 45 CFR 46.101 b(2). Continuing review is not necessary for this project. However, any modification to the project must be reviewed and approved by the IRS prior to implementation. Any failure to adhere to the approved protocol could result in suspension or termination of your project. The IRS reserves the right, at anytime during the project period, to observe you and the additional researchers on this project.

Please refer to your IRS number (#05-086) when contacting our office regarding this application.

Thank you for your cooperation and good luck to you in conducting this research project. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me at jmiller@research.msstate.edu or 325-5220.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Jonathan E. Miller IRS Coordinator

cc: Joe Underwood

Office of Regulatory Compliance
P. O. Box 6223, 8A Morgan Street, Mailstop 9563 • Mississippi State, MS 39762 • (662) 325-3204 • FAX (662) 325-8776
APPENDIX B

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL FROM

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AT NEW ORLEANS
March 10, 2005

ATTN: Tracy Arwood, IRB Director Mississippi State University
8A Morgan Street
Mississippi State, MS 39762

RE: Adrell Pinkney (#433925661)
   Major/Area:   Counseling Education
   Major Professor:  Dr. Joel Ray Underwood

Dear Ms. Arwood,

Please allow this Communiqué to serve as a written authorization for the above-referenced student to complete her research studies on the campus of Southern University at New Orleans. She and her advisor have provided adequate information regarding her study and its limited usage. Therefore, she has been approved to complete her surveys utilizing the students on this campus.

If any further information is needed, please feel free to contact me at 504.284.5464. With warm regards, I remain

Sincerely yours,

Stacey L. Thomas, Chair Internal Review Board

cc: Adrell Pinkney
APPENDIX C

LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM CONNER PARTNERS
February 25, 2005

To whom it may concern:

Adrell L. Pinkney, as a representative of Mississippi State University and under the supervision of Dr. Joe Underwood, has the permission of Conner Partners to use the Personal Resilience® Questionnaire in the research project she has proposed for her dissertation in Ph.D. in College/Postsecondary Student Counsel and Personal Services program.

The measure in its entirety cannot be included in the write up the research: only sample items from the scale may be included.

Sincerely,

Amanda L. Gettier
Research Associate
Conner Partners
APPENDIX D

LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION FROM

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

AT NEW ORLEANS
March 3, 2005

Dr. Thomas Herbert
Chair, Human Subject Research
Southern University at New Orleans
CAMPUS

Dear Dr. Hebert:

I am a doctorial candidate in Counselor Education at Mississippi State University in Starkville, MS. My dissertation topic is “A Study of the Correlation or Personal Resiliency and Student Involvement of Nontraditional Commuter Students at a Historically Black University.” The purpose of this study is to enhance our understanding of African American, nontraditional, commuter, students and their level of involvement in campus events.

I am writing to request your approval to conduct this research with students at your university. This study will involve the completion of two enclosed anonymous surveys by non-traditional students enrolled in your undergraduate programs. After the purpose of the research is explained, students will be given the option of participating. The survey takes approximately 30 minutes to complete.

As a responsible researcher, I would not attempt any research that would negatively affect the university or the students. I feel that the research will have a positive impact on the university, in that the results of this study will be made available upon your request, may be used to guide decisions on how to optimize your students’ successful matriculation in college.

I would appreciate your positive consideration to this request. It would be helpful if you would provide a response as soon as possible, so that I may begin collecting the data immediately. If you have any questions, please contact me at (504) 340-2480.

Sincerely,

Adrell Lawrence Pinkney
APPENDIX E

LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION FROM INSTRUCTORS
Southern University at New Orleans
CAMPUS

Dear Instructor:

I am a doctoral candidate in Counselor Education at Mississippi State University in Starkville, MS. My dissertation topic is “A Study of the Correlation of Personal Resiliency and Student Involvement of Non-Traditional Commuter Students at a Historically Black University.” The purpose of this study is to enhance our understanding of African American, nontraditional, commuter, students and their level of involvement in campus events.

I am writing to request your approval to conduct this research with students in your class. The study will involve the completion of two enclosed surveys by nontraditional students enrolled in your undergraduate programs. After the purpose of the research is explained, students will be given the option of participating. The survey takes approximately 30 minutes to complete.

As a responsible researcher, I would not attempt any research that would negatively affect the university or your students. I feel that the research will have a positive impact on the students, in that they may come to understand that their in-class and out-of-class activities are valuable to their college experience. They may also start to realize their live changes have a positive effect on their decision to attend college. Results of this study will be made available upon your request.

I would appreciate your positive consideration to this request. It would be helpful if you would provide a response as soon as possible, so that I may begin collecting the data immediately. If you have any questions, please contact me at (504) 340-2489.

Sincerely,

Adrell Lawrence Pinkney
APPENDIX F

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE
Participant:

Your responses to this survey are anonymous; however, in an effort to track both the Student Demographic Questionnaire and the Personal Resiliency Questionnaire I will need the following tracking data.

Please indicate the last four digits of your social security number. *(Only one digit per box.)*

[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Please indicate the last four digits of your cell phone number. If you do not have a cell phone, please indicate 0000.

[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete this questionnaire by providing the information requested or by checking the appropriate blank. Please complete every item.

PERSONAL

2. Age: 1. 20 _____ 2. 21 _____ 3. 22 _____ 4. 23 _____ 24 and older _____
3. Ethnic Background: 1. Black/African American _____ 2. Other _____
5. Do you have any children?
   1. Yes _____ 2. No _____
7. Have you completed 12 or more semester hours?
   1. Yes _____ 2. No _____
8. Do you work more than a total of 30 hours per week (either on or off campus)?
   1. Yes _____ 2. No _____
9. Did you enroll in a college/university immediately after graduation from high school?
   1. Yes _____ 2. No _____
10. Classification:
11. Did either of your parents graduate from a four-year college/university?
    1. Yes _____ 2. No _____
ACADEMIC

Please indicate your response with one of the following options:

12. Ask your instructor for information related to a course you are taking (grades, make-up work, assignment, etc.).


13. Use a computer or word processor to prepare reports or papers.


14. Use a learning lab or center to improve study or academic skills (reading, writing, computer lab, etc.).


15. Memorized formulas, definitions, technical terms and concepts.


16. Asked a librarian or staff member for help in finding information on some topic.


17. Worked on a class assignment, project, or presentation with other students.


18. Take detailed notes during class.


19. Contribute to class discussion.


20. Explained material from a course to someone else (another student, friend, family).


21. Searched the World Wide Web or internet for information related to a course.

SOCIAL

22. Have you been on a date or group outing with a member of your class away from the University (movie, bowling, concert, dance, etc.)?


23. Communicate with classmates outside of the classroom (telephone, email, visits).


24. Serve as a participant in the homecoming coronation and/or attended any homecoming events.


25. Attended a Greek organization interest meeting, stomp show, or party.


26. Attend meeting of a campus club, departmental organization, or student government group.


27. Make friends whose interests are different from yours.


28. Supported classmates’ fundraisers, (purchased raffle tickets, candy, etc.).


29. Visit the university center’s (bowling alley, pool, game room).


30. Have you gone to lunch with a classmate?


31. Would you consider living in an apartment or dormitory if the university provided on-campus housing?

APPENDIX G

PROTOCOL CHECKLIST
## Protocol Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Packet included consent form, Student Demographic Questionnaire, Personal Resiliency Questionnaire scantron, pencil.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Informed consent form for study read by researcher.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Student instructed to provide the last four digits of their social security number and the last four digits of their telephone number.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Researcher provided instructions on how to complete the Student Demographic Questionnaire.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Students completed the Student Demographic Questionnaire. Researcher circulated among students to answer any questions and to make certain all questions were answered.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Researcher provided instructions for completion of the Personal Resiliency Questionnaire. Researcher circulated among the students to answer any questions and to ensure all questions were answered.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Researcher collected the Tracking Data Form, Student Demographic Questionnaire, the Personal Resiliency Questionnaire, and the scantron.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Personal Resiliency Questionnaires were mailed to Connor Partners for scoring.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Personal Resiliency Questionnaires and Student Demographic Questionnaires files were merged together.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Completed survey forms were kept in locked file cabinet.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX H

COVER LETTER OF INSTRUCTIONS
Survey Instructions

INTRODUCTION

I am a doctoral student at Mississippi State University in Starkville, Mississippi. I am requesting your participation in a study for my doctoral dissertation. The purpose of this study is to enhance our understanding of student involvement, and student resiliency; how they bounce back from changes in their lives.

Results of this study will be analyzed and the data will appear in the dissertation. However, your identity will not be revealed. Participation in this survey is strictly voluntary and you may discontinue at any time. Please take a moment to review and sign the consent form.

DIRECTIONS

Please provide the last four digits of your social security number, and the last four digits of your cell phone number. If you do not have a cell phone, please indicate 0000. Write only one digit per box.

Your questionnaire will be read by an electronic scanning device, so be careful in marking your response. Please use only a # 2 black lead pencil. Do not write any marks on the questionnaire outside the space provided for your answers. Erase cleanly any responses you want to change. Again, it is very important to answer all questions.

PERSONAL DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

This information is necessary to determine how college experiences vary, depending on student’s age, sex, year in college, whether they have a job, and so forth.

PERSONAL RESILIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is designed to assess several characteristics related to personal resilience, “how you bounce back from life changes”. The items do not have right or wrong answers. Your answers should reflect what you believe to be true. The usefulness of this survey depends on your thoughtful responses.

On the information data sheet provided please fill in the circle that best shows how much you agree or disagree with each item according to the scale below.

It is very important you answer all questions; if you are uncertain about what a question means, use your best judgment.

120
APPENDIX I

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM
Participant Consent Form

Dear Participant:

This survey is a research project by Adrell Pinkney at Mississippi State University. She will be conducting a study that will focus on personal resiliency and student involvement. Please sign below if you are willing to participate in this survey. A description of the research study follows:

**Title of Study:** A Study of the Correlation of Personal Resiliency and Student Involvement of Nontraditional Commuter Students at a Historically Black University

**Study Site:** Southern University at New Orleans

**Name of Researcher(s) & University affiliation:** Adrell L. Pinkney, Mississippi State University

**What is the purpose of this research project?** The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between resiliency and student involvement of nontraditional, African American, nontraditional, commuter students.

**How will this research be conducted?** As part of this research you will be asked to complete two questionnaires during one of our class sessions. The questionnaires will be analyzed to determine if there is a correlation between resiliency and student involvement.

**Are there any risks or discomforts to me because of my participation?** No risk is expected for this study. The researcher will be present as you complete the survey.

**Will this information be kept confidential?** All information will be kept confidential. Only the researcher will have access to any information collected.

**Who do I contact with research questions?** If you should have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact Adrell L. Pinkney at (504) 286-5395.

**What if I do not want to participate?** Please understand that participation is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and the you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

_________________________  Participant Signature  ___________  Date

_________________________  Investigator Signature  ___________  Date
APPENDIX J

PERSONAL RESILIENCY QUESTIONNAIRE

(SAMPLE ITEMS)
ConnersPartners did not provide the researcher a description of which survey items were correlated to each of the seven resilience indicators. The following items are a representation of randomly selected questions from the *PRQ*.

**Personal Resilience Questionnaire**  
**Sample Items**

Task that don’t have a simple or clear-cut solution are fun.

I use list to remind me of all the things that need to be done.

I prefer to stick to tried and true clothing styles.

One thing I’m really good at is making sense out of confusing situations.

I feel confused and indecisive when trying to make important decisions in my life.

You should always have a detailed plan before trying to overcome a complex problem.

My friends would gladly help with my transportation or offer a place for me to stay if I ever needed it.

I am not capable to do the things I’d like to do.

I am powerless to change the things in my life.

I am currently working on several things that I am committed to.