AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF BLACK ADOLESCENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF "EMPOWERED YOUTH PROGRAMS": AN ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

by

LISA LYNETTE SIMS

(Under the Direction of DERYL F. BAILEY)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of Black adolescent students regarding their academic and social performance in school by participating in Empowered Youth Programs which is an after-school enrichment program. If the students perceived their academic and social performance has improved because of their participation in Empowered Youth Programs, this strategy could be one way to help students in marginalized groups close the gaps in achievement and opportunity. The Empowered Youth Programs Impact Questionnaire was given as a pre-test and post-test to determine program impact. Results from this study, although statistically insignificant, showed that the participants in the Empowered Youth Programs perceived there was program impact regarding their academic performance. Additionally, male participants believed the program impacted their social performance, however; female participants did not perceive program impact regarding their social performance.

INDEX WORDS: Academic Achievement, After-School Programs, Black Adolescents, Empowered Youth Programs, Enrichment Programs, Social Performance

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my ancestors who paved the way for me to even have the opportunity to earn a doctorate so I can reach out and help others. I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to my great-grandmothers Mary Essie DeHaven Lee and Lillian Oates as well as my grandmother, Selma Sims, my grandfather, Raymond Sims and my sister Rhonda. I hope you all are smiling down on me from heaven and I pray that that I made you proud. Lastly, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to the students I served in the Empowered Youth Programs as well as all students who have not had their needs met because no one has listened to your voice. You are the reason why I am writing this dissertation. Keep your heads up and never let anyone tell you what you cannot accomplish! Always follow your dreams and do not let anyone stop you!

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Success in education continues to represent the primary avenue to economic and social stability for both the individual and the nation (Bailey, 2003; Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2010, 2007; Jones, 2007 Kentor & Lowe, 2011; McKinsey & Company, 2009; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003). President Barak Obama (2011) recently underscored the impact of a sound education stating that "an excellent education for all children is imperative for the United States to compete globally" because our nation stands to benefit from the individual success of our children. U.S. citizen's understanding of this success is often couched in the belief of the individual's ability to obtain the "American dream" and the belief that hard work begets opportunity and upward mobility (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2004). For Black adolescents, this success is often impeded by a myriad of individual and systemic factors such as teacher-student relationships, parent or caregiver student relationships, motivation, SES, and peer influence that can be linked to socioeconomic status as well as difficulties thriving in the traditional educational setting (Worley, 2007). Scholars (Bailey, 2003; Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2010, 2007; Jones, 2007 Kentor & Lowe, 2011; McKinsey & Company, 2009; The Education Trust, 2003, 2006) note that these factors contribute to a perpetual relationship between poor academic performance and low socioeconomic status. Thus, the very educational system designed to liberate instead becomes a roadblock to economic and social stability for certain individuals. For Black adolescents, learning to navigate the educational system must

become a priority if they are to break the cycle of educational failure and attain economic and social stability (Bailey, 2003; Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2010, 2007; Jones, 2007; Kentor & Lowe, 2011; McKinsey & Company, 2009; The Education Trust, 2003, 2006).

Helping Black adolescents navigate the educational system falls within the domain of social justice. Social justice "generally emphasize(s) fair and equitable access to societal resources that allow all groups to participate in society without threat to their physical and psychological safety" (Kenney & Romano, 2008). Social justice also considers how oppression and privilege, or lack thereof, affects not only clients, but also groups of people (Singh, Hofsess, Boyer, Kwong, Lau, McLain & Haggins, 2010). Goodman, Liang, Helms, Latta, Sparks, & Weintraub (2004) named six principles for social justice: a) on-going self-examination; b) sharing power; c) giving voice; d) facilitating consciousness raising; e) building strengths and f) leaving clients with tools for social change. Building on the foundation of the social justice principles, professionals working within the educational system could learn to understand and appreciate both the differences as well as the commonalities for cultures different from their own; in addition, the implementation of these principles allows for a recognition of how individuals representing different cultures or socioeconomic status have to navigate life in spite of their lack of privilege as oppressed members of our society.

Researchers (Arrendondo, Toporek, Brown, Jones, Locke, Sanchez and Stadler, 1996; Bass, 2012; Katz, 1985; Sue, Arrendondo and McDavis, 1992; Sue & Sue, 2008) further suggest the need to adopt a multicultural lens when working within the educational system explaining that the United States is quickly becoming a minority-majority country where Black and Latino/a will be the majority races. In spite of reports

that indicate the shift of the United States to a minority-majority country by 2045, many may still have a “monocultural and monolingual” view regarding differences in race, gender, religion, culture, nationality, creed, ethnicity, and sexual orientation (Sue, Arrendondo & McDavis, 1992, p. 478). In response to the shift of the United States becoming a minority-majority country, the American Psychological Association (APA) decided to develop and adopt the Guidelines on Multicultural Guidelines in 2002. The Multicultural Guidelines direct psychologists in the treatment of clients as well as becoming change agents to help organizations deal with the shift from a “monocultural and monolingual” (Sue, Arrendondo & McDavis, p. 478) view of the United States to one that values differences. The Multicultural Guidelines are as follows:

- Psychologists are encouraged to recognize that, as cultural beings, they may hold attitudes and beliefs that can detrimentally influence their perceptions of and interactions with individuals who are ethnically and racially different from themselves.
- Psychologists are encouraged to recognize the importance of multicultural sensitivity/responsiveness, knowledge, and understanding about ethnically and racially different individuals.
- As educators, psychologists are encouraged to employ the constructs of multiculturalism and diversity in psychological education.
- Culturally sensitive psychological researchers are encouraged to recognize the importance of conducting culture–centered and ethical psychological research among persons from ethnic, linguistic, and racial minority backgrounds.

- Psychologists strive to apply culturally–appropriate skills in clinical and other applied psychological practices.
- Psychologists are encouraged to use organizational change processes to support culturally informed organizational (policy) development and practices (APA, 2002, p. 382-392).

The commitment to social justice and multiculturalism constitutes a hallmark of counseling psychology (APA, 2002) given that counseling students are trained in that tradition to become effective when serving clients from minority and oppressed groups using both the Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research Practice and Organizational Change for Psychologists and the Social Justice principles (APA, 2002; Goodman, et al., 2004; Miller and Sendrowitz, 2011). Thus, having been trained in this tradition, counseling psychologists and counselors have the responsibility of promoting multicultural competency and social justice standards. Even though the original purpose of the Multicultural Guidelines and Social Justice principles was to make counseling psychologists and counselors aware of differences between themselves and the clients with whom they work, many scholars (Constantine, et al, 2007; Goodman,et al.; 2004; Hunsaker, 2007; Kenny, Horne, Orpinas & Reese, 2008; Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011; Singh, et al. , 2010; Vera & Speight, 2003) have encouraged counseling psychologists and counselors to be aware of the need for societal change on a systemic level. Adopting this type of awareness allows counseling psychologists and counselors to become agents of change with not only their clients, but also within the larger community.

Thus, counseling psychologists and counselors are in an excellent position to help those who are oppressed because of training that helps them understand how to serve

their clients' needs. The addition of standards that focus on multicultural competence and social justice represents another step in the process to truly help and not hinder those that are served (Hytten & Bettez, 2011; Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011; Vera & Speight, 2003). As part of understanding their client's needs, counseling psychologists and counselors need to become aware of any stereotypical views associated with their marginalized clients that could impede their ability to serve them. Furthermore, as counseling psychologists and counselors step outside of their offices to become involved in social justice those same stereotypical views could also negatively impact their understanding of the social justice dynamics for the community-at-large. For example, counseling psychologists and counselors who decide to advocate for social justice within the educational arena need to understand all of the factors that impact how Black, Latino/a, and low socioeconomic students perform in school and on standardized tests that serve as measures of student achievement (Vera & Speight, 2003). Equipped with this awareness and understanding, counseling psychologists and counselors could become advocates from a social justice perspective within the educational system for marginalized populations who may not have the power or privilege to help themselves (Singh, et.al, 2010; Vera & Speight, 2003).

Statement of the Problem

Counseling psychologists and counselors interested in being advocates for social justice within the educational system would need to understand the dynamics involved with student achievement as it pertains to the achievement gap and opportunity gap (Cobbold, 2010; Cahill, 2007; Fine, Burns, Payne & Torre, 2004). Both represent social injustices that counseling psychologists and counselors should attend to because both are

perceived symptoms of unjust treatment of Black adolescents within our educational system. To counter the negative impact of the achievement and opportunity gaps on the academic performance of students, legislators created *No Child Left Behind* (2001) to hold educators accountable for the academic achievement of all students, especially those from marginalized populations – students of color and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

While *No Child Left Behind* (2001) remains controversial, its original intent was to allow stakeholders, educators, parents, and the community, to compare rates of student achievement for every subgroup within a particular educational system. NCLB required states to be accountable regarding the achievement of all students no matter their race, socioeconomic status, special education placement or language ability (Harrison-Jones, 2007). The federal government mandated schools to show Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) by improving reading and mathematics scores of all students and closing the achievement gap. States use standardized tests to determine student achievement in grades three through twelve to ascertain AYP for which each state establishes the standards. Further, if a single group of students as noted above does not make the AYP standard, then the school or district must determine specific goals and accompanying strategies to help increase student achievement for that particular group(s) of students (Harrison-Jones, 2007).

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) analyzed data from each state regarding students' academic progress. Their longitudinal study starting from 1996 indicated an academic achievement gap between White and African-American students that has persisted since that time (NAEP, 2010; Viadero, 2010). According to the

US Department of Education (2010), White students continue to outperform African-American students by at least ten percent or more on a variety of academic outcomes including critical reading, writing, and math (NAEP, 2010; US Department of Education, 2003). Given that these academic areas represent the foundation for all other subject areas, achievement gaps associated with them would easily translate to achievement gaps in other courses as well thereby limiting African-American students success in both secondary and postsecondary environments (Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2010, 2007; The Education Trust, 2003, 2006). This, in turn, perpetuates the opportunity gap for these students (Cobbold, 2010).

Given the emphasis on social justice in the training of counseling psychologists, counseling psychology programs and their graduates are well equipped to address systemic injustice such as under achievement of marginalized and vulnerable populations (Miller & Sendrowitz, 2011). Thus, it becomes imperative for both counselors and counseling psychologists to use their position within the educational system to counter the impact of achievement and opportunity gaps. Both counselors and counseling psychologists have an opportunity to narrow the achievement gap between Black and White students through research and the development of programs that provide services and resources to Blacks, as well as other underserved populations (Chen-Hayes, Saud Maxwell & Bailey, 2009; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). Academic enrichment programs that specifically serve marginalized populations represent programs dedicated to this purpose.

Critical to an academic enrichment program's success is an alignment between program components and its goal to serve social justice by narrowing the participants' achievement and opportunity gaps (Chen-Hayes, et al., 2009; Holcomb-McCoy, 2007).

Usually, program evaluation involves data related to the program and academic and social performance, but given the Multicultural Guidelines and principles of social justice, counseling psychologists should be aware that their perception or their staff's perception of program effectiveness may be limited by their culture and/or socioeconomic background (APA, 2002). Thus, counseling psychologists and counselors should find it necessary to solicit participant/parent/ guardian perceptions as part of the program evaluation thus giving a voice to program participants (Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2010, 2007; Bailey & Paisley, 2004).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of an academic and social enrichment program, Empowered Youth Programs, on participants' academic achievement through an exploration of their academic and social perceptions. Furthermore, Empowered Youth Programs serves many Black and other marginalized students and while its founder and director is a counseling professional of color, most of the EYP staff represent a different cultural and socioeconomic background than participants; therefore, exploring participants' perceptions of the relationship between their participation in an academic and social enrichment program and their academic and social performance in school represent critical pieces of the evaluation process because it gives participants, Black and other marginalized students a voice. More specifically, the researcher will explore the academic and social perceptions from a sample of high school students (grades 9 -12) in the Empowered Youth Programs. Otherwise stated, if participants' academic and social perceptions are positive as a result of their participation in EYP, their academic achievement could also be positively affected which, in turn,

could help narrow the achievement gap that exists between students of color and their White counterparts (Guay, Larose, & Boivin, 2004).

Hypotheses

There are four general hypotheses this study seeks to investigate:

Hypothesis 1: Participants of Empowered Youth Programs will report positive impact in perception of their academic performance.

Hypothesis 2: Participants of Empowered Youth Programs will report positive impact in perceptions of their social performance.

Hypothesis 3: Participants of Empowered Youth Programs will report positive impact on their academic performance by gender.

Hypothesis 4: Participants of Empowered Youth Programs will report positive impact on the social performance by gender.

Theoretical Frameworks

The two theories used by the current study to drive the research include Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1996) and Empowerment Theory (Rappaport, 1981, 1984, 1987). In addition, the current study referenced research that alludes to –an additional theory outside of Social Learning Theory and Empowerment Theory to provide a foundation for their work with students. The additional theory discussed is Paulo Friere's Empowerment Theory (1970).

Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1996) suggests that learning occurs through modeling of behavior. Unfortunately, studies could not be found regarding the application of Social learning Theory to Black adolescents. However, Mihalic and Elliott (1997) indicated that Black adolescents and adolescents can understand how intimate

relationships are supposed to look by observing the intimate relationships of their parents. Further, the study suggests that adult intimate relationships of Black adolescents and adolescents can be impacted depending on what the observed from their parents.

Empowerment Theory (Rappaport, 1981, 1987) as a construct, where depending on the group on which it is being used, can take on "different forms" (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995, p. 573). However, Chinman and Linney (1998) indicated that Empowerment Theory can be utilized with adolescent populations but they did not specifically indicate how the theory is received by Black adolescents. Chinman and Linney (1998) also indicated that use of empowerment is a natural progression of growth for all adolescents. Watts, Griffith and Abdul-Adil (1999) indicated that Freire's Empowerment Theory (1970) was influenced from the Black social movement. Further, Guiterrez (1990) indicated that Black women deal with the issues of racism and sexism and that Empowerment Theory helps them to deal with the issues of powerlessness. However, there was no indication regarding how the theory would help adolescent Black females and there were no articles that specifically addressed how Empowerment Theory is used on Black males. So, maybe the current study will help mend the gap in research regarding how both Empowerment Theory and Social Learning Theory can work on Black adolescent populations. A description for Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1986) and Empowerment Theory (Freire, 1970; Rappaport, 1981, 1984) will follow.

Social Learning Theory

Bandura's (1986) Social Learning Theory dictates that learning occurs through modeling from observational learning (Demirbas & Yagbasan, 2006). Observational learning takes place by gaining knowledge by observing other people (modeling) and the

behavior learned can be positive or negative (Bandura, 1986). Cognitive processes must occur in order for the learning to take place including attending to the model's behavior, encoding what is observed, and retaining the information for recall (Bandura, 1986; Demirbas & Yagbasan, 2006). Although students can learn subjects by direct teaching of skill in school settings, they can become competent in areas such as problem-solving or study skills from observing other students or their teacher and it is nonessential for the skills to be taught directly (Bandura, 1986; Demirbas & Yagbasan, 2006). Learning is ongoing as long as cognitive processes are utilized (Bandura, 1986; Demirbas & Yagbasan, 2006; Shaffer, 1999).

Another component of social learning theory is the notion of reciprocal determinism (Bandura, 1986). Reciprocal determinism describes how human development replicates an interface among active person, behavior and environment (Bandura, 1986). Further, interactions between persons, behaviors and the environment are bi-directional meaning each can influence the other (Bandura, 1986).

Empowerment Theory

When thinking of the word empowerment, some researchers consider the perception of power as one definition (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995; Zimmerman & Warschausky, 1998) and others feel empowerment deals with the ability to free oppressed communities on the sociopolitical level (Carr, 2003). Guiterrez (1995, p. 229) defined empowerment as "the process of increasing personal, interpersonal or political power so that individuals, families and communities can take action to improve their situations" (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Wyatt, 2009). Empowered Youth Programs uses this theory to help students and parents to

improve their situation by empowering them to understand and navigate the educational system to their advantage (Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2010; Bailey & Paisley, 2004). Feminists and multicultural theorists were innovators regarding the use of empowerment in counseling (Lee, 1991; Lee & Hipolito-Delgado, 2007; Lyddon, 1998). Feminists analyzed counseling especially in instances where women were being oppressed (Marecek, 2001) just as multiculturalists analyzed how oppression affected marginalized people especially people of color (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007). The empowerment theory was developed based on Paulo Freire's Education Theory (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007).

Paulo Freire's Educational Theory

Much of the information regarding Paulo Freire's Empowerment Theory comes from secondary sources (Carr, 2003; Cohen, 1988; Dugan, 2003; Guiterrez, 1995; Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007; Moreau, 2005; Peterson et al., 2002, Zimmerman, 1995) Paulo Freire developed a literacy campaign in his efforts to help other people in his village change from a feudal system to one of democracy (Cohen, 1988). Freire's goal was to raise consciousness of the villagers by helping them learn to read. The government in Brazil imprisoned Freire because of his efforts (Cohen, 1988). After his imprisonment, Freire left Brazil at the government's request and moved to Chile during which time he wrote the Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970) and where he campaigned for political change through literacy (Cohen, 1988). Friere believed that if villagers learned to read, they would be able to look at their lives and understand their oppression which in turn could lead to social change (Cohen, 1988). His educational theory fundamentally asserted people needed to "label their world, assess it and then act as an agent to change it"

(Cohen, 1988, p. 6; Freire, 1970).The foundation of Empowerment Theory, rooted in Paulo Freire's educational theory, focused on helping and liberating oppressed and marginalized people.

The underlying premise of Freire's Empowerment Theory suggests that oppressed people realize their state of oppression and identify the obstacles of their oppression (Dugan, 2003). According to Freire (1970), oppressed groups or individuals need strategies to overcome the oppression they face. Instead of marginalized students being active listeners, they participate in contributing their own knowledge on how to solve their problems that Freire called "problem-posing" (Dugan, 2003; Freire, 1970). Problem –posing allows the marginalized students empowerment for critical thinking and solving their own problems through this process (Dugan, 2003; Freire, 1970). By engaging in the educational process, oppressed students empower themselves (Dugan, 2003). Freire's Empowerment Theory suggests that empowerment can occur on three levels: the personal (Zimmerman, 1995), the community or organizational (Peterson, et. al, 2002) and the sociopolitical (Moreau, 1990).This dissertation will only focus on personal empowerment.

The purpose of personal empowerment, just as with ethnic identity, is to build three constructs including critical consciousness, positive identity and participation in social action (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007). Critical consciousness deals with the fact marginalized people and communities place attention on the oppression which they experience (Guiterrez, 1995; Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007). By being attentive to the oppression which marginalized people experience, they realize there is misinformation about them in dominant society and they rise above the misinformation by discarding it

(Hanna et al, 2000; Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007). Hypothetically, those who do not experience critical consciousness can survive in an oppressive society but do not have the skill set to understand the systematic measures that are in place to deceive them. This inability to understand systemic measures that work to deceive marginalized people inhibits them from accurately perceiving the world that oppresses them (Guiterrez, 1995; Hanna, et. al; Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007).

Oppressed people must ascertain positive identity (Carr, 2003; Hipolito-Delgado, 1995). When the marginalized group or individual establishes a positive identity, it lends itself to ignoring how the dominant culture views them and instead identifies positive characteristics and merits that lead to a positive outlook and valuable legitimacy to their existence. According to Carr (2003), the most important piece to personal empowerment is social action (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007). Social action allows oppressed people to work to free themselves from their oppression, which leads to gaining control to effect change socially and politically. This particular theory is a foundation of Empowerment Theory (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007). Empowered Youth Programs helped participants understand the perceptions and attitudes people have about them, help participants rise above the perceptions society has placed upon them, and help them to have a positive identity regarding their educational pursuits (Bailey, & Paisley, 2004).

Delimitations

There are several delimitations worth noting in this study. First, this study will use a sample of Black high school students who participated in Empowered Youth Programs from 2010 to 2011. Thus, the results cannot be generalized to all Black adolescents participating in an academic and social enrichment program. Second, this study does not

attempt to make any comparisons between student academic and social self-perceptions and their grades or state/district test scores. Finally, the current study does not consider graduation rates.

Assumptions

It is assumed that use of qualitative surveys can help the researcher understand how participants are impacted by programming in an after-school enrichment program (Tranakos Howe, 2000).

It is assumed that program participants completed the Empowered Youth Programs Impact Questionnaire (EIQ) honestly and were not answering the questions attempting to impress program developers or program staff.

Definitions

This section will review definitions of terms that are necessary to understand for this study:

Achievement gap: According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2011), "An achievement gap occurs when one group of students outperforms another group and the difference in average scores for the two groups is statistically significant."

Adequate yearly progress: "Adequate yearly progress is a measure of year-to-year student achievement on statewide assessments. Each state comes up with its own definition on what it means to make AYP. Definitions must answer three questions: the percentage of students that must be proficient or above when tested in reading and mathematics (yearly in grades 3-8 and once in high school); whether or not at least 95 percent of students in those grades participated in the assessments; and, the additional

academic indicator (e.g., graduation rates for high schools) that will be measured" (Ed Data Express: Definitions, n.d.).

After-school program: An after-school program is an extension of the school day and provides homework assistance and enrichment activities that are not readily available within the at-large community (Fleming, 2011; Leuhmann, 2009; Walker, Kronick, & Diambra, 2007).

Culture: According to Multicultural Guidelines (APA, 2003; p. 380), "culture is defined as the belief systems and value orientations that influence customs, norms, practices and social institutions including psychological processes (language, caretaking practices, media, educational systems) and organizations (media, educational systems).

Cultural Sensitivity: According to Ridley, Mendoza, Kanitz, Angermeier and Zenk (1994, p. 130) cultural sensitivity is defined as the ability of counselors to acquire, develop and actively use an accurate cultural perceptual schema in the course of multicultural counseling."

Enrichment Program: An enrichment program is defined as an out-of-school program that includes academic enrichment, tutoring, mentoring, career services, and leadership activities while maintaining a relationship with district educators regarding the participant's progress (Bailey, 2003; Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2010; Bailey & Paisley, 2004).

Multiculturalism: According to the Multicultural Guidelines (APA, 2003, p. 380), "Multiculturalism, in an absolute sense, recognizes the broad scope of dimensions of race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability and other cultural dimensions".

Opportunity gap: Latino, Black and low income students are not as likely to have access to similar resources available to their White counterparts that help increase their academic achievement including access to academic rigor, teachers with experience, early educational opportunities and school counselors (Flores, 2007; Shah, 2011).

Social Justice: Miller and Sendrowitz (2011) defined social justice as, "the causal link between affect, personal relevance and perceptions of just or unjust treatment and the processes associated with the development of factors that shape an individual's assessment regarding the justice or injustice of a specific situation" (p. 159).

Summary

Earning an education remains foundational to economic and social stability, both individually and nationally (Kentor & Lowe, 2011; McKinsey & Company, 2009). In addition, obtaining a good education has long represented a critical component of the "American Dream" by succeeding both economically and socially. Unfortunately, the "American Dream" has not become reality to many marginalized students including Black adolescents in the Empowered Youth Programs.

Since it is the responsibility of counselors and counseling psychologists to promote multicultural competency and social justice, helping marginalized students and particularly, Black adolescents to succeed both economically and socially (Bailey, 2003; Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2010, 2007; Jones, 2007; Kentor & Lowe, 2011; McKinsey & Company, 2009; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003). One way for Black adolescents to succeed is to perform well in school. However, opportunity gaps that exist between Black adolescents and their White counterparts continue to prevent Black adolescents from succeeding in school (Chen-Hayes, Saud Maxwell & Bailey, 2009; Holcomb-McCoy,

2007). *No Child Left Behind* of 2001 was purposed to help close the achievement gap by making schools and school districts accountable for helping all perform well in school. Nevertheless, instead of closing the gap in achievement; it continues to persist (Harrison-Jones, 2007). Although there is no one reason that the achievement gap continues to persist, one major reason is that marginalized Black adolescents do not have the same access to resources to help them be successful in school as their White counterparts causing an opportunity gap (Flores, 2007; Levin, 2007; O'Keefe, Scheopner & Scheopner, 2009; Shah, 2011). One way the opportunity gap can close is by providing resources for marginalized Black adolescents such as after-school programs.

After-school programs can be one way to help marginalized Black adolescents to close the achievement gap by providing enrichment opportunities for them (deKanter, 2001; Gardner, Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2009; Lauer, Akiba, Wilkerson, Apthorp, Snow & martin-Glenn, 2006; Luehmann, 2009). However, the evaluation outcomes for after-school programs yielded mixed results, meaning the results showed both positive and negative impacts for Black adolescents, which caused a problem in understanding the impact of after-school programs on improving academic outcomes for Black adolescents. When the results for after-school programs are mixed, it can cause a problem especially if Black adolescents are attending these programs to improve their academic or social performance (Granger, 2008). The purpose of the current study is to explore the perceived impact that Empowered Youth Programs have on its participants' academic and social performance. However, most of the after-school programs focused on academic outcomes and not social outcomes making the current research study relevant.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

Research indicates that the United States has failed to educate some of its students to the same high standards as other countries as indicated by the achievement gap that exists between Black adolescents and their White counterparts (Shockley, 2011; Viadero, 2000). Scholars (Jeynes, 2007; Lewis & Kim, 2008; National Center for Education Statistics, 2007, 2011; Rowan, Hall & Haycock, 2010; Viadero, 2000) have discussed issues surrounding this achievement gap while others (Flores, 2007; Levin, 2007; O'Keefe, Scheopner & Scheopner, 2009; Shah, 2011) have debated the issue regarding the opportunity gap by underscoring the lack of or access to resources that seem readily available to White children or more affluent students.

However, there is one opportunity that is available for Black adolescents that could counter the impact of achievement and opportunity gaps on their academic and social performance as well as serving as a bridge between the schools and the community – academic enrichment programs. Such programs afford students the opportunity to compete on the same level as their White counterparts (deKanter, 2001; Gardner, Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2009; Lauer, Akiba, Wilkerson, Apthorp, Snow & martin-Glenn, 2006; Luehmann, 2009). To ensure their effectiveness, academic enrichment programs need to be evaluated to discern their effectiveness regarding improvement in the areas of academic and social performance for their participants (Apsler, 2009; Dietel, 2009; Lauer, Akiba, Wilkerson, Apthorp, Snow & Martin-Glenn, 2009).

Typically, enrichment program evaluations would include the participant's academic progress, discipline record, and possibly, their participation in school activities; however, the evaluation process may need to include another dimension, the student's voice, given that the ability to compete in the academic arena not only stems from the student's academic and social performance, but their perceptions regarding that performance (Guay & Vallerand, 1997; Pershey, 2010; Stringer & Heath, 2008; Zirkel, 2005).

For the purpose of this study, a review of the literature necessitates a need to understand the history associated with the achievement and opportunity gaps, an overview of academic enrichment programs dedicated to minimizing these gaps, and the evaluation of these programs especially in the area of student perceptions. To understand the impact of both the achievement and opportunity gaps on the educational experiences of Black adolescents necessitates a brief review will ensue of some of the pivotal cases and legislation that impacted the history of education as it relates to this population.

A Brief History of Education Relative to the Experiences of Black Adolescents

At times, equality and equity appeared to be the emphasis in the United States by attempting to provide Blacks the opportunity to better themselves with a sound education (Spring, 2001; Zinn, 2009). However, there have been several instances, both historically and currently, where equality and equity did not translate in its purest form which was making education available to all without the use of racism, prejudice, and discrimination (Spring, 2001). Unfortunately, the history of educating Black adolescents suggests a constant battle for social justice that extended far beyond the educational arena. Pieces of our history that exemplify these battlegrounds include: the illegality of forced immigrant

children to attend school in the southern United States (Bullock, 1970; Jeynes, 2007; Spring, 2001; Wilson, 1977), Black slaves being punished for learning to read (Butchart, 2010; Spring, 2001), the passing of *Plessey v. Ferguson* (1896) which mandated the constitutionality of separate, but equal facilities for Blacks (Greenberg, 1994), and the reactions of White Americans concerning the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas (1954)* Supreme Court ruling with riots and killings (Spring, 2001). Given this history, researchers suggest (Butchart, 2010; Jeynes, 2007; Jones, 2007; Spring, 2001; Thernstrom & Thernstom, 2003) that racism and cultural dominance represent key factors involved in molding and shaping education in the United States.

This historical context is not comprehensive of all the events or experiences that occurred regarding education of Blacks in the United States. Further, it should be noted that this review does not include all peoples and groups who experienced inequality and inequity in education; including other people of color and women. This historical framework being presented will only discuss the educational inequality and inequity towards Blacks in the United States historically and in present day. A discussion of the history surrounding Black adolescents and education is necessary so that it can be understood that the discrepancy in educational attainment did not begin in recent years but rather, has been a problem since slavery (Ratner, 2008; Spring, 2001). Further, this section will highlight and underscore a portion of the most significant events that occurred in the United States regarding the inequality and inequity of Blacks and their education as well as exploring their attitudes towards education. Thus, the question regarding the need for academic enrichment programs in the present day can be answered by reviewing the history.

Education of Blacks in the Northern and Southern United States During Antebellum

According to Graff (2011), the act of forced immigration represented a traumatic experience for the Africans asserting that removing people from their homeland, transporting them to another land of which they were unfamiliar, treating them as if they were inferior, and forcing them to do manual labor without compensation was distressing. In addition, preventing forced immigrants the opportunity to receive an education or an education that is equal to what White children received was damaging to enslaved children, and although there were differences in how the northern states and the southern states approached the education of Black adolescents or lack thereof, the process remained disenfranchising for them (Graff, 2011).

According to Jeynes (2007), education during forced immigration appeared different in the northern United States versus the southern United States. Additionally, Short (1986) indicated that if any educational training of Blacks in the southern United States only benefitted the enslavers by making forced immigrants better workers; thus, education did not represent an opportunity to help them with their own personal development. Bullock (1970) and Wilson (1977) pointed to the fact that Black adolescents did not have the opportunity to attend school in the southern United States because it was forbidden by law. However, in the northern states, Black adolescents were allowed the opportunity to attend schools sponsored by religious groups (Alley, 2002; Bullock, 1970; Gundaker, 2007; Jeynes, 2007; Schiller, 2008). Schiller (2008) explained that these religious groups believed that reading would help forced immigrants be introduced to their God; thus, teaching forced immigrants to read represented a self-serving act of these religious groups. Moreover, scholars (Alley, 2002; Gundaker, 2007;

Jeynes, 2007; Loveland, 1999; Miller, 1996) indicated that forced immigrants only learned Bible passages that encouraged their oppression which did not show equality or fairness even though they had the opportunity to attend school in the northern United States.

Since formal education for Black adolescents was forbidden in the southern states, there was a disparity in the literacy rate between Black adolescents in the northern states versus those in the southern states. Wilson (1977) indicated that the literacy rate for Black adolescents in the southern states was less than 10% mainly because many of those who owned chattel slaves turned their backs on educating them; however, there were some owners who felt that it would benefit Black slaves to learn how to read the Bible (Alley, 2002; Jeynes, 2007; Loveland, 1999; Miller, 1996). On the other hand, the literacy rate in the northern states was much higher among Black adolescents. According to Bergman and Bergman (1969) the literacy rates for Blacks during the time that chattel slavery ranged from 64% to 97% in the northern states with those rates being higher the further north the Black adolescents resided from the southern states. For example, Bergman and Bergman (1969) indicated the literacy rate for Black adolescents in Providence Rhode Island was 97% but on the other hand the literacy rate in Baltimore, Maryland was 64% for Black adolescents. Following the Emancipation Proclamation, access to education became possible for Black adolescents via the Freedmen's Bureau; as a result of these schools, Black literacy rates in the south climbed from 7% to 30% before the Compromise of 1877 which rescinded any gains made by Blacks after the Civil War. State governments took back control of educational systems and either closed schools for

Blacks or operated dual school systems institutionalizing the practice of segregation (Alley, 2002; Jeynes, 2007; Loveland, 1999; Miller, 1996).

Influence of Segregation and Integration on the Education of Black Adolescents

According to Zinn (2009), segregation not only represented a repressive act, but an impetus for racial discrimination towards Blacks as well. Segregation become rampant in the southern United States; however, the northern states segregated Blacks in religious centers, schools, housing, and businesses as well as disenfranchised them by making Blacks unable to sit on juries, to act as witnesses or to exercise the right to vote (White, 1969). *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) deemed segregation constitutional as long as the facilities and services provided were equal to those of Whites. However, researchers (Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Morris, 2008; White, 1969) emphasized that such equality between schools for Black and White children rarely existed given that schools for Black adolescents often lacked heat and fell easily to disrepair given their poor construction; nevertheless, Blacks continued to learn in spite of those conditions.

Douglass (1845) alluded to the fact that segregation also had a negative emotional impact on Black adolescents because their separation from White children due to the color of their skin may have caused Black adolescents to have low self-worth. Furthermore, some Black integrationists would send their children to all White schools to protest segregation orders, however; educators would not allow the children access to classrooms or to instruction and sometimes children were removed from school grounds by force (White, 1969). All of these experiences contributed to what Douglass (1845) referred to when discussing the negative emotional impacts of segregation on Black adolescents.

In spite of these negative emotional impacts, many Blacks supported segregation and opposed integration after the passing of *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* (1954). Researchers (Jeynes, 2007; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Zirkel, 2005) indicated that many Blacks did not believe making segregation unconstitutional would magically make anyone, in particular Whites, think differently of Black adolescents. Moreover, some Black parents believed that removing their children from segregated schools where they received support from staff who looked like them to schools where White teachers may show prejudice towards them was disheartening, especially with the thought that the prejudiced attitudes towards their children could damage Black adolescents' self-worth (Butchart, 2010; Morris, 2008; White, 1969; Zirkel, 2005).

As predicted by many Black parents, after *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* (1954), Whites still did not support the court decision. As Black adolescents attempted to integrate all White schools, they were met with riots and violence exemplified by the nine Black teenagers that attempted to integrate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas now referred to as the Little Rock Nine (Howard, 1979; Jeynes, 2007; Zinn, 2009). Howard (1979) also indicated that the United States Supreme Court had to deliver an opinion stating that Black adolescents should not be the victims of violence or impede their right to attend school. Once the United States Supreme Court delivered their opinion (Howard, 1979), White parents started to pull their children out of inner city schools causing White flight and the resegregation of these schools; this action resulted in a lack of resources and opportunities for children in low socioeconomic geographic areas and minority majority schools (Nichols, 2005).

Although the United States Supreme Court decided in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, KS* (1954) that separate was not equal, there were states that did not comply with the decision. According to Logue (2008) and Perlstein (2002), Mississippi was one of those states that did not comply with the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, KS* (1954) decision. Perlstein added that Mississippi had the most inferior education in the United States. Moreover, the state of Mississippi continued to give Black adolescents an even more inferior education especially regarding funding; whereas, White students were allocated approximately $30.00 per student and Black adolescents were allocated 76 cents for each Black student (Cobb, 2011). Believing the disbursement of funds was unjust, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Southern Leadership Christian Conference (SCLC), Congress for Racial Equality (CORE) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) joined forces and decided to develop Freedom Summer in 1964 (Chilcoat & Ligon, 1998; Cobb, 2011; Jones, 2004; Logue, 2008; Perlstein, 2002).

Initially, the purpose of the Mississippi Freedom Summer (Freedom Summer) was to draw attention to the racial injustices found in Mississippi which also included voter suppression, violence towards Blacks as well as an inferior education for Black adolescents (Cobb, 2011; Jones, 2004). However, the NAACP, SCLC, CORE and SNCC developed the Freedom Summer as a six week program to help Black adolescents learn to critically think about the different injustices that were occurring against them through Mississippi (Cobb, 2011; Logue, 2008; Perlstein, 2002). In the subsequent years, the Freedom Summer program spread all over the country and eventually settled in Los Angeles in 1965 with the Black Panther Party (Perlstein, 2002). Perlstein added that the

Black Panther Party expanded the Freedom Summer to not only educate children, but also adults. Although all of the Freedom Summer programs taught their students the art of critical thinking, the Black Panther Party's approach was expanded to include challenging authority regarding the inequities Black people faced in the 1960's (Perlstein, 2002). While the Freedom Summer movement eventually faded, the fact that the Freedom Summer program encouraged its students to think critically about the social injustices they faced helped them develop a resiliency despite the inequities that occurred in their lives (Cobb, 2011; Logue, 2008; Perlstein, 2002). In addition, Freedom Summer represented a grass roots movement led by Black organizations dedicated to helping Black adolescents attain access to a quality education in the face of gross negligence on the part of state governments (Fleming, 2011; Leuhmann, 2009; Walker, Kronick, & Diambra, 2007).

Thus, the history surrounding the education of Black adolescents demonstrates a constant barrage of factors such as racism, inequity and inequality contributed to the reality of both the achievement gap and opportunity gap as they relate to the educational experience; Black adolescents suffered to receive an education in the United States whether during forced immigration (Graff, 2011; Shor, 1986; Spring, 2001; Zinn, 2009), reconstruction following the Civil War, or the enactment of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (1954) (Butchart, 2010; Morris, 2008; Spring, 2001; White, 1969; Zirkel, 2005). The history of Blacks in education reveals that the educational experience for Black adolescents has fallen short both academically and emotionally; consistently, Black adolescents were either not taught at all (Bullock, 1970; Wilson, 1977) or did not receive the same curriculum as White children (Shor,1986; Jeynes, 2007); emotionally,

Black adolescents have experienced a high degree of stress relative to their educational experience – for some, forced segregation and for others, integration - because in either case, Black adolescents did not have the privilege of a safe, supportive learning environment (Butchart, 2008; Douglass, 1849; Hooks, 1994; Morris, 2008; White, 1969).

The Status of Black Education After Brown v. Topeka Board of Education (1954)

Many scholars (Blanchett, Mumford & Beachum, 2005; Guinier, 2004; Lyons & Chesley, 2004; Nichols, 2005; Orfield & Lee, 2004; Zirkel, 2005; Zirkel & Cantor, 2004) contributed to the literature regarding the progress of *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* (1954) during the fifty year anniversary of the decision. A major piece of *the Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* (1954) was that there would be greater access to resources and equity in educational experiences for Black adolescents; however, many believe, the opposite has been true for too many Black adolescents (Lyons & Chesley, 2004). Moreover, fifty years after *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* (1954), Black adolescents as a group continue to lag behind their White counterparts in reading and in mathematics on standardized tests that are required because of *No Child Left Behind* (2001) (NCES, 2007; Rowan, Hall & Haycock, 2010).

President George W. Bush signed *No Child Left Behind* ([NCLB], 2001) into law with the premise to close the achievement gap between students of color, English Language Learners, students with low SES and their White counterparts. Irvine and Irvine (2007) indicated that it appeared NCLB would benefit all students, particularly, Black students because of its accountability requirements mandating all students achieve at the proper levels set by each state. In addition, no improvement in student achievement or the achievement gap since the passing of NCLB (Irvine & Irvine 2007).Irvine and

Irvine (2007) suggested that NCLB indirectly added to the low achievement of Black students because non-performing schools may not attract quality teachers. Further emphasizing the fact that Black students were twice as likely assigned ineffective teachers (Irvine & Irvine, 2007; Sanders & Rivers, 1996), inexperienced teachers (Haycock, Jerald & Huang, 2001; Irvine & Irvine, 2007) and teachers assigned to areas of instruction in which they are not certified (Haycock, 2002; Irvine & Irvine, 2007). Thus, suggesting NCLB contributed to low achievement of Black students because they were more than likely to attend schools that are non-performing and subjected to low-level curriculum which focus on test preparation rather than a skill-set (Irvine & Irvine, 2007).

Responding the persistence of the achievement gap, President Barack Obama signed *Race to the Top* on February 17, 2009 attempting to reward those states who developed innovative programs that increased student achievement and graduation rates (Callahan, n.d.). In addition, the premise of *Race to the Top* (2009) was to expand charter schools. However, according to Rock (2011), charter schools were not providing better services than traditional schools, thus; the problem continues to remain regarding the achievement gap and the opportunity gap with the possibility that after-school enrichment programs like Empowered Youth Programs could bridge the gap for Black students.

Brown v. Topeka Board of Education (1954), *No Child Left Behind* (2001) and *Race to the Top* (2009) represent a court decision and legislation intended to make educational opportunities equitable for all students, however; evidence exists that this does not represent the educational reality for all of our students (Blanchett, Mumford & Beachum, 2005; Carroll, Fulton, Abercrombie & Yoon; Nichols, 2004; Zirkel & Cantor, 2004). Carroll, Fulton, Abercrombie & Yoon (2004) emphasized that schools whose

majority population includes mainly Black, Latino/a and/or a high number of low-socioeconomic status students tend to have high teacher turnover, high number of substitute teachers, and poor physical facilities. Moreover, Zirkel and Cantor (2005) indicated that these same schools are often under-funded and lack equal access to resources that will help all students succeed. Carroll, et al. (2004) provided some solutions to help deal with the inequality in education such as an in depth understanding of the inadequacies associated with these schools, creating better procedures for funding all schools in an equitable manner, as well as hiring teachers who are qualified to teach in a particular subject area with proper licensure. Other researchers (Bailey, 2003; Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2007; David, 2010; Neuman, 2011) contend that academic enrichment programs could also play a role in helping Black adolescents overcome the historical educational disparities which have resulted in the current achievement gap and opportunity gaps.

Academic Enrichment Programs

In an attempt to close the achievement and opportunity gaps that exist for Black adolescents, schools and community organizations have implemented three different types of enrichment programs to improve student performance including: 1) after school programs, 2) extended day or full-service programs, and 3) out of school programs (Dryfoos, 2008; Fleming, 2011; Leuhmann, 2009; Walker, Kronick, & Diambra, 2007). After school programs provide homework assistance, recreational activities, and meals while extended day or full-service programs represent an extension of the school day or school year and are often housed within a particular educational institution (Dryfoos, 2008; Fleming, 2011); furthermore, this type of program often partners with community

agencies to provided additional support in the form of mental and physical health services, college visitations, and special leadership programs (Leuhmann, 2009; Walker, Kronick, & Diambra, 2007).

According to Neuman (2011), after-school programs have been a pivotal part of the education enrichment and continue to be an important component today. After-school programs were first designed to provide a safe-haven for students during after-school hours because of the increased risk of misbehavior and criminal activity (David, 2010; Gottfredson, Cross, & Soule', 2007; Gardner, Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2009; Gottfredson, Cross, Wilson, Rorie & Connell, 2010; Neuman, 2011). Additionally, Gottfredson, Cross, and Soule', (2007) Kreider and Raghupathy (2010) and David (2010), stated that afterschool programs assisted in the social development of children such as how to work well together. Black adolescents tend to have difficulty compared to their White counterparts to adjust in school socially, however; Black female students tend to fare better than Black males (Dixon and Muhammad;

Although after-school programs were formed out of concern for children's welfare during non-school hours, they later branched out to incorporate educational opportunities (Afterschool Alliance, 2008; David, 2010; Gottfredson, Cross, & Soule', 2007; Neuman, 2011). Additionally, according to the Afterschool Alliance (2008) and Halpern (2000), the gap of time that occurs when students are released from school and when parents return home from work represents a critical time when students seem most susceptible to commit crimes, experiment with alcohol and other drugs, as well as participate in sexual activity. Although after-school programs continue to serve the needs of working parents by providing a safe haven after-school, increased obligation of

federally mandated accountability standards of No Child Left Behind of 2002 has shifted the focus for many after-school programs given that after-school hours represents additional time to provide children with different enrichment activities (Afterschool Alliance, 2008; Armstrong & Armstrong, 2004; Olatokunbo & Cooper, 1999; Gardener, Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2009; Gottfredson, Cross, et al, 2010)

The Afterschool Alliance (2008) also added that after-school programs are necessary not only to keep children safe, but also to provide additional academic enrichment for those students failing to meet adequate yearly progress in school. Moreover, Gardner, Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2009) suggested that after-school programs could possibly offset the injustices occurring in schools in the United States by helping narrow the achievement and opportunity gaps that exist between marginalized students and non-marginalized students. Thus, many after-school programs from grassroots, school-based and national programs have adopted a more academic enrichment focus to help close the achievement gap for marginalized students including Black adolescents (Walker, Kronick & Diambra, 2007).

Characteristics of Effective Academic Enrichment Programs

Several commonalities exist between successful academic enrichment programs that help students of color and/or students from low socioeconomic backgrounds progress academically and socially. These characteristics include, but are not limited to, relationships, assessment, parent involvement, and partnerships. First, successful enrichment programs establish authentic relationships with students and families; programs that do not establish authentic relationships with students and families run the risk of not securing student commitment and parental buy-in (Bailey, 2003; Bailey &

Bradbury-Bailey, 2010). Successful enrichment programs also display an understanding of the strengths and growth edges of students that they serve (After-School Alliance, 2008; Apsler, 2009; Gottfredson, Cross & Soule', 2007). Additionally, these programs value the presence of parents' participation in their child's academic pursuits which is why successful enrichment programs make an intentional effort to gain parent involvement (Bailey, 2003; Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2010). These efforts should include assisting parents in navigating through the educational system; being able to navigate the politics of schools can be an empowering experience for parents (Bailey, 2003; Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2010). Empowering the parents along with program participants could earn the confidence and esteem of schools and families thus creating effective partnerships between all stakeholders (i.e., schools, families, communities, and businesses). Enrichment programs exhibiting these characteristics increase their chances of improving the educational experiences of students, thereby increasing students' chances of having post-secondary options that could increase economic and social stability (Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2010; Bailey & Paisley, 2004). Empowered Youth Programs have many of the characteristics of effective academic enrichment programs.

Bailey and Paisley (2004) and Bailey and Bradbury-Bailey (2010) discussed how Empowered Youth Programs have the characteristics of an effective academic enrichment after- school program. Upon entering the program, potential participants and their parents are interviewed by the program director to establish what the needs are. Each parent or guardian is required to complete demographic information which asks if the student is entering the program for academic needs, social needs or both. Additionally, Empowered Youth Programs established relationships with area schools by

asking participants' teachers to complete Academic Monitoring Forms which allow the schools to communicate with the programs on a regular basis on participants' progress. The Academic Monitoring Forms allow Empowered Youth Programs to receive regularly up-to-date information on each of its participants. Moreover, the Empowered Youth Programs require participants' parents to attend monthly meetings. The parent meetings are geared to help them and their child to navigate through the educational system. Parents are also required to attend Parent/Teacher Conferences when the schools schedule them as well as requesting conferences, as needed, so that parents are involved in and are aware of their child's academic progress in school.

Federally-Sponsored Academic Enrichment Programs

Although many academic enrichment programs exist on a grass roots level, several programs have received national attention for their work to offset the academic and social challenges faced by Black adolescents. Upward Bound and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) represent two national programs created to combat the issues associated with both the achievement and opportunity gaps; moreover, both programs help students successfully navigate through rigorous academic courses (college-preparatory, Advanced Placement and honors) which will help them to gain admission to as well as help them eventually graduate from college. AVID provides services for students from fourth to twelfth grades and Upward Bound works with high school students (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

As a part of their recruitment process, both programs solicit students from low socioeconomic backgrounds as well as potential first-generation college students for participation in their programs (AVID, n.d.; 2008; United States Department of

Education, 2008). While Upward Bound attracts high school students through two programs, Classic Upward Bound and Upward Bound Math and Science; AVID caters to students from fourth to twelfth grades. Additionally, both programs are funded differently with Upward Bound being funded by the United States Department of Education and AVID being funded by local school districts. Further differences occur since AVID is required to be associated with a school district whereas Upward Bound can be associated with a school district, college or university or community agency (AVID, n.d; 2008; United States Department of Education, 2008). Although both programs provide tutoring for students who need it, AVID focuses on students who already have above average to average grades in school (Avid, n.d.; 2008) and Upward Bound looks at the potential of a student to succeed in school with the help of the program through the use of parent, teacher or school counselor recommendations (United States Department of Education, 2008).

A Grass Roots Organization: Empowered Youth Programs

Empowered Youth Programs (EYP) represents an academic enrichment program dedicated to countering the impact of the achievement and opportunity gaps on the academic and social performance of Black adolescents. EYP evolved from an earlier program entitled, Project: Gentlemen on the Move (GOTM) (Bailey & Paisley, 2004). Founded as an academic and social enrichment program, GOTM focused on developing and nurturing academic and social excellence in African American males (Bailey, 1998; Bailey, 2001; Bailey & Paisley, 2004; Lee & Bailey, 1997). As suggested by African American scholars, this meant identifying skills and talents students' entered the program with as well as determining their capacity for academic and social performance (Bailey,

2003; Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2007; Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2010; Bailey &Paisley, 2004).

Comprehensively, the program took in consideration all aspects of the students' environment (family, school and community) and employed strategies that provided opportunities for the family, school and community to work together on the behalf of the students (Bailey, 2003; Bailey & Paisley, 2004). By examining the developmental and academic growth of each student, GOTM created an academic and social atmosphere that allowed for a transformation. According to Bailey and Paisley (2004), a transformation occurs when members exude positive change or modifications in their social and academic performance. This transformation could occur during the program or after program completion (Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2007, 2010; Bailey & Paisley, 2004). To facilitate this transformation, EYP (which includes GOTM) has operated from a set of assumptions grounded in social justice that seeks to close the achievement and opportunity gaps for its participants. The assumptions are as follows:

- African American parents want their children to succeed and will participate if opportunities are provided
- All students are capable of learning
- All young people know right from wrong but may not know or understand the consequences for their behaviors
- All young people want to do what is right
- All young people are at risk
- All young people deserve a quality education

- All young people have a right to fail if they choose (however, it is critical that the consequences for this choice are made clear along with opportunities for growth)
- All young people are worthy of forgiveness from others and themselves
- All young people are worthy of love, nurturing, guidance, support and meaningful opportunities
- Negative stereotypes of young people can only be changed by providing positive views of African Americans by the community at-large with positive images of themselves (Bailey & Paisley, 2004).

Although the initial purpose was to help young high school Black males do well in school, Black females showed interest and wanted to receive assistance as well. The request resulted in the formation of Young Women Scholars (YWS). With the creation of YWS, EYP evolved and currently represents the overarching program which includes GOTM, YWS and Parents of Empowered Youth (PEY) (Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2010; Bailey & Paisley, 2004). The core components of EYP have been intentionally designed to counter the impact of the achievement and opportunity gaps and include: 1) the Saturday Academy, 2) Academic Monitoring and Advising, 3) Fall and Spring Exam Lock-Ins, 4) the Summer Academy, and 5) College Tours.

The Saturday Academy: The Saturday Academy occurs every Saturday during the academic school year in the College of Education at the University of Georgia; this core component for EYP provides academic and social enrichment through a combination of academic rotations and tutoring sessions. Students attend the general assembly upon arrival in the morning. During the assembly, the students listen to a motivational speech from the program founder as well as feedback regarding their progress or lack thereof in

school and in EYP. Since EYP represents an additional support system for the students, they all celebrate each other's success. This type of support is grounded in the EYP Motto, "Each of us is important. None of us is more important than the group of us" (Bailey, personal communication). Divided into groups, EYP participants rotate through three academic sessions (Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary, and Math) and one group session entitled "Self-Discovery" from 8:30 am until 11:45am and then tutoring from 12:00 pm until 1:00 pm. Black adolescents (K – 12) are divided into cohorts based on grade level: Elementary (K-5); Middle School students (grades 6 – 8) are subdivided into two groups, grades 6 – 7 and grade 8; and High School students (grades 9 – 12) are subdivided into 3 groups, grade 9, grade 10, and grades 11 – 12. Developmentally, these cohorts of students are grouped based on appropriate academic and social levels thus facilitating effective group dynamics for learning. Occasionally, gifted 7^{th} and 8^{th} graders are placed with the 9^{th} grade rotation because it more closely matches their academic and social level. Most cohorts range from 8 – 15 members.

Teachers, undergraduate, and graduate students (master and doctoral level) facilitate the academic rotations which last approximately 45 minutes. The decision to focus on reading comprehension, vocabulary, and math during the Saturday Academy was based on the fact that these academic areas serve as "gateways" to successful post-secondary matriculation. They also represent the critical areas of the well-documented achievement gap between Black adolescents and their White counterparts (College Board, 2006; The Education Trust, 1999, 2003, 2006). The academic rotations provide an opportunity for EYP participants to work with other Black adolescents in academic areas critical to bridging the achievement gap. During tutoring sessions, students review study

skills and then are given the opportunity to practice them in a structured environment with teachers, undergraduate and graduate students as tutors; more advanced high school students sometimes serve as tutors.

During the "Self-Discovery" portion of the Saturday Academy, group leaders (teachers and graduate students) help EYP participants work through sessions that explore topics related to personal and social challenges including social skills, anger management, leadership skills, and career exploration. This type of group experience exposes program participants to role models who are able to serve as models of success. Finally, the Saturday Academy creates opportunities to meet on a local college campuses where EYP participants not only receive academic assistance from college students, (Black adolescents when possible, but not exclusively) but become familiar with and comfortable being in a college setting (Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2007a, 2007b; Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2010a, 2010b).

Academic Monitoring: Academic Monitoring represents a critical component for program staff because it provides direct and frequent feedback from members' teachers as well as their counselors. Academic monitoring allows the staff to keep abreast of students' school performance. Members' whose grade point averages are lower than a "B" are required to participate in the after-school tutoring program. Twice a week students meet with teachers in core content areas to receive additional assistance. As a part of Academic Monitoring, EYP divides participants into grade level Academic Advising groups which meet on alternate Saturday's to review the group's academic and social progress. In addition, each grade level follows a specific advisement plan that carefully outlines steps so that participants will be prepared to apply to and be accepted

by a postsecondary institution. This becomes especially important for first generation college applicants who may not understand all the dynamics necessary for acceptance into and completion of a degree program in a postsecondary institution (Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2007a, 2007b; Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2010a, 2010b).

The Exam Lock-In: The Exam Lock-In (ELI) is an overnight weekend long intensive exam preparation experience for high school participants that occur the weekend before Fall and Spring semester final exams. Participants are locked in one of the local partnering high schools from Friday evening until Sunday afternoon participating in both individual and group study sessions in preparation for state end-of-course tests and final exams. The ELI incorporates a multifaceted approach to intensive exam preparation utilizing highly structured individual, small group, and peer tutoring. The Exam Lock-In consists of sixteen 60-minute study sessions and eight 30-minute quiz sessions over 2 nights and two days (5pm Friday to 3pm Sunday). While individual study time is allowed, the majority of the study and quiz sessions are held in small groups (3-5 per group) and directed by teachers and graduate students (Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2007a, 2007b; Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2010a, 2010b).

The Summer Academy: The Summer Academy provides a positive group experience that combines travel with academic and cultural enrichment. Previous Summer Academies have included trips to New York City, Washington, D.C., Savannah and Skidaway Island, Ga., the Tennessee Aquarium, and camping trips to the mountains of North Carolina and Georgia. Careful planning allows for structured activities throughout the course of the Summer Academy and ensures that several personal, social, and academic challenges are directly addressed. Such trips foster the opportunity for

students to have definite boundaries in place as well as high expectations relative to individual and group behavior (Bailey & Paisley, 2004; Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2007).

College Tours: In addition to the three main components, EYP provides additional enrichment experiences via college tours and special retreats. Their participation in college tours at Historically Black Colleges and Universities as well as Traditionally White Institutions allows EYP participants to be exposed to more college students who are also African American. The college tours allow program participants opportunities to shadow African American college student for a day, then processing their experience with the group allowing for even more growth. This is critical for participants who will be first generation college students. This experience alone may encourage them to step outside their comfort zone and allow them to see the possibilities available to them beyond high school (Bailey, 2003; Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2007).

Evaluation of Academic Enrichment Programs

Finally, effective academic enrichment programs include an evaluation component in order to provide feedback for their continued success; evaluation ranges from the collection of specific academic and social data on program participants to participants' perceptions of the program's effectiveness. It was difficult to find studies of after-school programs that evaluated their programs, however; a few were found that were federally sponsored and grass-roots evaluations of after-school programs. A review of the evaluation of federally funded and grassroots programs will follow.

Evaluation of Federally Funded Academic Enrichment Programs

Most enrichment programs rely on academic and social data to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs. Several studies, (AVID, 2008; 2010; Durlak, Weissberg & Pachan, 2010; James-Burdamy, Dynarski & Deke, 2008; United States Department of Education, 2008; 2009) point to the outcomes of Upward Bound (UB) (Classic and Math and Science) 21st Century Community Learning Centers and AVID. Upward Bound uses participant graduation rates as one way to measure program effectiveness. For UB participants, 59% graduated from high school that dropped out of program participation before their senior year compared to 93% of those students who completed the program (United States Department of Education, 2008). For Upward Bound Math and Science students, 95% completed high school if they completed the program as opposed to 81 percent of those students who did not complete the program suggesting that participation in Upward Bound helps students graduate from high school and matriculate to college (United States Department of Education, 2008). In 2009, 92% enrolled in a post-secondary institution with 62% enrolling in four-year colleges and 32% in two-year colleges (AVID, 2010). In addition, AVID reported that their program produced more African American AP test takers than the national average at 13% and 8% respectively (AVID, 2010).

In addition to graduation rates or postsecondary acceptance, many academic enrichment programs use a comparison of academic progress before participation in the program to during participation in the program to determine their effectiveness in changing a student's academic achievement. Twenty-First Century Community Learning Center has been assessed in this manner. Researchers (Apsler, 2009; James-Burdumy,

Dynarski, & Deke, 2007) and concluded that 21st Century Community Learning Centers have not positively influenced the grades of their participants. Given that student behavior in school could impact academic progress, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers also analyzed whether participation in their program affected participants' behavior in school. James-Burdumy, Dynarski and Deke (2008) found that the participants' negative behaviors increased and further, the males had higher disciplinary issues than females. In fact, almost all of the disciplinary issues came from the males in the program because the level of disciplinary issues for females in the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program was "close to zero and statistically insignificant" (James-Burdumy, Dynarski & Deke, 2008, p. 16).

Gottfredson, Cross, Wilson, Rorie & Connell (2010) also evaluated the effects of participation in 21st Century Community Learning Centers Programs for middle school students by conducting a randomized trial. The treatment was the after-school program and the control was "a treatment as usual" group (Gottfredson, et al., 2010 p. 288). The study reported no difference between the control and treatment groups on disciplinary issues, grades, attendance, peer pressure and school bonding. Further, those who attended the after-school program regularly did not benefit any more than those who did not attend regularly.

Subject Focused After-School Program

Kim, Capotosto, Hartry and Fitzgerald (2011), evaluated READ 180 Enterprise after-school program which focused on improving reading and writing skills. Read 180 Enterprise focused on assisting struggling readers who scored in the lower quartile of their standardized reading scores. The study showed that those students who regularly

attended the program fared better than those participants who attended sporadically. Further, the study showed that whole-group instruction and rotations to different classes had a greater impact. Last, the study indicated that there was an impact on participants' reading comprehension and vocabulary scores, however; there was no impact on spelling or reading fluency.

Evaluation of Grassroots Academic Enrichment Programs

Empowered Youth Programs' focus on academic critical needs areas and tutoring for its participants with developing effective study skills being a primary goal of both the Saturday Academy and Exam Lock-In components (Bailey, 2003; Bailey and Bradbury-Bailey, 2010; Bailey & Paisley, 2004; Endale, 2007) has resulted in several academic achievement gains. "To date, 98% of program participants have graduated from high school and have been accepted to, are currently attending, or graduated from postsecondary institutions. This is in contrast to the 55% local high school graduation rate for African Americans students and the 64% high school graduation rate for the state. According to data from The Governor's Office on Student Achievement (2005), only 19% of African American students from the local school district attend a postsecondary institution." (Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2010, pg. 8).

In addition, Empowered Youth Programs have shown improvement in the grades of participants with the use of the Exam Lock-In. Bailey, Phelps, Packer and Hardin (2006) compared test scores at the beginning of the semester and at the end of the semester in 2004 and found that Exam Lock-In participants had higher scores on their school examinations than their semester test averages and also scored higher than the participants' teachers predicted. Also, Bailey, et al. (2006) reported that the average test

score for the cohort of students was 77%, however; after participating in the Exam Lock-In, their final examination score was 81% and their peers' examination average was 74%. Further, the teacher prediction percentage was 73%. Students who participated in the Exam Lock-In fared better than those students who did not as well as faring better than teacher prediction.

Furthermore, Empowered Youth Programs collected data regarding participants' academic and social performance using the Academic Monitoring Forms which collects data from each participant's teacher or counselor. Once the information is received, the program director or academic monitor will speak with the student and attempt to correct the issue by providing more intense tutoring in the academic problem area or request a conference with the teacher, parent, student and program staff to deal with any behavioral issues the participant may be having in school (Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2010; Endale, 2007).

In contrast to a quantitative evaluation approach, Miller and Gentry (2010) conducted a qualitative study exploring how students in kindergarten through fifth grades experienced and perceived their involvement in Project HOPE (Having Opportunities Promotes Excellence). For this study, Project HOPE, an academic enrichment program for gifted students, wanted to include high potential students meaning students from low-income backgrounds, who had standardized assessment scores in the 70^{th} percentile or higher or were recommended by a teacher or counselor and not been previously identified as gifted (Miller & Gentry, 2010). Project HOPE used Super Saturday intervention, which was developed by John Feldhusen as an enrichment program for gifted students in grades pre-K-8 (Feldhusen & Whyman, 1980; Miller & Gentry, 2010). Super Saturday

offers classes that contain no more than 18 students from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. for six Saturdays during fall semester and six consecutive Saturdays for spring semester and teachers teach the classes two or more grade levels higher than the students' actual grade (Miller & Gentry, 2010). Students enroll in high-interest courses taught by certified teachers or trained doctoral students including "science, technology, engineering, and math disciplines and in arts and humanities" (Miller & Gentry, 2010, p).

Instead of examining participants' academic progress or grade completion as a means of program evaluation, researchers developed a qualitative approach that included both interviews and observations (Miller & Gentry, 2010). For the interview, Miller and Gentry (2010) used five questions in a semi-structured interview format during the interviewing process including: a) Tell me about your Super Saturday experience?; b) What did you learn?; c)What did you like best?; d) What did you like least?; e) Would you want to come to Super Saturday again? Why or Why not? Additionally, Miller and Gentry (2010) observed participants using an observation protocol; attention was given to how students engaged in their classes with each other, the teacher, and if the dealings were positive or negative. Students were observed in thirty-minute blocks and the observers for the study observed several students in a three-hour period (Miller & Gentry, 2010). By using this type of approach for program evaluation, participants have been given a voice in determining program impact and effectiveness.

While the Miller & Gentry (2010) study did ask students what they liked about the enrichment program, they did not consider how the students felt about school because of their participation in "Super Saturdays". Guay, et al (2008) indicated that students' self-perceptions of school could make a difference regarding students' academic and

social success; however, very few academic enrichment programs used participants' perceptions of their academic or social performance in relation to their participation in the program as a measure of program effectiveness; thus, the very evaluation process necessary for improving the program's effectiveness essentially makes the voice of the participants invisible. It is possible that participants' perceptions of their academic and social performance could be the missing link regarding academic enrichment program effectiveness; thus, researchers and program evaluators may need to include them in their analysis of an academic enrichment program's effectiveness.

Summary

In sum, the Black adolescents and those who are in low socioeconomic status have been overlooked regarding their academic and social success (Shockley, 2011; Viadero & Johnston, 2000) and some scholars attribute it to the achievement gap (Jeynes, 2007; Lewis & Kim, 2008; National Center for Education Statistics, 2007, 2011; Rowan, Hall & Haycock, 2010; Viadero & Johnston, 2000), whereas; others (Flores, 2007; Levin, 2007; O'Keefe, Schoepner & Schoepner, 2009; Shah, 2011) attribute the lack of attention to the opportunity gap. Historically, Blacks have suffered because of the social stigma against them in the United States from racism, prejudice and discrimination (Spring, 2001) but also academically by not being allowed to attend school because forced immigrants were not allowed to attend school (Bullock, 1970; Graff, 2011; Jeynes, 2007; Wilson, 1977). Even the Blacks who migrated to the northern U.S. were segregated from their White peers and only taught by those affiliated with the religious groups (Alley, 2002; Bullock, 1970; Gundaker, 2007; Jeynes, 2007; Schiller, 2008).

Although the United States attempted to rectify the issue of the gap in achievement that has occurred since forced immigration through the passing of court cases such as *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, KS* (1954) and the passing of legislation such as *No Child Left Behind* (2001, it was not enough to close the gap in achievement between Blacks and their White counterparts because there was also a gap in opportunity that needed to be addressed.

Blacks attempted to deal with this gap by concealing the fact they learned to read when it was illegal during forced immigration (Bullock, 1970; Douglass, 1845; Graff, 2011; Jeynes, 2007; Wilson, 1977) as well as developing the Mississippi Freedom Summer which was purposed to help Blacks learn to critically think (Cobb, 20011; Logue, 2008; Perlstein, 2002). Because of its success, the Mississippi Freedom Summer expanded throughout the country (Perlstein, 2002). The Mississippi Freedom Summers eventually ceased (Perlstein, 2002), however; the grassroots movement of enriching and reinforcing education of Blacks did not cease because of the development of after-school enrichment programs.

At first, after-school programs provided a safe-haven during the hours after-school dismissed and parents returned from work (David, 2010; Gardner, et al., 2009; Gottfredson, Cross & Soule', 2007; Gottfredson, et al, 2010; Neuman, 2011). However, since the increased accountability education standards of *No Child Left Behind of 2001,* after-school programs shifted its focus to provide educational resources for its participants (Afterschool Alliance, 2008; Armstrong & Armstrong, 2004; Olatokunbo & Cooper, 1999; Gardner-Roth, et al., 2009; Gottfredson, et al. 2010). Unfortunately, many

after-school enrichment programs do not evaluate their effectiveness programs (David, 2010; Kim, Capotosto, Hartry & Fitzgerald, 2011) making it difficult to ascertain if participants are benefiting. Those programs that have evaluated their effectiveness have yielded mixed results with the results ranging from making a difference in the participants' academic success to not making an impact at all (Dietel, 2009). Moreover, many programs tend to measure success by high school graduation rates (AVID, 2008; 2010; Durlak, Weissberg & Pachan, 2010; James-Burdamy, Dynarski & Deke, 2008; United States Department of Education, 2008; 2009), grades (Apsler, 2009; James-Burdumy, Dynarski and Deke, 2007) and the development of social skills (James-Burdumy, Dynarski and Deke, 2008). Miller and Gentry (2010) included interviewing participants regarding their perceptions of the enrichment program, however; the study did not consider asking the participants their perceptions of program impact on their academic and social success in school. Guay, et al. (2004, 1997) determined that if students perceive they are successful in school then they will be. Thus, the current study explored how Black adolescents in Empowered Youth Programs perceived the programs' impact on their academic and social success in school.

CHAPTER 3

Method

Introduction

Educators and researchers developed after-school programs to help close the achievement gap with most after-school programs focusing on academics, social skills, or both. Empowered Youth Programs focused on both. There were several differences that have set Empowered Youth Programs (EYP) apart from other after-school programs. First, EYP empowered parents to be actively involved with the program and the education of their children (i.e., regular parent-teacher conferences and homework assistance). Additionally, EYP has established strong relationships with families and local schools. With this study, the researcher is interested in understanding how program participants perceived the impact of EYP on their academic and social performance.

Research Position Statement

The current writer worked with the Empowered Youth Programs from 2006- 2009 as a Graduate Research Assistant. Since I was a graduate research assistant with Empowered Youth Programs, it should be noted that I received reduced tuition costs as well as a monthly stipend during the time I worked with the program, thus; causing bias. However, as a beginning researcher, it is my responsibility to compartmentalize my desire for the program to be successful as well as report my findings in an ethical way.

Participants and Selection of Site

Participants in the study were students involved in EYP from August 2010 until May 2011. Even though EYP included students in grades Pre-K through 12th grade, only the middle school and high school students (students in grades 6 through 12) were included in this study. EYP participants' self-selected to participate in the program, thus the students involved in this study were all self-selected. With regards to the location of the program, the majority of program activities took place in the College of Education on the campus of a Southeastern university.

Instrument

The Empowered Youth Programs Impact Questionnaire (EIQ, Student Version) (Bailey, Phelps, Packer Harden, 2004) was used to determine student perceptions. The EIQ also included demographic information of participants. The EIQ assessed the participants' perceptions of the "impact of the Empowered Youth Programs on their academic and social [performance]" (p. 2) and is a self-report measure (Bailey et al, 2010). The EIQ uses a Likert scale (1= *Strongly Disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3= *Agree* and 4= *Strongly Agree*) and has scores ranging from 44 to 176. The EIQ has an overall Cronbach alpha coefficient of .95, indicating its validity. The EIQ measures two factors: academic and social. Additionally, the EIQ has a Cronbach alpha coefficient for the overall scale of .97, and .95 for factor 1 and .94 for factor 2 indicating its reliability.

Data Collection

The EIQ gathered information regarding the participants' perceptions of EYPs' impact on their academic and social performance during a designated year. EIQ was completed at the beginning and end of each program year. Dr. Deryl Bailey, Program

Director, and the Empowered Youth Programs Research Team distributed and collected the EIQ from program participants for this study during the 2010 and 2011 program year while the current researcher was on the Pre-Psychology Doctoral Internship (internship). Upon returning from internship, the data that was collected for the current study was previously collected, thus not requiring Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to be used in this study. During registration, parents and guardians gave their consent to participate in program related research, as well as, permission for their students to participate in program related research.

Participants complete the EIQ during registration in as a group. Instructions were given to each individual student as they registered for the program and questions were addressed as needed by program staff or the Program Director. At the end of the program year, the EIQ was completed during the Spring Lock-In in again in a group format. Once completed, the EIQ was collected and entered by program staff. Originally, EIQ data was not collected for research purposes but rather for program development purposes. While the EIQ has been used since 2003, the factor analysis did not occur until the 2009-2010 program year. This study focused on previously collected data using the Student version of the EIQ completed during the 2010-2011 program year.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to illustrate the participants' demographic data. In addition, one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted with the factors measured on the EIQ: academic and social performance. A one-way ANOVA compared several sample means to determine if there were differences between the dependent variables: academic and social performance. The one-way ANOVA was used instead of a

two-way ANOVA since a one-way ANOVA compared many distributions for one independent variable: gender. On the other hand, in order to conduct a two-way ANOVA, two independent variables must be measured such as gender and grade level. Finally, a paired-samples *t*- test was used to compare pre-test and post-test data by gender. An independent *t*-test was not used because the means between two sub-groups was not the only thing being compared; the means of values between individuals were compared using pre-test and post-test data. In addition, one-sample *t*-tests were not used since there were no pre-set values determined to compare the variables such as analyzing a student's achievement score compared to the state minimum passing score.

Hypothesis

There are four general hypotheses this study seeks to investigate:

Hypothesis 1: Female participants of Empowered Youth Programs will have a positive perception of the impact of the program on their academic performance.

Hypothesis 2: Male participants of Empowered Youth Programs will have a positive perception of the impact of the program on their academic performance

Hypothesis 3: Female participants of Empowered Youth Programs will have a positive perception of the impact of the program on their social performance.

Hypothesis 4: Male participants of Empowered Youth Programs will have a positive perception of the impact of the program on their social performance.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Data Set

The data set included fall 2010 and spring 2011 semesters in the academic year. This analysis did not include summer. During the first administration of the EIQ, the number of males (*n*=10) and females (*n*=20) was higher than the current data set (males *n*=8; females *n*=14). However, due to the fact that (*n*=8) students did not participate in the spring 2011 administration, the total number decreased (*N*=22) which is the total that was used in the current study.

Descriptive Statistics

The numbers and percentages of the participants are detailed in the Table 1 by grade and race.

Table 1

Participant Characteristics (*N*=22)

Characteristic	N	%
Grade		
Sixth	3	0.14
Seventh	3	0.14
Eighth	3	0.14
Nine	3	0.14
Ten	3	0.14
Eleven	5	0.21
Twelve	2	0.09
Race		
Black (African-American)	19	0.86

Latino/a	2	0.1
Korean	1	0.04

The EIQ provided a wealth of information on the participants and their parents regarding if the 2010-2011 program year was the first time they enrolled in Empowered Youth Programs and the marital status of parents. During the 2010-2011 program year, there were (*n*=5) participants who enrolled for the first time during the program year and (*n*=17) that returned. Fifty percent (*n*=11) of the participants' parents were married, 9% (*n*=2) were parents and step-parents, 27% (*n*=6) were single mothers and 9% (*n*=2) were single fathers. Only one participant did not indicate the marital status of their parent(s).

The EIQ also allowed the participant to indicate the reason why they enrolled in Empowered Youth Programs. The choices were: academic, social, both academic and social, program reputation and all of the above. Since the participants were allowed to choose more than one reason, the total number of responses will be more than the total sample number (*N*=22). Three students selected that they joined Empowered Youth Programs because of the programs' reputation, 4 students selected they joined for academic reasons, 1 student selected they joined for social reasons, 12 students joined for both social and academic reasons and 8 students selected they joined for all of the above.

Other information that was provided on the EIQ included special needs, Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) referral, insurance coverage and medical condition. None of the students identified as special needs, however; 4.5% (*n*=1) indicated they were a DFCS referral to Empowered Youth Programs. 100% of the students had medical coverage. Out of the total number (*N*=22), (*n*=2) indicated that suffered from asthma and (*n*=1) indicated they had seizures.

One-Way Analysis of Variance

The one-way ANOVA was conducted on the data from the study which compared the means of pre-test academic factor scores and pre-test social factor scores as well as compared the post-test academic factor scores and the post-test social factor scores. The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 1.1.

Table 2

The Perceived Effects of Empowered Youth Programs on Academic and Social Performance – Pre-Test and Post-Test Comparisons

	Males			Females		
Factor/Test	N	*M*	*SD*	N	*M*	*SD*
Academic Pre-Test	8	48.25	6.36	14	52	5.66
Social Pre-Test	8	72.75	9.19	14	72.93	7.52
Academic Post-Test	8	48.63	14.43	14	52.25	4.95
Social Post-Test	8	74.5	5.78	14	71.18	7.86

Paired Samples t-Test

The paired samples *t*-test compared the means between the pre-test and post-test data from the participants' perception of their academic performance. Also, the paired samples *t*-test compared the means between the pre-test and post-test data from the participants' perception of their social performance and is presented in Table 1.3.

Table 3

Differences Between Academic and Social Performance

	M	*SD*	*Df*	*T*
Academic Pre-Test	50.64	6.06	21 56	-0.164

Academic Post-Test	50.93	9.37	21	-0.164
Social Pre-Test	72.86	7.95	21	0.337
Social Post-Test	72.39	7.22	21	0.337

Moreover, paired sample t-tests were conducted pairing the pre-test and post-test means of the academic factor and the pre-test and post-test means of the social factor on the EIQ. Sample means and standard deviations were reported. All statistical tests were performed using SPSS.

Limitations

The current investigator was a graduate assistant with Empowered Youth Programs for three years. The current investigator has a relationship with the program outside of the study thus recognizing experimenter bias is as one limitation of the current study. The current investigator will make every effort to be unbiased. It is the current investigator's goal to focus on assisting the program to understand how its participants perceive their growth or lack thereof because of their participation in EYP.

One cannot generalize the results of the study to all children in the US for a few reasons. First, the participants are mainly Black in the current study. Many can argue that the student population in the US is diverse. Although Black adolescents are diverse within themselves, it can be argued that the results of this study could not be generalized to other student populations such as White, Latino/a and Asian students.

Another limitation is that the sample in this study is small. Even though there are other data available from 2003-2006, that version of the EIQ was not a valid instrument, the current sample used a valid version of the EIQ, thus; making the current sample small.

Last, the subjects in the study self-selected and there is no control group to which to compare the results.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine participants' perceptions of the impact of Empowered Youth Programs (an after-school enrichment program) on their academic and social performance. This study attempted to contribute to the understanding of the impact of after-school and enrichment programs on the academic and social performance of not only Black students and students in low socioeconomic status, but potentially all students.

The sample for this study consisted of 22 middle school and high school students who participated in Empowered Youth Programs from fall 2010 until spring 2011. Fourteen of the participants were female and 8 were male. Participants completed the pre-test at the beginning of the program year. Eight of the participants had to be removed from analysis due to the fact they did not complete a post-test. The remaining 22 participants completed the post-test EIQ during the Spring Exam Lock-In and were included in the study.

Descriptive statistics were used to present the participants' grade level, race and length of time in the program. One-way ANOVAs were conducted on pre and post-test of the EIQ analyzing participants' perceptions of program impact on their academic and social performance by gender. Additionally, paired samples *t*-test was conducted on pre and post-test of the EIQ and was used to determine participants' perception of overall program impact on their academic and social performance.

The hypotheses this study investigated were as follows: (a) Participants of Empowered Youth Programs will report positive impact in perception of their academic performance; (b) Participants of Empowered Youth Programs will report positive impact in perceptions of their social performance; (c) Participants of Empowered Youth Programs will report positive impact on their academic performance by gender; (d) Participants of Empowered Youth Programs will report positive impact on the social performance by gender. The study did not support any of the hypotheses. Although hypotheses (a) and (c) did show a positive impact academically, the impact was not significant. However, hypothesis (b) showed a negative impact on participants socially. When the results were delineated by gender, they showed that male participants had a positive impact, conversely; female participants had a negative impact socially.

Discussion and Implications

The current study focused on Black adolescents' perceptions of the impact of EYP had on their academic and social performance. The data analyses from the paired samples *t*-test showed that the means from pre-test administration to post-test administrations increased slightly from the academic pre-test *(M*=50.63) to the post-test (*M=50.93)* but the increase was not significant. However the data analyses from the paired samples *t*-test showed the means from the social performance pre-test (*M*= 72.86) and the social performance post-test (*M*=72.39) decreased. Again, the change was not significant. Thus, the data suggested an impact of the program on the students overall academic performance. Conversely; the participants did not perceive there was an impact of EYP on their overall social performance. Although EYP worked to improve

participants' academic and social performance, the programs tended to focus more on participants' academic performance. For instance, during the Saturday Academy, all but one of the Saturday Academy rotations focused on academic improvement. The academic rotations for high school and middle school participants consisted of science, critical reading, vocabulary and writing. On the other hand, there was only one rotation that focused on their social performance which was the Leadership rotation. However, there were some reasons there was no perceived significant impact on their academic performance and there was no perceived impact on their social performance from the program.

There were several possible reasons why the participants did not perceive a significant impact of the program on their academic performance or no impact on their social performance. First, during the 2010-2011 program year, academic monitoring (via the Academic Monitoring [AMF] Form), which was a major component of the program, was not utilized because the participants' classroom teachers were overwhelmed with more responsibility from their schools. Although Empowered Youth Programs attempted to make completing the AMF easier for classroom teachers (i.e., electronic version of AMF); teachers still failed to complete them on a regular basis. Thus, the lack of completed AMFs made it difficult for EYP staff to monitor students' academic progress. Additionally, Lauver (2012), indicated that both the school and the after-school program should share responsibility for student learning and development as well as have regular communication regarding student progress. Unfortunately with the turnover of staff during the 2010-2011 program year, the AMFs were not completed regularly by teaching staff, thus; communication between the school and the Empowered Youth Programs did

not occur and the data shows the impact on the participants (Lauver, 2012). Second, the Program Director would use the completed AMFs as part of the Saturday Academy morning meetings. According to Bailey and Paisley (2004), the program director would discuss participants' academic and social performance each Saturday during the Saturday Academy General Assembly. The goal of this process was to hold each student accountable for their academic and social performance the previous week. Granger (2008) indicated the premise of after-school programs should be to have a positive impact on academic performance which during this program year, Empowered Youth Programs did achieve. However, other scholars (Apsler, 2009; Lauer et al., 2009) indicated the importance of program impact of both academic and social performance.

Third, there was high turn-over in EYP staff during this time period. In fact, the lead EYP teacher took a leave of absence during the time period under evaluation. Because this person was in charge of academic advisement her absence was even more impactful. Moreover, Granger (2008) underscores the importance of having quality staff as a characteristic of a quality after-school program and with the lead teacher absent during this program year impacted not just the participants but also the front-lines teaching staff who depended on the lead teacher for assistance when needed. The Lead Teacher had over 20 years of experience teaching high school science and her expertise was possibly missing during this program year. The Academic Advisement period provided EYP staff members an additional opportunity to address students' academic and social performance as it related to their future academic and career aspirations. Again, the Lead Teacher's absence to coach front-lines teaching staff regarding academic

advisement possibly impacted the program in 2010-2011 especially since hiring and retaining high quality staff is a major concern for after-school programs (Granger, 2008).

There were gender differences of perception of program impact based on data analyzed from the one-way ANOVA. Female participants felt that EYP had a greater impact on them academically (*M*=52.00, 52.500) than did their male counterparts (*M*= 48.25, 48.63). This result is not surprising since Black females surpass their male counterparts academically (Harrison-Jones, 2007); on the other hand, the male results did show that he program impacted them positively; thus possibly translating that if Black males who are enrolled in Empowered Youth Programs feel that they are achieving academically, then they will achieve academically (Guay et al., 2004; 1997).

However, the reverse is true for perception of EYP's impact on their social performance. Male participants felt that EYP impacted on their social performance (72.75, 74.50) than did their female counterparts. In fact, female participants did not perceive the program as having much of an impact on their social performance (*M*= 72.93, 71.18). Muhammad and Dixson (2008) indicated that Black females also surpass their male counterparts in school socially, however; Black females are not exempt from having issues with social performance in school where teachers attempt to make Black females more "lady-like" (p. 165) instead of embracing their ability to assert themselves. Further, the expectations for the participants in Empowered Youth Programs are higher than those are at school. So, the Black female participants may have felt more confident about their social performance during the pre-test, however; being exposed to the high expectations could have possibly made the Black female participants less confident about the programs' impact on their social performance. Similarly, a previous study using EIQ

data from the fall of 2003 to spring of 2009 found similar results regarding participant perceptions on program impact.

When Bailey and Cayirdag (2012) conducted the analysis on a larger sample size (N= 133) using earlier EIQ data, no significance was found based on gender ($t(101) = .99$) (p=.32, d=.20). This result was not surprising given the fact that Black females performed better than their male counterparts on achievement tests which is how the achievement gap is measured. On the contrary, male participants perceived the impact of EYP to be greater on their social performance than did their female counterparts. This finding, although not significant, is surprising given the fact that Black males tend to have more disciplinary actions against them in school versus their female counterparts. Surely, it seems that male participants perceived that EYP impacted their social performance.

Limitation of Study and Future Recommendations

A major limitation of this study is its small sample size, however; there are reasons for it. Empowered Youth Programs utilized the EIQ as an internal measure of effectiveness without consideration for its use for research purposes. Since the EIQ was not initially used for research purposes a factor analysis was not conducted on the instrument until the 2009-2010 program year. Once the EIQ was deemed valid and reliable, this researcher used this information for research purposes. During the 2010-2011 program year, the number of participants available was small, thus, affecting the sample size of the study. Conversely, even though the sample size was small for the current study, Bailey and Cayirdag (2012) conducted the study on a larger sample size and their study also found no significant differences of perceived program effectiveness based on gender.

With that said, there are ways in which to increase the numbers so the sample size can be larger. As a result of this study it is recommended that Empowered Youth Programs continue to use the EIQ as a valuable means of program evaluation. In fact, administering the EIQ as a pre and post-test measure may be one way to increase the sample size. Once the participant enters the program and leaves the program, they could be given the EIQ to determine program impact on their academic and social performance. It seems that one year is not enough time to determine program impact. Further, it seems that when the program experiences internal changes (staff turnover), program participants feel the impact of these changes. EYP alumni could also serve as a useful source of data for program evaluation. It would seem that interviewing former program participants regarding their perceptions of the impact of EYP the program could be extremely useful.

Finally, parents understand their children and can tell when they are being impacted by the program. It would be interesting to pair the students' perceptions with those of their parents to determine program impact. It may be that program participants cannot see the impact the program is having on their academic and social performance because they are not able to be objective since they are in the midst of the program.

It seems there are many aspects of Empowered Youth Programs that have impacted its participants. Continuing to explore the impact of the programs on its participants is imperative, especially since the literature regarding the evaluation of after school and enrichment programs yields mixed results (Granger, 2008). Finding the most effective way to utilize afterschool and enrichment programs, as well as instruments such as the EIQ, could help Empowered Youth Programs, as well as other programs, understand its impact on program participants and inform program development.

Hopefully the recommendations from this study will assist with future research of Empowered Youth Programs as well as other enrichment programs with similar goals.

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APPENDIX A

EMPOWERED YOUTH PROGRAMS

FORM
II (Student Perceptions)

Deryl F. Bailey, Ph.D., and Stephanie Dixon, B.S.

Dear EYP participant,
The goal of Empowered Youth Programs is to develop and nurture academic and social excellence in children and adolescents. In an effort to evaluate the impact of *Empowered Youth Programs* (Gentlemen on the Move and Young Women Scholars, Young Future Leaders) your assistance is needed. It would be greatly appreciated if you would complete the following questions and the attached questionnaire.

Demographic Questions:

1. What grade are you in?

○ 1ST ○ 3rd ○ 5th ○ 7th ○ 9th ○ 11th ○ Other _____
○ 2nd ○ 4th ○ 6th ○ 8th ○ 10th ○ 12th

2. How long have you been in GOTM _____ , YWS _____, or YFL?

3. What is your race/ethnicity?

○ African American/Black ○ Chinese ○ Japanese
○ White ○ Filipino ○ Korean
○ American Indian or Alaskan Native ○ Other Asian _____ ○ Vietnamese
○ Asian Indian ○ Other Pacific Islander _____

4. How many people live in your household? _____

5. Who are the people who live in your home?

○ Mother ○ Grandmother ○ Step-mother ○ Brother ○ Aunt ○ Cousin

○ Father ○ Grandfather ○ Step-father ○ Sister ○ Uncle ○ Unrelated person

6. How did you hear about the program?

○ Parent(s)	○ Assistant Principal	○ From another student in the program
○ Neighbor	○ Teacher	○ Newspaper Article
○ Brother	○ Counselor	○ Television
○ Sister	○ Friend	
○ Other relative	○ Principal	

7. Why did you join Empowered Youth Programs?

○ Academic support	○ Both Academic and Social support	○ Because parents wanted me to
○ Social support	○ Overall reputation of the programs	○ All of the above

EMPOWERED YOUTH PROGRAMS

FORM II (Student Perceptions)

Deryl F. Bailey, Ph.D., and Stephanie Dixon, B.S.

SD = Strongly Disagree	***D = Disagree***	***A = Agree***	***SA = Strongly Agree***

GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF OVERALL PROGRAM

1. Since joining the program I believe my overall behavior at school has improved;

   SD D A SA

2. Since joining the program I believe my overall behavior at home has improved;

   SD D A SA

3. I believe I have made improvements in my academic performance since joining the program;

   SD D A SA

4. I believe the program has challenged me to feel good about who I am;

   SD D A SA

5. I believe there is a need for programs such as Empowered Youth Programs;

   SD D A SA

6. I believe I am more concerned about my grades since I joined the program.

   SD D A SA

7. I believe I have been committed to the guidelines/rules of the program;

   SD D A SA

8. I believe the program has had a positive impact on how well I get along with other students;

   SD D A SA

9. Since joining the program I believe I have served as a role model for other students;

   SD D A SA

10. I believe I have had fewer disciplinary problems since I joined the program;

    SD D A SA

SD = Strongly Disagree	***D = Disagree***	***A = Agree***	***SA = Strongly Agree***

Since joining the program I believe I…

11. have been more respectful of him/herself and others;

SD D A SA

12. have had a better relationship with teachers, principals, counselors and other school personnel;

SD D A SA

13. have had a better relationship with my family;

SD D A SA

14. am able to identify my strengths and weaknesses;

SD D A SA

15. respect the differences of others;

SD D A SA

16. am more willing to follow the rules set by my teachers;

SD D A SA

17. have developed positive friendships with other students;

SD D A SA

ATTITUDE TOWARD LEARNING

Since joining the program I believe I…

18. have been more willing to learn;

SD D A SA

19. do my homework and school work more regularly;

SD D A SA

20. participate more in class;

SD D A SA

21. make-up school work missed when I have been absent in a timely manner;

SD D A SA

22. put forth my best effort on assignments as demonstrated by the quality of the work I submit;

SD D A SA

23. work harder on my school assignments.

SD D A SA

SD = Strongly Disagree	*D = Disagree*	*A = Agree*	*SA = Strongly Agree*

ACADEMIC SKILL BUILDING

Since joining the program I believe I…

24. have been more organized;

SD D A SA

25. have developed better study skills;

SD D A SA

26. ask for help with school work when I need it;

SD D A SA

27. am better prepared to participate in class.

SD D A SA

MOTIVATION/SELF-EFFICACY/ATTITUDES/BEHAVIORS

I believe the program…

28. has motivated me to take learning more seriously;

SD D A SA

29. has helped me excel academically and socially;

SD D A SA

30. has helped me learn how to resolve conflicts in a positive way;

SD D A SA

31. has improved my level of confidence in my academic abilities;

SD D A SA

32. has improved my display of appropriate classroom etiquette (respect of others, following classroom rules, taking care of equipment, etc.);

SD D A SA

33. has helped me become a better leader.

SD D A SA

SD = Strongly Disagree	***D = Disagree***	***A = Agree***	***SA = Strongly Agree***

SOCIAL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

Since joining the program I believe I…

34. am more willing to follow instructions and receive feedback from teachers, counselors, and administrators;

SD D A SA

35. get along more effectively with teachers, administrator, and my peers;

SD D A SA

36. am less likely to be disruptive in class;

SD D A SA

37. am more willing to consider the feelings of others;

SD D A SA

38. am better able to withstand pressure from my friends to do things that I know are not right;

SD D A SA

39. am more willing and able to effectively communicate with authority figures.

SD D A SA

40. am more active in positive school-related activities;

SD D A SA

41. am better able to challenge myself socially and academically;

SD D A SA

42. am more willing to participate in community service projects;

SD D A SA

43. am able to develop positive relationships with other students and other adults.

SD D A SA

44. am more willing to show appreciation when I receive assistance from others (students and teachers);

SD D A SA

SD = Strongly Disagree	*D = Disagree*	*A = Agree*	*SA = Strongly Agree*

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Since joining the program I believe I…

45. am better able to avoid verbal arguments with peers, adults, and authority figures;

SD D A SA

46. am better able to solve problems in positive ways;

SD D A SA

47. am more willing to seek the assistance of teachers, and other school personnel when necessary.

SD D A SA

48. am less likely to participate in bullying behaviors or other negative activities;

SD D A SA

49. am better able to express my anger and other negative emotions appropriately;

SD D A SA

50. am better able to exercise control over my reactions in all situations.

SD D A SA

Please feel free to include written comments: