

SELF-ESTEEM AND FEELINGS OF COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS OF AT-RISK
ADOLESCENTS WHO ATTEND COMMUNITY BASED AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

By

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A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF SCIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2012

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To my supportive and loving family

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first like to acknowledge my awesome committee, Dr. Barnett, Dr. Culen, and Dr. Stedman. Your guidance, expertise, and patience in helping me to complete the best thesis possible is greatly appreciated. I would like to extend a special thank you to my advisor, Dr. Barnett for all of the additional help that you provided throughout this process. I most certainly could not have done this without each and every one of you.

I would also like to thank Caroline Payne-Purvis, CYFAR State Coordinator for helping to arrange my visits to the afterschool program sites as well as for helping me with data collection. Your dedication to the project is forever appreciated.

Also, I would like to thank my fellow teaching assistants and FYCS friends. Your encouragement is greatly appreciated. Thank you for cheering me on all along the way, I couldn't have kept chugging along without your kind words and enthusiasm.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank my family, Mom, Dad, and Leah and my boyfriend, Stephen. Thank you for dealing with me at my best and my worst throughout this whole process. The accomplishments I have made would never have possible without the support of each and every one of you. You have dealt with me not being able to come home for holidays due to being too busy writing this as well as going weeks without me returning your phone calls. Through it all you have continued to encourage me and express how proud you are to watch me overcome challenges and fulfill my dreams.

Thank you again to everyone that has been a part of this experience. You have all been wonderful supporters and I hope that I can one day repay you for everything you have done for me.

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Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science

**SELF-ESTEEM AND FEELINGS OF COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS OF AT-RISK
ADOLESCENTS WHO ATTEND COMMUNITY BASED AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS**

By

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May 2012

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Major: Family, Youth and Community Sciences

My research investigated the relationship between adolescent afterschool program attendance, self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness.

Specifically, the effect of overall self-esteem on the decision to attend an afterschool program as well the adolescents overall feelings of community connectedness. The theory of Developmental Contextualism was used to explore and identify the various factors that may influence an adolescent's self-esteem, feelings of community connectedness, and their decision to attend a community based afterschool program.

A sample of 61 adolescents enrolled in two federally funded and community based afterschool programs completed a 10 item self-esteem questionnaire followed by a 5 item section of the Youth Involved in Community Issues Survey (YICI). The surveys consisted of questions regarding the adolescents overall feelings of self-esteem and community connectedness. Attendance records were also collected from the afterschool program sites. Data were analyzed using Pearson Correlations, Linear Regression Models, ANOVAs, and MANOVAs.

Results indicated that there is no significant relationship between adolescent self-esteem and afterschool program attendance. Nor was there significant evidence that feelings of community connectedness were affected by afterschool program attendance. While there was no significant relationship between overall self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness, the individual item analysis did show a significant relationship between adolescents feeling they had a voice in the community (Community Connectedness Item) and their level of respect for themselves (Self-esteem Item). Findings suggest that there is a relationship to be explored and strengthened through means of community outreach for adolescents to get their voices heard.

Recommendations for further research include taking a larger sample size and collecting data from adolescents who are part of the afterschool program as well as those who are not. Also, it would be beneficial to collect data at more than one point in order to identify change in adolescent self-esteem and afterschool program attendance. Conclusions reached through this study have important implications for youth practice. Specifically, programs need to help adolescents get involved in the community so that they are able to thrive in the community environment as contributing members of society.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Background

“Self-esteem is defined as a person’s overall sense of worth and well-being” (Arnett, 2010) and is an integral part of youth development. It is important that adolescents develop a high self-esteem from an early age and continue it into their adult lives. Since adolescence is the period during which identity issues are most prominent and most crucial to development, Erickson (1950) argued that it is important that youth are able to establish a clear identity. Identity serves as a basis for initial commitments in adult life and as a foundation for later stages of development (Arnett, 2010). There are many factors that contribute to adolescent self-esteem, including: personal identity, personal achievements, family, friends, school, neighborhood, and community. Self-esteem in adolescence can fluctuate. Through positive youth development programs, however, a youth’s self-esteem can be strengthened, thus, allowing them to feel better about themselves, their identities, their families, friends, and the community in which they live. “While many techniques have been used to enhance adolescent self-esteem, afterschool program attendance and the opportunity to connect with the community can have a significant effect on the self-esteem of a youth who participates” (Saunders-Ferguson et.al., 2006).

The use of one single approach can be difficult when trying to help diverse groups of adolescents, thus, communities, families, and schools must create opportunities for the youth to thrive in the environment in which they live, grow, go to school, and play. Afterschool programs and the chance to connect to communities through volunteer work provide youth with an outlet, a place to exhibit their strengths

and gain a feeling of belonging and connectedness to their community. (Halpern, 2005; O'Donnel, Michalak, & Ames, 1997; Benson, 1998; Ybrandt & Armelius, 2008; Barton, Watkins, & Jarjoura, 1997; Schine, 1990; Broadbent, 2010).

Rationale of Study

A great deal of research has been done linking self-esteem to after school programs, and most of that research has found that after school programs are effective as protecting the self-esteem and healthy development of youth. Little research has been done to examine the level of an adolescent's self-esteem and the attendance in an afterschool program. Nor has much research been done to examine the relationship between self-esteem and afterschool program attendance. This study will explore the relationship between the self-esteem of at risk youth and their afterschool program attendance. It will also explore the adolescent's level of self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness and their feelings of community connectedness based on community based afterschool program attendance.

It is important that afterschool programs promote bonding and reduce risk (O'Donnel, Michalak, & Ames, 1997) in order to facilitate an environment in which youth can thrive and learn to give back to the community in which they live. The current research will be implemented in a high-risk urban neighborhood where it is important to occupy adolescents during the unsupervised hours of the afternoon (O'Donnell, Michalak, & Ames, 2007). The current study will focus on afterschool programs that not only give adolescents a safe place to go in the unsupervised hours of the afternoon, but also create conditions for re-working as well as for developing self-hood (Halpern, 2005). This re-working and developing self-hood aspect of afterschool programs has been called for through previous research and will be investigated in this study by

allowing adolescents opportunities to feel as though they are more connected to the community in which they live. When this occurs, youth take ownership of it and, thus, no longer partake in activities that compromise their community and its accomplishments (Benson, 1998).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the level of self-esteem, afterschool program attendance and feelings of community connectedness of at risk adolescents. Using the Theory of Developmental Contextualism, this study will explore “the interaction between the growing, that is, the continuously changing individual and the ecological context in which that person lives” (Muuss, 1996). This study will initially examine whether self-esteem relates to attending an afterschool program. It will explore levels of self-esteem and youth feelings of connectedness to their community. It will also examine youth with low, medium and high self-esteem and investigate their corresponding feelings of community connectedness to determine whether there is a relationship between self-esteem and community connectedness. If a relationship is found, the study will examine the strength of the relationship and whether self-esteem might be a predictor variable for youth’s feelings of community connectedness.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness through community involvement of youth who attend afterschool programs.

Specifically, this study aims to answer the following:

1. Is there a relationship between self-esteem and afterschool program attendance?

2. Is there a relationship between an adolescent's self-esteem and community connectedness?
3. Is the feeling of connectedness to the community affected by afterschool program attendance?

Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this research include:

Hypothesis 1: Adolescents with higher attendance patterns in afterschool programs will have higher self-esteem scores.

Hypothesis 2: Adolescent self-esteem is positively related to levels of feelings of community connectedness.

Hypothesis 3: Adolescents who attend afterschool programs will have greater feelings of connectedness to the community.

Discussion of Variables

For this study, self-esteem was used as the independent variable in the research questions involving self-esteem. In these questions, both feelings of community connectedness and attendance were defined as dependent variables. Self-Esteem was used as the independent variable because the researcher did not aim to change the adolescents self-esteem based on the program that the adolescents attend. For the research question regarding adolescent's feelings of community connectedness and afterschool program attendance, afterschool program attendance was used as the independent variable and community connectedness the dependent variable. This is the case because the researcher hoped to find that adolescents who attended the program more consistently would have higher feelings of community connectedness.

Definitions

Adolescence: “A period of the life course between the time puberty begins and the time adult status is approached, when young people are preparing to take on the roles and responsibilities of adulthood in their culture” (Arnett, 2010). Adolescence starts at the onset of puberty and ends at the beginning of young adulthood” (Hudome, 2010).

Adolescents: For the purpose of this study, “adolescents were considered as youth who are in middle school or high school with an age range of 12-18” (Arnett, 2010).

Afterschool Program: “Afterschool is an all-inclusive term for youth development programming that occurs beyond the school day, including before school, after school, holidays, weekends and summers” (Indiana After School Network, 2010).

Community Connectedness: In this study, community connectedness is “a strong sense of identity or feeling of belonging to the community, good relationships with neighbors and others (real friendships — call on in times of need); and, a number of links with people or groups from outside the immediate group” (Tomison, 1999).

Self-Esteem: “Self-esteem is a person’s overall sense of worth and well-being” (Arnett, 2010).

Semester: In this study, a semester is the 90 day period in which adolescents attend school and after school.

Significance of Study

This study will add to the body of literature in a way that has rarely been done before. It will assess the relationship between an adolescent’s attendance, self-esteem, and feelings of community connectedness. This study will be conducted with a

population of low income inner-city adolescents in order to increase knowledge about African American, Caucasian and Hispanic adolescents who attend afterschool programs. An increase in an adolescent's feeling of community connectedness will hopefully increase their openness to new experiences and willingness to take the steps necessary to be able to succeed (Halpern, 2005).

Adolescents in low-income areas often face issues earlier in their lives that cause them to question the self and mistrust others (Halpern, 2005). If adolescents are able to increase their feelings of community connectedness through afterschool program involvement, they will build trusting relationships with friends, adults, and the community itself. This study will increase knowledge of afterschool program effect on youth in an area that is under-researched and extremely important.

If an increase in community connectedness is developed through afterschool program attendance, the current research aims to get many adolescents connected to their communities in positive ways. It is one thing for a youth to feel connected to their community through gang involvement, but quite another for them to feel connected because of the positive contributions that they have made to that community.

Assumptions of the Study

This study assumes that the adolescent participants have relatively low feelings of community connectedness and can benefit from a program that allows them a place to feel welcome and a place to connect to their community through activities. It is recognized that the participants may have high levels of self-esteem, feelings of community connectedness, and may have previously attended afterschool programs. The study, however, did not differentiate between the various levels of self-esteem, feelings of community connectedness, or afterschool program attendance that the

participants may have already experienced. The study also assumes that the attendance data collected at the afterschool program sites is accurate. This data will be collected by a third party source as the researcher is not able to attend the program every day. As a quasi-experimental design, it has the purpose of establishing a cause and effect relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable, but the assignment of subject to treatment conditions is not at random (Cook & Campbell, 1979).

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The middle school and high school years that include many of the years of adolescence are a time when many lifestyle changes are being made. This is a time that can prove to be extremely difficult for adolescents in terms of their self-esteem. This period brings change that is unfamiliar and often unwelcomed by adolescents that must adapt and overcome the unfamiliarity that has suddenly been thrust upon them. During the years of middle school and high school, it is imperative that these changes be examined in efforts to help promote positive development in a time of such turmoil.

This literature review will examine self-esteem of inner-city adolescents who feel connected to their communities through after school and community program involvement. The first section will examine the risks that inner-city adolescents may take due to unstructured free time and the consequences of their actions. The second section will examine the self-esteem of youth who are involved in after-school programs in order to define the need for such programs and show the benefits that are incurred by the adolescents. This section will examine afterschool programs that are already in place and functioning in a manner that is beneficial to the adolescents who attend the program.

The third section will discuss community connectedness and how those involved feel about the accomplishments and friendships they have made in the communities in which they live. It will also examine the ways that have been useful in getting youth involved in the community.

The fourth section will discuss the framework used for this which will include the theory of developmental contextualism. This theory will explain “the interaction between the growing, that is, the continuously changing individual and the ecological context in which that person lives” (Muuss, 1996). The final section will discuss afterschool programs in general and what is needed to make them function in such a way that will increase adolescent self-esteem and feelings of connectedness to their community.

Risky Behaviors

Adolescent risky behaviors can be defined as, “any act of involving unprotected sex, substance abuse or violence among those between the ages of 13 and 19. Adolescence starts at the onset of puberty and ends at the beginning of young adulthood” (Hudome, 2010). There are many factors that play into adolescents wanting or having the ability to partake in these behaviors, one of which is unstructured free time.

In a study by Bolland (2007), it was found that among those living in high poverty inner-city areas, African American adolescents are the most at risk. This study was done in waves in order to track changes in adolescent attitudes and behaviors over a five year period as the adolescents grew older while still living in poverty. The risks that these adolescents are taking in inner-city neighborhoods include substance abuse, abuse and sexual behaviors. Bolland’s study also found that age had little relationship with race and hopelessness, but race and hopelessness were strongly correlated. He reports that inner-city mixed-race adolescents exhibit the highest levels of hopelessness and feel that there is no end to their current situation. The higher rate of hopelessness also raised the likelihood of risk behavior participation.

Along with race and age, timing of exposure to violent behavior plays a huge role in an adolescent's decision to begin engaging in such behaviors. A five wave design examined the short and long term effects violence exposure has on adolescents. The study was conducted in Mobile, Alabama and examined youth ages 9-19 and limited the effects of neighborhood and individual level poverty by restricting the study to those who are homogenous in those areas. During the first wave, violence exposure had little significance in predicting violent behavior (2006). Most violent behaviors were found to occur in wave five and could be correlated to violence exposure during waves three and four, but violence exposure between waves one and four had a more significant impact. The violence exposure during waves one and two shows to have a more long term impact as violence tends not to occur until wave five. And if the adolescent was exposed to violence starting at wave one rather than wave three or four, the acts appear to be less violent than those that were exposed during wave three and four only. Thus, the exposure to violence during the most proximal time period increases wave five violence by 84 percent (Spano, 2006).

Campbell (2005) conducted a similar study that aimed to link violence and parenting as mediators between poverty and psychological symptoms in urban African American adolescents. This study shows links between poverty and adolescent psychological symptoms through economic stressors and impaired parenting. For the study, 105 students with a mean age of 12.9 and about 47% female were examined. The results showed that poverty and economic stressors did not predict a significant difference in the prevalence of internalizing and externalizing behaviors. However, internalizing symptoms such as those that cause low self-esteem did correlate with

exposure to violence and age. The study also found that monthly income and mean number of economic stressors show that the adolescents are exposed to significant poverty and economic stress. Public policy efforts to eradicate poverty are necessary to protect these children from psychological symptoms. The study also suggests that intervention programs protecting youth from poverty's impact must also protect the family and the neighborhood in which the youth reside.

Kataoko (2008) posits that school mental health assessments need improvement in order to protect minority students who would not generally receive traditional mental health services get the assistance that they need. These services are particularly important for low-income minority students who are at increased risk for violence exposure and mental health problems due to multiple risk factors including poverty, school, and community factors. For this study, children were asked socio-demographic questions in which they responded on a 4 four point Likert scale. Violence exposure questions were also measured using a modified life-events scale. Overall, students reported high levels of victimization and witnessing of violent events. It also found that more students were exposed to violence at school rather than at home or in the community and that greater English language fluency among non-native speakers resulted in higher incidences. The greater English language fluency also contributed to the students being at higher risk of violence exposure, Post traumatic Stress Disorder, and avoidance symptoms.

Self-Esteem and Afterschool Programs

Adolescent self-esteem, behavioral and emotional status, and social context, including the peer group, family, and school social system all play a role in adolescent aggressive behaviors. Ybrandt & Armelius, (2008) conducted a study suggesting that

self-esteem be used as a mediator for peer aggression and mental health problems. Many factors, including self-esteem have proven to have long-lasting consequences on mental health in early adulthood. High self-esteem was found to be related to positive adjustment, general well-being, and mental health in adolescence and also to fewer internalizing and externalizing problems. One possible explanation is that high self-esteem could be a potential mediator between peer aggression and psychopathology which presumably facilitates effective coping and inhibits maladaptive responses to being involved in peer aggression, but this is far less well investigated (Ybrandt & Armelius, 2008). The purpose of the study by Ybrandt & Armelius, (2008) was to explore self-esteem as a possible mediator between involvement in peer aggression and internalizing and externalizing problems in a group of normal adolescents aged 12 to 16 years old. A school-based sample of 204 adolescents in four middle and junior high schools in different socioeconomic areas and a series of questionnaires were used to collect data regarding self-esteem, mental health problems, and involvement in peer aggression. It was found that self-esteem had a direct effect on mental health problems and also partly or mediated the association between involvement in peer aggression and mental health problems. The study examined three types of peer aggressors: the aggressor, the victim and those who are both the victim and the aggressor. Among the three, those who are only victims tend to have lower self-esteem than any other kind of aggressor (Ybrandt & Armelius, 2008).

The unsupervised hours of the afternoon are a crucial time for adolescents. It is during these hours that adolescents tend to get in the most trouble simply because they have nothing to do. In a study conducted by O'Donnell (1997), middle school and high

school students from low income areas who were at high risk for behavioral problems were taken to mentor elementary aged children during the afterschool hours. This was done through a partnership with the YMCA and three elementary schools. The program allowed 54 mentors to work with 584 elementary school children from afterschool programs. The teens went through an intensive training process in order to be considered for the program and were then supervised at the elementary schools. The aim was that the program be preventative in that it keeps the mentors off the streets, thus services were provided for both the mentors and the mentees who participated in the program. Through the afterschool program, both the mentors and the mentees benefited from a bonding experience that heightened the self-esteem of all involved. In fact, 89% of the mentors reported positive changes in themselves due to the employment opportunity. The program also gave the younger youth a safe place to go after school, helped them build a positive self worth, and it was also good for the parents because child care was provided. Overall, the program had positive effects on the youth, their families, and the community.

The following study by Roffman, (2001) was conducted in order to obtain information about African American and Hispanic children who attend afterschool programs. The research focuses on the change it makes in the self-esteem of children based on race, gender, and age. Roffman chose participants from a Boys and Girls Club of America in a major urban center. Three variables were used to measure the child's functioning and the children's self-esteem was measured from four opinions of themselves: a) I'm very talented and will be very successful; b) I have some things going for me and will do okay; c) I have trouble with many things and won't do too much

with myself; and d) I don't have anything special about me and won't be very successful. Children also reported the average number of days and hours they spent at the club each week. The children were also asked if they came to the club for the activities, staff at the club, enjoyment at the club, and treatment at the club. Roffman (2001) found that there was a significant correlation between enjoyment at the club and self-esteem. It was also found that girls who attended reported slightly higher levels of self-esteem than boys that attended the club, possibly because of relationships formed with staff members as girls reported getting in trouble less than boys and mentioned club staff as important to their attendance.

Inner-city youth programs operate with the aim to address the normative tasks of adolescents without neglecting the range of vulnerabilities like self-doubt and mistrust of others (Halpern, 2005). Adults have an important role to play in youth development and are essential for teaching developmental tasks. Many students have low self-efficacy and get lost in the hustle and bustle of large urban high schools, thus afterschool programs are needed to help show these at risk students how to be good citizens. An afterschool program is a place where students can go and get the extra support they need due to the deficit in support they are receiving at home or in school. Through the afterschool program, students will try out different roles, sample different kinds of experiences, question themselves and others, take risks and test limits. In order to service these children effectively, it requires a variety of persons and social resources as well as the children being open to new experiences and willing to take the steps necessary to be able to succeed. Many of the children suffer problems rooted in earlier life experiences such as loss of a family member, absentee/erratic parents, early

pregnancy, dropping out of school, responsibility for younger siblings, pressure from gangs, contact with police, juvenile justice, and child welfare authorities (Halpern, 2005). The afterschool program provides a place for those that fall somewhere between school stars and the disconnected due to gang involvement, too early parenthood, dropping out of school, being caught up in the juvenile justice system, etc. Thus afterschool youth programs need to create conditions for re-working as well as for developing self-hood (Halpern, 2005).

Community Connectedness

Youth often have the opportunity to make a huge impact on the community and neighborhood in which they live. Communities also can help make the youth development process go as smoothly as possible by providing programs for the youth to participate in that they make them feel connected to their community and want to give back to it. High feelings of community connectedness have been proven to help adolescents with positive development. Community connectedness has acted as a mediator for adolescents who have depressed or suicidal tendencies (Matlin, Molock, & Tebes, 2011).

Barton, Watkins, & Jarjoura, (1997) conducted a study that aimed to find strategies for youth development that lessen risky behaviors for those living in inner-city impoverished neighborhoods and develop a prevention program that addresses community specific risks and assets at multiple levels. This community specific approach is important, as no two communities or two children are the same. The program, must be specifically tailored to each community that it is attempted in. This community specific approach breaks down aspects of the community that cause specific issues that need to be addressed. In order for progress to be made, there must be

guidelines for what an effective program will need. Specific goals and objectives must be set out and clearly measurable. The program must be strong in duration and frequency in order to serve younger teenagers. The program must also involve peer and parent support in order for it to be successful. Unfortunately, there is no simple quick fix to the problems that impoverished youth face due to violence exposure, early pregnancy, substance use, delinquency, etc. What is known is that each neighborhood will have to tailor a program to the specific needs of its youth in order to make prevention programs successful. It is also necessary for parents, youth, and communities to be involved in the development process in order for it to be most effective (Barton, 1997).

In order to connect youth to communities, there are many strategies that can be applied. One that has proven to be rather effective is a community cultural arts program (Ersing, 2009). These community-based art programs are empowering marginalized youth to make a difference in their community and become agents of change. This particular study aimed to examine how after-school cultural arts programs have a positive effect on core development assets. The study measured youth developmental assets by using the 40 developmental assets instrumentation (Search Institute, 2004). The focus was to connect youth with outlets and opportunities that they would otherwise not have. The program helped youth increase competent decision-making skills so that they can engage in the community and learn to solve their problems rather than externalize them through risky behaviors. After a decade of research, the study concluded that if trained properly, youth can become competent community builders and agents of change (Ersing, 2009). Community development programs provide

alternative ways to utilize free time and exhibit creative expression while helping the community.

Adolescents who help care for young children, who assist people with disabilities, serve in soup kitchens, tutor their peers or younger children, visit with the aging, assist shut-ins, participate in programs to educate their communities about substance abuse, organize an action campaign to rehabilitate a building, improve a playground, clean up a stream, or advocate for the homeless are filling the void that our age of technology and alienation has created in their lives. Perhaps in more positive ways than their counterparts of an earlier era, they are assuming meaningful roles and responding to real needs of their society as well as to their need to be needed (Schine, 1990). This participation in community development allows the youth to obtain a feeling of belonging and contributing that sustains them even when the work is difficult or dull. However, for young people to learn most effectively from their participation in community service they must have opportunities to reflect thoughtfully upon the meaning of their work. A youths desire to reach out to adults other than parents and teachers, a drive to test values and try on new roles, are all important developments of this period of adolescence. Most, if not all, young adolescents will derive benefits from engaging in meaningful service to their community. Working with the very young or the aging, young volunteers enjoy the warm welcome and affection that greet them, and at the same time, their self-esteem is bolstered by the knowledge that they are valued and do, indeed, “make a difference” (Schine, 1990).

Many after school programs such as the YMCA and Boys and Girls Club of America offer youth volunteer opportunities that they like more than those provided by

schools as they do not feel restricted by the school schedule and are more able to do volunteer work that they really want to do. Establishing community service as an integral part of the program in middle level schools, however, could constitute an important first step in true reform. The challenge is to create environments and opportunities that will allow those qualities to develop, “to nurture young people in their initial quest toward an effective and satisfying adulthood” (Hornbeck, 1988). This policy identified the importance of community involvement in key decisions about schooling. One model aimed to promote self-confidence and self-esteem, develop life and problem solving skills, encourage the practicing of social skills, link the child or young person into appropriate community services, and ultimately, facilitate the young person’s engagement in education. This model is beneficial to all involved. The community receives a volunteer, the youth’s self- esteem is bolstered and the school has fostered change in a young person.

Broadbent (2010) found that six in 10 youth believed that they are now more confident as a consequence of participating and valued highly the experience of exploring and learning in their local communities and engaging with diverse people, whether this was volunteering capacity, assisting others, or engaging in new experiential learning and skill development. The program also improved the overall school performance of five in 10 youth. Learning happens at home, and in neighborhoods as well as at school – wherever young people with curious minds spend time. Thus, schools that provide high quality teaching and an array of experiences and skill-building opportunities in a variety of community environments, learning is deepened and strengthened. Clearly communities need to be places where young people can

avail themselves of such opportunities and it requires communities, programs and governments to work together to achieve long term sustainable program outcomes and benefits (Broadbent, 2010).

Community schools are open to students, families, and community members before during and after school and throughout the year. They are a place and set of partnerships that lead to improved student learning, stronger schools, and healthier families and communities (Blank, 2003). Community schools use the community as a resource to engage students in learning and service and help them become problem solvers and asset builders in their communities. This is also beneficial to the students as it provides them with a place to go in the after school hours. A place where they can get an assignment and go out and make a difference. This is great way to get youths connected to their communities through service and cooperative learning experiences. When the community is used as text, young people can become assets in their community, helping to solve specific problems alongside peers and adults while increasing their feeling of connectedness to the community in which they live. Community based Child and Youth Care (CYC) include building partnerships with parents, service providers, and youth while helping resolve individual problems and helping to build capacity. CYCs have learned to use recreation strategically as a tool to attract at-risk youth into the community centre (Martin & Tennant, 2008). Community centers have a neighborhood Board of Directors who plan the long term development of the community center in conjunction with the municipality community members and staff of the center. These centers must learn to observe children and youth and the trends that they partake in. Thus, the comfort and connection between children and youth

worker are key indicators of the effectiveness of a community CYC worker (Martin & Tennat, 2008). Experience has taught us, however, that youth work best when they initiate and develop the programs. In this case, a few adolescents may develop a program that works great for them that is also great for many other youth simply because it was created by youths in the same sort of situation. This allows the adolescents to create meaningful relationships with one another, the youth workers and the community. Community centers that are open year round to people of all ages in the community often facilitate a living room type center. In these centers, the feeling of community connectedness is extraordinarily high as everyone meets in one place and feels comfortable being there together. The adolescents do not feel ostracized by the adults and the adults do not feel bothered by the actions of the adolescents at the center. Over time, the adolescents and friends develop closer ties with each other than they were previously able to.

Local schools can also benefit from community centers as they provide places for youths with anger problems and other disabilities with a place to let out frustrations whether it is by playing on a sports team or just interacting with youth who are just like them. The centers provide a place for cooperative learning and a great resource to schools. The center allows the schools to focus on educating youth rather than try to fix their problems while educating them. The center ultimately provides a support system for youth to develop skills and competencies; provide youth with opportunities to practice new behaviors and take on challenging roles; encourage civic involvement and; provide opportunities for youth to feel connected and valued (Martin & Tennant, 2008).

Having a sense of community represents a social economy of shared intimacy based on self-disclosure and feelings (McMillan, 1996). This suggests that individuals who do not have a sense of community are at greater risk for feeling of social isolation and alienation, which may lead to experiences of loneliness and low self-esteem (Chipuer, 2001). An adolescent's feeling of connectedness to peers, parents and the neighborhood communities are important to the developmental process and are predictors of a youth's self-esteem and life satisfaction.

Loneliness is a factor that greatly affects self-esteem and youth that don't feel the dyadic connection with their peers and parent report a higher degree of loneliness experiences and those who feel closely connected to peers, school, neighborhood and community report lower levels of loneliness than those who only feel connected to their parents. These dyadic relationships between peers and the community in which the youth live are very important to the youth's well-being and it is important that we create communities that meet youth's needs.

Theoretical Framework

The theory that will be used for this study is Richard M. Lerner's Theory of Developmental Contextualism. This is a theory that is not limited to adolescence, but on the contrary, it encompasses the entire span of human life, and is a lifespan developmental theory that shares many ideas with the life-span developmentalists Baltes, Reese, and Neselroade. Contextualism constitutes a conceptual tool that fosters an awareness of diversity and greater understanding of the individual in the multiple contexts that in which he or she lives. The purpose is to advance our knowledge of specific factors and subfactors and emphasize how their interactions contribute to the developmental process. The multiple contexts in which an adolescent

lives are particularly important to this study as it examines the relationship between an adolescent's self-esteem, feelings of community connectedness, and afterschool program attendance.

The focus of this study will be on context as described by Lerner. The contexts to be examined include, family structure, family recreational and leisure time activities, socioeconomic variables, quality and level of supervision, and geographic location of the home. Each of these contexts will reveal the specific context and situation in which the adolescents in the study live, grow, and go to school. This information will help explain the relationships between self-esteem, feelings of community connectedness, and afterschool program attendance (Muuss, 1996).

Summary

Adolescents of middle school and high school age participate in risky behaviors almost every day. These risk behaviors tend to occur during the unsupervised hours of the afternoon between the time school gets out and parents get home from work. The need for structured activity and a safe place to go after school is greatly needed for adolescents living in inner-city neighborhoods.

After school programs provide an outlet for these students that fall somewhere in between those who are involved with positive extra-curricular activities at school and those that have no place to turn, but the streets and gang involvement for support. This is a crucial time in the adolescent's life and the need for activities that keep them grounded are necessary. It is also necessary that these activities benefit their self-esteem as well. Low self-esteem is an ever so increasing problem among many adolescents, partially due to the feeling that they don't belong because they fall in the disconnected group. After school programs offer the opportunity for students to have an

outlet, a place to “blow off steam” while still being supervised and allow them to “hang out” with their friends.

Communities and community centers are a great location for these afterschool programs that allow inner-city adolescents the opportunity to have a place where they feel like they belong. It is a place that is like a home away from home for them where they feel safe and can also learn about the community in which they live. Communities are an integral part of the youth development process and communities that provide opportunities for youth to thrive have produced great results in terms of the youth’s experiences. The youth who are able to volunteer in their community whether it be with the elderly, younger children, or their peers can develop a sense of belonging. The community and the youth both gain from the experience that has been provided.

Community centers and afterschool programs often provide these volunteer opportunities to the adolescents in their community. They help to locate and provide these opportunities for adolescents who would generally have no idea where to start looking for such an experience. These opportunities to connect with the community have increased student performance in the classroom as well as their own personal self-esteem and vocational skills. The ability to feel connected to their community is something that youth of all ages can benefit from and communities need to provide an environment in which youth can thrive.

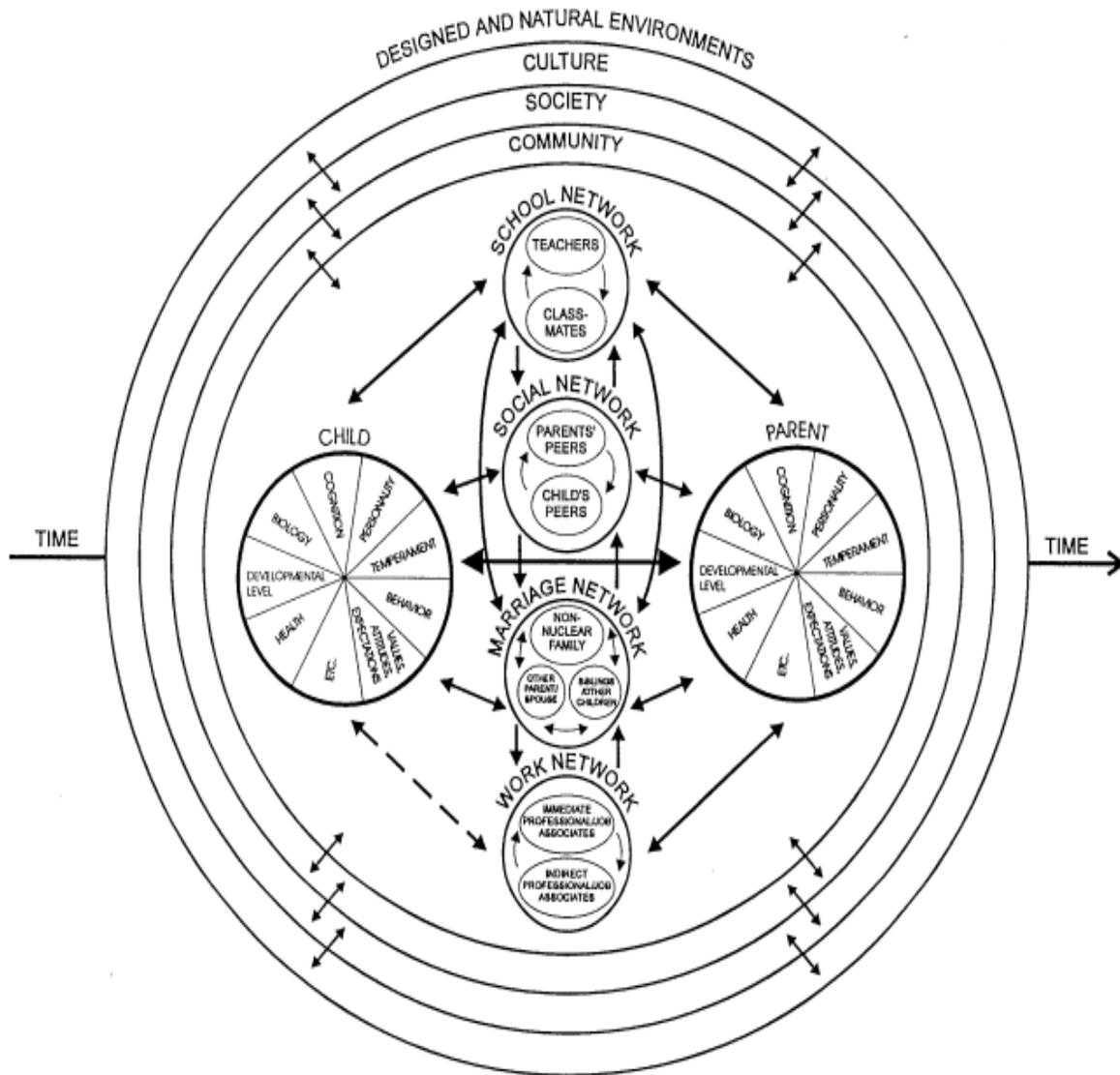


Figure 2-1. Learner's Model of Developmental Contextualism

CHAPTER 3 METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a quasi-experimental design. A quasi-experimental design has the purpose of establishing a cause and effect relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable, but the assignment of subjects to treatment conditions is not at random (Cook & Campbell, 1979). Thus, this study examined whether a program or treatment caused some outcome or outcomes to occur. Adolescents were not randomly selected but rather chosen based on their participation in a currently running afterschool program. Quasi-experimental designs do determine the relationship between two or more variables as well as the direction of the relationship between the variables. For this study, the independent variable is self-esteem and the dependent variables are the adolescents' change in feelings of community connectedness as well as the adolescent's afterschool program attendance.

Population & Sampling Frame

The theoretical population for this study was comprised of adolescents participating in a particular afterschool program in Central Florida funded by The United States Department of Agriculture Children Youth and Families at Risk (CYFAR). The entirety of the population was students enrolled in nearby middle or high schools in Volusia and Seminole County. The population available for sampling consisted of 61 middle school or high school aged adolescents enrolled in the CYFAR afterschool program in Volusia and Seminole counties. Minority students, particularly African American and Hispanic youth were studied as the researcher wanted to add to the body of research concerning those minority/ethnic groups. These youth were also thought to

show potentially greater increases in feelings of community development as they lived in low-income, rather impoverished communities. The researcher had no reason to believe that the minority adolescents in this study were different than adolescents in their same situation elsewhere and assumed that the findings would be generalizable among African American and Hispanic middle school and high school aged adolescents from low SES areas.

Each adolescent's parent was contacted in person at drop off and pick up points at the afterschool program site to inform them of the study and asked to sign a form providing written consent for their child to participate in the research. Program registration forms were made available in English and Spanish and a translator was at each point to communicate with parents who had low level of English language fluency. If the consent form was not received within a two week period, the researcher attempted a second contact via telephone. Once parental consent and student assent was obtained, students were included in the population for the current study.

Data Collection

For each county, the researcher coordinated a time with the program director to come to the program and collect the data. All students present on the day of collection were asked to participate in the data collection process. Afterschool program participants were reminded that their participation was voluntary, and would remain confidential and anonymous. They were also reminded that their responses would be given a number for identification rather than their name.

A total of 61 participants participated in the study. Only students whose parents did not return consent forms did not participate. Of the 65 questionnaires that were completed, 61 were used for data analysis.

Instrumentation

Self- Esteem Instrumentation

Self-esteem was measured using the Rosenberg's (1965) 10-item self-esteem scale. The scale in this study reported a Cronbach's Alpha score of .758 which is consistent with the historical Cronbach's Alpha scores found when using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. The scale consisted of statements dealing with general feelings about the self. The complete scale took about 10 minutes to complete. The questionnaire consisted of the following conceptual areas: a). self-worth; b). success or failure; c). ability; and d). attitude. Each item consists of answers ranging from 0, strongly agree to 3, and strongly disagree. Some items were reverse coded so that 3 was strongly agree and 0 strongly disagree. The raw score will be measured and can range from one to 30 with 30 being the highest level of self-esteem and one being the lowest level of self-esteem. Those with low levels of self-esteem will have self-esteem scores that range from 0-10 and will be assigned to group 1, mid range self-esteem will range from 11-20 and be assigned to group 2 and a high level self-esteem score will be classified as 21-30 and will be assigned to group 3.

Community Connectedness Instrumentation

To assess the adolescent's feelings of community connectedness, a shortened, 5-item version of the variable was used from Youth Involved in Community Issues Survey (YICI) (Barnett & Payne, 2010). The Cronbach's Alpha on this measure was a .90. The complete scale took approximately five minutes to complete. The survey consists of questions regarding community connectedness. The 5-item survey is measured on a five point scale ranging from 1, strongly disagree to 5, strongly agree.

The YICI survey was implemented on participants participating in the afterschool program.

The community connectedness section of the YICI (Barnett & Payne, 2010) included five items. These five items are as follows: a).youth in my community have a voice; b). I feel connected to my community; c). I am not interested in what goes on in my community; d). I am able to influence decisions that affect my community; and e). I do not feel I have a positive impact on my community. These questions allowed the researcher to determine whether or not the adolescent's felt as though they were valued in the community and whether they were willing to go into the community and make decisions. This instrumentation was administered in June 2011. The measure of feelings of community connectedness can range from 5-25. Those reporting low feelings of community connectedness will have a score between 5 and 11 and will be assigned to group 1. Those with mid-level feelings of community connectedness will have a score between 12 and 18 and will be assigned to group 2, and those reporting high feelings of community connectedness will have scores between 19 and 25 and will be assigned to group 3.

Measurement of Attendance

Attendance was measured using the attendance records that are kept at the afterschool program site. Each site keeps a record of daily attendance in which frequency and consistency of attendance was obtained from. The attendance measure will be broken into three categories based on the number of times the adolescent attended the program. Those who reportedly attended 0 days will be assigned to group 0. Those who attended 1-47 days will be considered to have low attendance and assigned to group 1. Those who attend 48-94 days will be considered to have mid-level

attendance and will be assigned to group 2 and those who attend 95-142 days will be considered to have a high rate of attendance and assigned to group 3.

Demographics

The demographics section consisted of questions asking about the participant's age, grade in school, race/ethnicity, and gender. Demographics information was collected as it is in most research in order to gain a better understanding of the sample being studied. Adolescents were first asked to write their age as a number in years. They were then asked to identify their grade, 6th-12th. Following their age, adolescents were asked to select their race/ethnicity, a). White, (non-Hispanic); b). Asian- Pacific Islander; c). Black (non-Hispanic); d). Hispanic; or e). Other. Last the adolescents were asked to identify their gender, a). Male or b). Female.

Limitations of the Study

The population of this study was a sample of convenience in which the participants voluntarily agreed to take part in the after school program and community development activities that were provided. Another limitation of this study is that the results cannot be generalized to youth in after school programs everywhere as there was not a great deal of diversity among the sample population. Also, adolescent development strategies must be tailored to each individual community as the adolescents are not the same in all communities thus the results cannot be used to generalize adolescents in every community environment. A final limitation was that the attendance data collected from the afterschool program sites was not completely accurate.

Data Analysis

The researcher used Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) 20.0 for statistical tests of the data collected. Data collection was analyzed using many different types of tests including Correlation Coefficient, ANOVA, Linear Regression, MANOVA and Chi-Squared test to display the correlations between the variable as well as the variance that exist among middle school and high school students as well as African American and Hispanic participants.

Table 3-1. Research questions table

Research Questions	Hypothesis	Items	Type of Analysis	Variables
RQ 1: Is there a relationship between self-esteem and afterschool program attendance?	Ho 3: Adolescents who attend after school programs will have higher self-esteem scores.	Attendance 1-10 (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Measure)	Correlation Coefficient Anova Linear Regression MANOVA Chi-Square	Independent Variable: Self Esteem Dependent Variable: Consistency of attendance
RQ 2: Is there a relationship between an adolescent's self-esteem and community connectedness?	Ho 1: Adolescent self-esteem is positively related to levels of feelings of community connectedness.	1-10 (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Measure) 25-29 (Youth Involved In Community Issues Survey)	Correlation Coefficient Anova Linear Regression MANOVA Chi-Square	Independent Variable: Self- Esteem Dependent Variable: Community Connectedness
RQ 3: Is there a relationship between feelings of community connectedness and afterschool program attendance?	Ho 2: Adolescents who attend after school programs will have greater feelings of connectedness to the community.	Attendance 25-29 (Youth Involved In Community Issues Survey)	Correlation Coefficient Anova Linear Regression MANOVA Chi-Square	Independent Variable: Afterschool Program Attendance Dependent Variable: Community Connectedness

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the level of self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness of adolescents who participate in afterschool programs. This chapter reports the results of the “Youth Involved in Community Issues Survey (Community Connectedness Index), as well as “The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Measure”, and the participants frequency of afterschool program attendance. It includes a description of the participant demographics in the areas of gender, race, and age. This study compared adolescents feelings of community connectedness and self-esteem based on their afterschool program attendance.

Descriptive Results

A total of 65 CYFAR afterschool program attendees completed the surveys. If the afterschool program attendees only filled out one of the surveys, or there were a great deal of questions left unanswered, they were eliminated from the sample. A final total of 61 participants were included in the sample. Of the participants, 11 were from the Volusia County CYFAR afterschool program and 50 were from the Seminole County CYFAR afterschool program. The response rate of adolescents attending the afterschool program was 93.8%. The final sample size was limited as some participants did not want to fill out the surveys or the participants were picked up from the program before being able to complete both surveys.

Demographics of the Sample

The demographic criteria included gender, race and age. Tables D-1, D-2 (see Appendix D), and 4-3 display demographics for this sample. Of the participants from Volusia County, six (54.5%) of the respondents were male and five (45.5%) were

female. The respondents ranged in age from 12-16 and the mean age was 14.09 years old. A total of 2 (18.2%) were 12 years old, 2 (18.2%) were 13 years old, 3 (27.3%) were 14 years old, 1 (9.1%) were 15 years old, and 3 (27.3%) were 16 years old. Participants identified their race as either African American, Hispanic/Latino, or White /Caucasian. A total of 3 (27.3%) reported that they were African American, 6 (54.5%) that they were Hispanic/ Latino, and 2 (8.2%) were White/Caucasian.

Of the 50 participants from the Seminole County site, 27 (54%) reported that they were male; 20 (40%) reported being female, and 3 (6%) did not answer. The participants ranged in age from 10-19 with a mean age of 12.94. Of the participants, 1 (2%) was 10 years old, 12 (24%) were 11 years old, 11 (22%) were 12 years old, 8 (16%) were 13 years old, 10 (20%) were 14 years old, 3 (6%) were 15 years old, 0 (0%) were 16 years old, 2 (4%) were 17 years old, 1 (2%) was 18 years old, 1 (2%) was 19 years old, and 1 (2%) did not respond. The Seminole County participants identified as African American, Hispanic/Latino, and White/Caucasian. Of the participants, 44 (88%) reported being African American, 1 (2%) as Hispanic/Latino, 1 (2%) as White/Caucasian, and 4 (8%) did not respond.

Combined, there were 61 participants. Of the participants, 26 (42.6%) were male, 32 (52.5%) were female, and 3 (4.9%) did not answer. The age of the participants ranged from 10-19 and the mean age was 13.15. One (1.6%) participant reported being 10, 12 (19.7%) were 11 years old, 13 (21.3%) were 12 years old, 10 (16.4%) were 13 years old, 13 (21.3%) were 14 years old, 4 (6.6%) were 15 years old, 3 (4.9%) were 16 years old, 2 (3.3%) were 17 years old, 1 (1.6%) was 18 years old, 1 (1.6%) reported being 19 years old and 1 (1.6%) did not respond. The participants reported being

African American, Hispanic/Latino and White/Caucasian. Of the sample, 47 (77%) were African American, 7 (11.5%) were Hispanic/Latino, 3 (4.9%) were White/Caucasian, and 4 (6.6%) did not respond.

Table 4-1. Demographic characteristics of combined county study participants

	n	f	%
Gender	61		
Male		26	42.6
Female		32	52.5
Did not Respond		3	4.9
Age	61		
10 years old		1	1.6
11 years old		12	19.7
12 years old		13	21.3
13 years old		10	16.4
14 years old		13	21.3
15 years old		4	6.6
16 years old		3	4.9
17 years old		2	3.3
18 years old		1	1.6
19 years old		1	1.6
Did not Respond		1	1.6
Race/Ethnicity	61		
African American		47	77
Hispanic/Latino		7	11.5
White/Caucasian		3	4.9
Did not Respond		4	6.6

Attendance Measure

The attendance measure reported respondent's number of days attending the afterschool program. Tables D-3, D-4 (see Appendix D), and 4-2 display the number of times respondents attended the program. Number of days attended in Volusia County ranged from 20 to 117 days. The mean number of days attended was 65.55. Of the 11 participants, 1 (9.1%) attended the program 20 days, 1 (9.1%) attended 30 days, 1 (9.1%) attended 32 days, 1 (9.1%) attended 35 days, 1 (9.1%) attended 69 days, 1

(9.1%) attended 73 days, 2 (18.2 %) attended 77 days, 1 (9.1%) attended 87 days, 1 (9.1%) attended 104 days, and 1 (9.1%) attended 117 days.

The participants in Seminole County attended between 0 and 142 days with a mean of 25.66. Of the participants surveyed, 22 (43.1%) of the participants had reportedly not attended the program. These surveyed participants are thought to have attended the program previously, but the attendance records are presumably inaccurate. One (2%) attended 2 days, 1 (2%) attended 3 days, 1 (2%) attended 5 days, 2 (3.9%) attended 9 days, 3 (5.9%) attended 14 days, 1 (2%) attended 15 days, 1 (2%) attended 21 days, 1 (2%) attended 25 days, 1 (2%) attended 29 days, 1 (2%) attended 30 days, 1 (2%) attended 32 days, 1 (2%) attended 37 days, 1 (2%) attended 42 days, 1 (2%) attended 44 days, 1 (2%) attended 46 days, 1 (2%) attended 57 days, 1 (2%) attended 75 days, 2 (3.9%) attended 87 days, 1 (2%) attended 91 days, 1 (2%) attended 97 days, 1 (2%) attended 104 days, 1 (2%) attended 135 days, and 1 (2%) attended 142 days.

Combined, the participants attended the afterschool program between 0 and 147 days. The mean attendance was 32.85 days. Of the participants, 0 (22%) did not attend the program, 1 (1.6%) attended 2 days, 1 (1.6%) attended 3 days, 1 (1.6%) attended 5 days, 2 (3.3%) attended 9 days, 3 (4.9%) attended 14 days, 1 (1.6%) attended 15 days, 1 (1.6%) attended 17 days, 1 (1.6%) attended 20 days, 1 (1.6%) attended 21 days, 1 (1.6%) attended 25 days, 1 (1.6%) attended 29 days, 2 (3.3%) attended 30 days, 2 (3.3%) attended 32 days, 1 (1.6%) attended 35 days, 1 (1.6%) attended 37 days, 1 (1.6%) attended 42 days, 1 (1.6%) attended 44 days, 1 (1.6%) attended 46 days, 1 (1.6%) attended 57 days, 1 (1.6%) attended 69 days, 1 (1.6%) attended 73 days, 1

(1.6%) attended 75 days, 2 (3.3%) attended 77 days, 3 (4.9%) attended 87 days, 1 (1.6%) attended 91 days, 1 (1.6%) attended 97 days, 2 (3.3%) attended 104 days, 1 (1.6%) attended 117 days, 1 (1.6%) attended 135 days, and 1 (1.6%) attended 142 days.

Table 4-2. Attendance of combined county study participants

Number of Days Attended	n	f	%
	61		
0		22	36.1
2		1	1.6
3		1	1.6
5		1	1.6
9		2	3.3
14		3	4.9
15		1	1.6
17		1	1.6
20		1	1.6
21		1	1.6
25		1	1.6
29		1	1.6
30		2	3.3
32		2	3.3
35		1	1.6
37		1	1.6
42		1	1.6
44		1	1.6
46		1	1.6
57		1	1.6
69		1	1.6
73		1	1.6
75		1	1.6
77		2	3.3
87		3	4.9
91		1	1.6
97		1	1.6
104		2	3.3
117		1	1.6
135		1	1.6
142		1	1.6

Self-Esteem Measure

“The Rosenberg Self-Esteem measure” assessed the self-esteem of the adolescent’s that participated in the study. Tables D-5, D-6 (see Appendix D), and 4-3 display adolescent’s self-esteem scores. The self-esteem (SE) scores for the Volusia County participants ranged from 18 to 30 points and had a mean score of 22.55. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale can output self-esteem scores between 0 and 30. Those students who reported a self-esteem score between zero and 10 were put in group and assessed as having low self-esteem. Those with scores between 11 and 20 were put in group two and were assessed to have mid-level self-esteem, and those with self-esteem scores between 21 and 30 were placed in group 3 and assessed to have high self-esteem. Of the Volusia County afterschool program participants, 1 (9.1%) reported a SE score of 18, 1 (9.1%) reported a SE score of 19, 1(9.1%) reported a SE score of 20, 2 (18.2%) reported a SE score of 21, 1 (9.1%) reported a SE score of 22, 2 (18.2%) reported a SE score of 23, 1 (9.1%) reported a SE score of 25, 1 (9.1%) reported a SE score of 26, and 1 (9.1%) reported a SE score of 30.

Among the Seminole County participants, the self-esteem scores range from 15-30 and had a mean score of 23.64. Of the participant, 2 (3.9%) reported an SE score of 15, 1 (2%) reported an SE score of 16, 2 (3.9%) reported an SE score of 17, 2 (3.9%) reported an SE score of 18, 3 (5.9%) reported an SE score of 19, 3 (5.9%) reported an SE score of 20, 4 (7.8%) reported an SE score of 21, 5 (9.8%) reported an SE score of 22, 1 (2%) reported an SE score of 23, 1 (2%) reported an SE score of 24, 6 (11.8%) reported an SE score of 25, 5 (9.8%) reported an SE score of 26, 5 (9.8%) reported an SE score of 27, 2 (3.9%) reported an SE score of 28, 3 (5.9%) reported an SE score of 29, 5 (9.8%) reported an SE score of 30, and 1 (2%) did not report a SE score.

Combined, the participants reported self-esteem scores between 15 and 30. The mean score was 23.44. Of the participants, 2 (3.3%) reported a SE score of 15, 1 (1.6%) reported a SE score of 16, 2 (3.3%) reported a SE score of 17, 3 (4.9%) reported a SE score of 18, 4 (6.6%) reported a SE score of 19, 4 (6.6%) reported a SE score of 20, 6 (9.8%) reported a SE score of 21, 6 (9.8%) reported a SE score of 22, 3 (4.9%) reported a SE score of 23, 1 (1.6%) reported a SE score of 24, 7 (11.5%) reported a SE score of 25, 6 (9.8%) reported a SE score of 26, 5 (8.3%) reported a SE score of 27, 2 (3.3%) reported a SE score of 28, 3 (4.9%) reported an SE score of 29, 6 (9.8%) reported a SE score of 30, and 1 did not report a self-esteem score.

Table 4-3. Self-esteem of combined county study participants

Self-Esteem Score	n	f	%
	61		
15		2	3.3
16		1	1.6
17		2	3.3
18		3	4.9
19		4	6.6
20		4	6.6
21		6	9.8
22		6	9.8
23		3	4.9
24		1	1.6
25		7	11.5
26		6	9.8
27		5	8.3
28		2	3.3
29		3	4.9
30		6	9.8
Did not Report		1	1.6

Youth Involved in Community Issues Measure

Respondents were asked to report their feelings of community connectedness based on the following five questions. I feel connected to my community, youth in my

community have a voice, I am not interested in what goes on in my community, I am able to influence the decisions that affect my community, and I do not feel I have a positive impact on my community. The results are displayed in tables D-7, D-8 (see Appendix D), and 4-4. Participants answered these questions by selecting strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree or strongly agree.

Among the participants at the Volusia County site, when asked if youth in their community had a voice, 1 (9.1%) disagreed with the Statement, 3 (27.3%) were undecided, and 7 (63.6%) agreed. When asked if they felt connected to their community, 4 (36.4%) were undecided, 6 (54.5%) agreed, and 1 (9.1%) strongly agreed. Two (18.2%) disagreed with the statement: I am not interested in what goes on in my community, 2 (18.2%) were undecided, 5(45.5%) agreed, and 2 (18.2%) strongly agreed. When answering whether or not they were able to influence decisions in their community, 2 (18.2%) disagreed, 5 (45.5%) were undecided, and, 4 (36.4%) agreed. When posed with the statement, I do not feel that I have a positive impact on my community, 1 (9.1%) strongly disagreed, 3 (27.3%) disagreed, 4 (36.4%) were undecided, 2 (18.2%) agreed, and 1 (9.1%) strongly agreed.

Among the participants at the Seminole County site, when asked if youth in their community had a voice, 6 (12%) strongly disagreed with the statement, 2 (4%) disagreed, 16 (32%) were undecided, 15 (30%) agreed and 11 (22%) strongly agreed. When asked if they felt connected to their community, 5 (10%) strongly disagreed, 1 (2%) disagreed, 12 (24%) were undecided, 18 (36%) agreed, and 14 (28%) strongly agreed. Seven (14%) strongly disagreed with the statement: I am not interested in what goes on in my community, 10 (20%) disagreed, 13 (26%) were undecided, 7 (14%)

agreed, and 13 (26%) strongly agreed. When answering whether or not they were able to influence decisions in their community, 7 (14%) strongly disagreed, 2 (4%) disagreed, 16 (32%) were undecided, 16 (32%) agreed and 9 (18%) agreed. When posed with the statement, I do not feel that I have a positive impact on my community, 5 (10%) strongly disagreed, 7 (14%) disagreed, 16 (32%) were undecided, 6 (12%) agreed, and 16 (32%) strongly agreed.

Among the participants of the counties combined, when asked if youth in their community had a voice, 6 (9.8%) strongly disagreed with the statement, 3 (4.9%) disagreed, 19 (31.1%) were undecided, 22 (36.1%) agreed and 11 (18%) strongly agreed. When asked if they felt connected to their community, 5 (8.2%) strongly disagreed, 1 (1.6%) disagreed, 16 (26.2%) were undecided, 24 (39.3%) agreed, and 15 (24.6%) strongly agreed. Seven (11.5%) strongly disagreed with the statement: I am not interested in what goes on in my community, 12 (19.7%) disagreed, 15 (24.6%) were undecided, 12 (19.7%) agreed, and 15 (24.6%) strongly agreed. When answering whether or not they were able to influence decisions in their community, 7 (11.5%) strongly disagreed, 4 (6.6%) disagreed, 21 (34.4%) were undecided, 20 (32.8%) agreed and 9 (14.8%) agreed. When posed with the statement, I do not feel that I have a positive impact on my community, 6 (9.8%) strongly disagreed, 10 (16.4%) disagreed, 20 (32.8%) were undecided, 8 (13.1%) agreed, and 17 (27.9%) strongly agreed.

Table 4-4. Feelings of community connectedness of combined county study participants

	n	f	%
Youth in my community have a voice.	61		
Strongly Disagree		6	9.8
Disagree		3	4.9
Undecided		19	31.1
Agree		22	36.1
Strongly Agree		11	18
I feel connected to my community.	61		
Strongly Disagree		5	8.2
Disagree		1	1.6
Undecided		16	26.2
Agree		24	39.3
Strongly Agree		15	24.6
I am not interested in what goes on in my community.	61		
Strongly Disagree		7	11.5
Disagree		12	19.7
Undecided		15	24.6
Agree		12	19.7
Strongly Agree		15	24.6
I am able to influence decisions that affect my community.	61		
Strongly Disagree		7	11.5
Disagree		4	6.6
Undecided		21	34.4
Agree		20	32.8
Strongly Agree		9	14.8
I do not feel I have a positive impact on my community.	61		
Strongly Disagree		6	9.8
Disagree		10	16.4
Undecided		20	32.8
Agree		8	13.1
Strongly Agree		17	27.9

Analysis of Research Questions and Hypothesis

Research Question 1.

Is there a relationship between afterschool program attendance and self-esteem?

Hypothesis 1. Adolescents who regularly attend afterschool programs will have higher self-esteem scores than those who do not regularly attend.

Hypothesis 1 was rejected.

Pearson Correlation

The adolescents who were used for this study were a sample of convenience. They were members of a federally funded afterschool program that is operated in two separate counties (Volusia and Seminole) in its second year of operation in their communities. The adolescents surveyed reported relatively high self-esteem scores. The self-esteem mean score was 23.44 of 30 possible and group mean score of 2.7377 of 3 possible with a standard deviation of 4.197 and group standard deviation of .44353 respectively. With self-esteem scores that are already relatively high as they are based on a 30 point scale, the researcher was not able to determine whether or not the self-esteem score could be attributed to afterschool program attendance or something else, as the number of days attended varied greatly and the self-esteem scores remained relatively high. Of those surveyed, the mean number of days attending the program was 32.85 with a standard deviation of 39.783 and group standard deviation. Due to the nature of the program (students are not required to attend) it is difficult to determine the exact cause of the adolescent's relatively high levels of self-esteem.

Spearman Correlation

A Spearman non-parametric correlation was also conducted in order to determine if there was a different relationship than was examined through the Pearson parametric correlation.

Linear Regression

The linear regression testing resulted in a significance score of .442 indicating that there is not a significant relationship between self-esteem and number of days attending an afterschool program.

One Way ANOVA

The one way ANOVA resulted in a significance score of .883 indicating that there is not any significant relationship between afterschool program attendance and self-esteem. Of the students used for data analysis, most fell into groupings two and three for both self-esteem and total attendance meaning that they reported mid to high level self-esteem as well as mid to high attendance patterns.

MANOVA

Using the MANOVA test of between subject effects, the results indicated an F score of 1.214 and a significance value of .284 indicating again that there is no significant relationship between self esteem and afterschool program attendance. The corrected model, however, resulted in an F score of 1.913 and a significance total of .049 indicating that there is some kind of relationship between the two, but it cannot be determined if there is a direct relationship between self-esteem and afterschool program attendance (The Corrected Model is the variance in the dependent variables which the independent variables accounts for without the intercept being taken into consideration.) In order for significance to be determined at a 95% confidence interval, the researcher would like to see a significance score of .05.

Research Question 2.

Is there a relationship between an adolescent's self-esteem and community connectedness?

Hypothesis 2. Adolescent self-esteem is positively related to levels of feelings of community connectedness.

Hypothesis 2 was rejected.

Pearson Correlation

Using the combined data (includes both counties) the mean self-esteem score of the participants in this group was higher than expected. The participants reported a mean self-esteem score of 23.44 and a grouped score of 2.7377 with a standard deviation of 4.197 and group standard deviation of .44353. This high range score showed that there was little room for self-esteem score increase. Although the participants reported a fairly high mean self-esteem score, it was found that self-esteem could be increased through heightened feelings of community connectedness in one specific area. The participants reported that having a voice in their community would help them to have more respect for themselves. The Pearson correlation between those two variables gave a result of $-.307$, showing that there is room for significant improvement in this area. Although the hypothesis was rejected as it was written, the researcher did find areas where self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness could be increased. With only one of the inter-item correlations proving to be significant, it is important to note that the correlations between the items although not significant, some were positive, indicating that the adolescents do feel connected to their community even if the connection is seemingly insignificant. The participants reported the highest level of agreement with the statement; I wish I could have more respect for myself which had a mean score of 1.67 and a standard deviation of 1.020. Thus, this is an area where improvement can be made whether it is through connecting with their community or continued afterschool program attendance.

Table 4-5. Self-esteem and community connectedness Pearson Correlation

	Youth in my comm- unity have a voice.	I feel connected to my comm.- unity	I am not interested in what goes on in my comm.- unity	I am able to influence decisions that affect my comm.- unity.	I do not feel I have a positive impact on my comm.- unity.	Total Community Connected- ness.
On the whole I am satisfied with myself. Pearson Correlation						
Sig. (2- Tailed)	-.100	.091	.006	.016	.014	.010
	.444	.484	.963	.904	.915	.942
At times, I think I am no good at all. Pearson Correlation	-.045	-.094	.155	-.015	.088	.045
Sig. (2-Tailed)	.731	.731	.234	.907	.499	.730
I feel that I have a number of good qualities. Pearson Correlation	-.045	.057	.151	.072	-.071	.062
Sig. (2-Tailed)	.733	.665	.246	.583	.587	.637
I am able to do things as well as most other people. Pearson Correlation	-.074	.143	.090	.102	-.028	.084
Sig. (2-Tailed)	.570	.270	.492	.432	.833	.520
I feel I do not have much to be proud of. Pearson Correlation	-.172	.036	.074	-.049	.110	.008
Sig. (2-Tailed)	.184	.786	.571	.706	.400	.950
I certainly feel useless at times. Pearson Correlation	-.157	-.077	.159	-.042	.037	-.018
Sig. (2-Tailed)	.230	.557	.226	.749	.777	.893
I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others. Pearson Correlation	.110	.163	.013	.108	-.045	.118
Sig. (2-Tailed)	.399	.209	.921	.409	.731	.364
I wish I could have more respect for myself. Pearson Correlation	-.307*	-.203	.233	-.217	.222	-.070
Sig. (2-Tailed)	.017	.121	.073	.096	.088	.597
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure. Pearson Correlation	-.232	-.100	.164	-.146	.218	-.013
Sig. (2-Tailed)	.072	.442	.206	.261	.091	.922
I take a positive attitude toward myself. Pearson Correlation	-.038	-.002	.128	-.096	.080	.036
Sig. (2-tailed)	.773	.988	.327	.460	.539	.784

Linear Regression

When analyzing the Linear Regression models to investigate whether or not there is a relationship between adolescent self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness, the results indicated a significance score between the two variables of .108, therefore, there is not a significant relationship between self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness. In order for the score to be considered significant, it must be .05 or below.

One Way ANOVA

The data shows again that there is no significance between self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness. The test of homogeneity of variance produced a significance score of .096 which indicates that the two are not significantly related. The ANOVA itself produced a significance score of .216 indicating to a higher degree that the two variables are not related.

MANOVA

Using the Multiple analyses of variance between subject effects test, the results indicate again that there is no significant relationship between self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness. In fact, the results produced a significance score of .946 indicating that the two are nearly as far from significantly related as they could possibly be as farthest from significant is a score of 1. The Corrected model, however, shows a significance score of .567 which is much better than the uncorrected model, but still does not indicate any significant relationship between self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness(The Corrected Model is the variance in the dependent

variables which the independent variables accounts for without the intercept being taken into consideration.)

Research Question 3.

Is the feeling of connectedness to the community affected by afterschool program attendance?

Hypothesis 3.

Adolescents who attend afterschool programs will have greater feelings of connectedness to the community.

Hypothesis 3 was rejected.

Pearson Correlation

The participants reported a mean attendance score of 32.85 with a standard deviation of 39.783. With participation ranging from 0 -120 days the results did not show a significant relationship between number of days attended and feelings of community connectedness. Participants agreed with all of the items asked about feeling connected to their community with a means core of 3.26 or higher with the highest being 3.7 for the item that stated, I feel connected to my community. Being that the communities where the afterschool programs are located are relatively small, reported scores of feelings of community connectedness could be slightly inflated. This could also be true due to the researcher collecting a sample of convenience from participants that may have attended the program for a year prior to this study.

Linear Regression

Using linear regression, the results indicate that there is some sort of relationship between after school program attendance and feelings of community connectedness. However, the significance score reported is a .60. While this significance score does not

prove that the two are directly related, it is indicative of some sort of relationship between after school program attendance and community connectedness.

ANOVA

The analysis of variance test resulted in a significance score of .33 indicating that there is not a relationship between afterschool program attendance and feelings of community connectedness.

MANOVA

Using the Multiple Analysis of Variance Test of between subject effects, the result again shows some sort of significance between afterschool program attendance and feelings of community connectedness, However, the significance score is .60 so it does not prove that the two are directly related with enough power to assume that one directly effects the other because a significance score of .05 is necessary to determine a relationship. The result, however, does show that there is a relationship to be discovered and possibly strengthened through increased afterschool program attendance and community involvement.

Other Significant Findings

Due to the presumed inaccuracy of the attendance record keeping, the researcher performed further data analysis with the participants who had reportedly attended the program 0 times removed. For this analysis, the researcher used Pearson Parametric correlations and found that the research questions as they were written were still rejected, but there was a greater number of inter-item correlation than was reported having the non-attendees in the data.

With the non-attendees removed the researcher found a significant relationship between self-esteem and community connectedness on seven different items as

opposed to one item when the non-attendees were included. Having excluded the non-attendees, hypothesis three would have been accepted in that the correlations between the variables becomes significant with a Pearson Correlation score of .3578 and a significance score of .026. This finding is extremely important as it proves that there is a relationship between adolescent feelings of community connectedness and afterschool program attendance. It is also important to recognize that although the research hypothesis were rejected, the correlation values in the majority of the inter-item correlations were positive thus indicating that the program is moving adolescents in a positive direction in regard to their self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness.

Summary

The statistical analysis presented in this chapter has shown very low correlation between the variables selected. However, there is some significance in the relationship between the individual items contained in each variable, specifically, in the relationship between self-esteem and feeling of connectedness to the community in which the participants live. Particularly alarming is the finding that amongst the participants in the survey, there was no correlation between afterschool program attendance and self-esteem. However, since it was a sample of convenience taken of students who already attend the program, some for more than a year, it could be possible that the afterschool program had already helped the students with their self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness. Had the researcher had the opportunity to measure pre and post self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness measures, the results may have produced greater findings.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

Adolescence is a developmental stage characterized by many corresponding changes, including those in physical, emotional, cognitive, social and moral domains. As youth experience these changes, they often have a decline in self-esteem related to their changing states of self (Arnett, 2010). It is a time filled with many changes that can adversely affect an adolescent's self-esteem. Numerous factors have been proven to affect an adolescent's self-esteem both negatively and positively. Afterschool program attendance can help adolescents and their self-esteem become resilient to the changes they are experiencing. Through after school program attendance the adolescent may not only become more resilient to changes going on around and inside them, but they may also have increased feelings of community connectedness.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the level of self-esteem, afterschool program attendance and feelings of community connectedness of at risk adolescents. Using the Theory of Developmental Contextualism, this study explored "the interaction between the growing, that is, the continuously changing individual and the ecological context in which that person lives" (Muuss, 1996). Self-esteem as measured by the Rosenberg Self-esteem Measure was examined to determine the level of self-esteem of the adolescents who attend community based afterschool programs. Feelings of community connectedness were measured using a 5- item portion of the Youth Involved in Community Issues Survey to determine the feelings of community connectedness that are exhibited by the adolescents attend the aforementioned afterschool program. This chapter presents a discussion and review of the research questions, as well as an

interpretation of the results the study as they relate to the theoretical framework. Implications for youth workers and then followed by a discussion of the contributions to the current literature and suggestion for further research.

Findings

The study's research questions were analyzed using SPSS 20.0. Frequencies and means were analyzed to group the study's participants based on their level of self-esteem, feelings of community connectedness, and afterschool program attendance. Pearson correlations were used to identify the relationship between the variables chosen. For further analysis and relationship determination, ANOVAs, Linear Regressions, MANOVAs, and Chi-Square analysis were analyzed.

Research Questions

The following research questions were stated along with a hypothesis that was intended to be accepted and were analyzed using the aforementioned methods.

The first research question concerned the relationship between afterschool program attendance and an adolescent's self-esteem.

Research Question 1: Is there a relationship between afterschool program attendance and self-esteem?

Hypothesis 1: Adolescents who regularly attend afterschool programs will have higher self-esteem scores than those who do not regularly attend.

There were no significant findings indicating that increased afterschool program attendance was related to an adolescent's level of self-esteem (low, medium, high). This finding resulted in a rejection of the hypothesis. The result that was found is rather surprising being that many researchers have found that afterschool program attendance does contribute to an adolescent's self-esteem (Halpern, 2005; O'Donnell, 2007;

Ybrandt & Armelius, 2008; Roffman, 2001). The variation in the findings of this study compared to that of previous studies may be due to the study being a study of convenience in that the subjects being tested were a small group of participants that attend a community based afterschool program by choice. Also, it is possible that the results differ slightly from those of previous studies due to inconsistent attendance reports that were collected through a third party, an employee at the afterschool program site. Additionally, previous studies have examined large groups of adolescents and have been able to measure self-esteem at pre and post treatment.

Through data analysis, no specific relationship was identified. The corrected MANOVA model, however, indicated a significance score of .049 proving that there is some sort of relationship between the two variables, but it may not necessarily be in the direction predicted by the researcher.

The second research question concerned the relationship between an adolescent's self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness.

Research Question 2: Is there a relationship between an adolescent's self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness?

Hypothesis 2: Adolescent self-esteem is positively related to levels of feelings of community connectedness.

Similar to hypothesis 1, there were no significant findings indicating a relationship between adolescent's self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness using the total scores from the two variables. The hypothesis was rejected. The inconsistent findings are particularly interesting as prior research has found relationship between self-esteem and community connectedness (McMillan, 1996; Chipuer, 2001; Martin &

Tenant, 2008; Broadbent, 2010). This finding could be due to small sample size and the use of a convenience sample. The participants were a small group of youth that attended a community based afterschool program by choice. Also, most of the prior research conducted allowed adolescents a great deal of experience volunteering in their communities. The individual item scores, however, did return favorable results regarding self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness. The individual item analysis indicated that the question, adolescents would have more respect for themselves (self-esteem item) if they had a voice in their community (Community Connectedness Item). This finding indicates that there is improvement to be made in the area of community outreach opportunities for the adolescents that attend the afterschool program in an effort to increase the respect they have for themselves and in effect, their overall self-esteem.

The final research question concerns the relationship between feelings of connectedness to the community and afterschool program attendance.

Research Question 3: Is the feeling of connectedness to community affected by afterschool program attendance?

Hypothesis 3: Adolescents who attend afterschool programs will have greater feelings of community connectedness.

There were no significant findings linking afterschool program attendance to feelings of community connectedness. Hypothesis 3 was rejected. This finding is particularly interesting as previous research has found that there is a positive relationship between afterschool program attendance and feelings of community connectedness (McMillan, 1996; Chipuer, 2001; Martin & Tenant, 2008; Broadbent,

2010). This contradictory finding could be due to the sample being a small sample of convenience. It is also possible that the results were contrary to previous research in that the current study is only similar to those done in the past. Past research involving the two variables has indicated a significant relationship, but the afterschool programs in previous studies have provided ample opportunities for their participants to get involved with their communities whether it is through mentoring the young or volunteering in the community doing various tasks. This contradiction to previous research could also be the result of collecting attendance data through a third party source. The attendance data seems to have not been properly collected as many students had reportedly never attended the program.

Risky Behaviors

The purpose of this study was to investigate the level of self-esteem, afterschool program attendance and feelings of community connectedness of at risk adolescents. Thus, the research question (Questions 1-3) focus on the relationship between self-esteem, afterschool program attendance, and feelings of community connectedness. In reviewing the literature regarding adolescent risky behaviors, however, it became apparent that the adolescent's choice to partake in risky behaviors depends on many variables, not just self-esteem, afterschool program attendance and feelings of community connectedness. To really understand why it is that adolescents choose to partake in risky behaviors, many variables must be examined such as first exposure to violence, living in poverty, age, race and risk taking propensity.

Although the decision to partake in risky behaviors and self-esteem are not directly related, an adolescent's decision to partake or not partake in risky behaviors is contingent upon lived experience which can also contribute to self-esteem and feelings

of community connectedness. Changes in risky behavior due to program participation were not measured, but it is assumed that those adolescents who regularly attend the afterschool program are less likely than their non-attending counterparts to take part in risky behaviors because they are in a safe place that is supervised during the regular unsupervised hours of the afternoon that have been proven to be the time of day when most adolescents get into trouble. Also, according to the research, adolescents with heightened feelings of self-esteem are less likely to partake in risky behaviors. Being that the majority of the participants used for this study reported mid to high levels of overall self-esteem, it is less likely that the program participants are partaking in risky behaviors.

Self-Esteem and Afterschool Programs

There are many factors that contribute to adolescent self-esteem, including: personal identity, personal achievements, family, friends, school, neighborhood, and community. Self-esteem in adolescence can fluctuate. Through positive youth development programs, however, a youth's self-esteem can be strengthened, thus, allowing them to feel better about themselves, their identities, their families, friends, and the community in which they live.

Afterschool program attendance was not proven to have a significant effect on an adolescent's self-esteem. The participants in this study however, reported higher levels of self-esteem than expected which left little room for growth. Afterschool program attendance in previous studies has been proven to increase adolescent self-esteem, but in this case a direct relationship cannot be determined.

Adolescent self-esteem and afterschool program attendance of those who participated in this study showed great variance in some areas (attendance) and very

little variance in others self-esteem). Although these results cannot be identified as causal, it is suggested through previous research that adolescents with higher self-esteem do attend afterschool programs. In this study the relationship between the two is not definite as the adolescents in this particular program are given the choice whether or not to attend. Therefore, it may not be the level of self-esteem of the adolescent that prompted them to attend or not attend the afterschool program. It is possible that the students although not required by the program to attend were required by their parents to attend thus their self-esteem is not affecting that decision, their parent is. Many of the program participants also attend as a recommendation by the school. Again, there decision to attend is not directly influenced by their own choice, but rather by a higher authority.

Community Connectedness

Youth often have the opportunity to make a huge impact on the community and neighborhood in which they live. Communities can also help make the youth development process go as smoothly as possible by providing programs for the youth to participate in that they make them feel connected to their community and want to give back to it. High feelings of community connectedness have been proven to help adolescents with positive development. Community connectedness has acted as a mediator for adolescents who have depressed or suicidal tendencies (Matlin, Molock, & Tebes, 2011).

Community connectedness is an important aspect of an impactful afterschool program. When an afterschool program has the ability to help youth connect to their community, the program is assisting the adolescent's development in many areas. Not only is the feeling of community connectedness beneficial to an adolescent's self-

esteem, it also allows them to feel appreciated by the members of their community. This appreciation of adolescents allows the adolescents to take ownership of their community and positively contribute to it.

Often it is helpful to allow adolescents the ability to participate and volunteer to help with community events. This is a way for adolescents to have a greater presence in the community and have their voices heard by the community. Recognition by members of the community and the ability to help others in their area whether it is the young or the old will help adolescents to develop a high self-esteem. This study shows that adolescents who feel as though they have a voice in their community will have more respect for themselves. Having more respect for oneself transcends across many areas of the adolescent's life and will help them to have more respect for everyone around them.

Developmental Contextual Model of Self-Esteem

For adolescents, self-esteem is extraordinarily important. Lerner's theory of Developmental Contextualism helps explain an adolescent self-esteem in ways that many other theories cannot. Developmental Contextualism, as it's named, considers the context in which adolescents grow and develop. In the context of their environment this theory examines the adolescent's personality, behavior, development, cognition, biology and much more. When considering these aspects and an adolescent's self-esteem, each is very important. The individual characteristics impact their social network. The social network moves forward to the parental context and then the community context.

This study focuses mainly on the adolescent's individual context as well as their community context. The school context was also examined as the individuals that the adolescents attend the afterschool program with are often the same adolescents who

operate within their peer network at school. The school network is also examined as the afterschool program is designed similar to a school setting where there is a curriculum that is followed just as there is during the school day. The self-esteem of the students in this study was discovered to be very high which is due to their development, biology, cognition, personality, and temperament. The adolescent's self-esteem although altered by their environment is developed primarily internally. The researcher found that the adolescents in this study were greatly influenced by their peer network, but not so much that it extended into their feelings of community connectedness. In fact, the results of this study suggests that the study participants are not being able to move forward from the individual and familial level to the community level.

The adolescents in this study are having difficulty making the step from individual to community level contexts. This could be due to the adolescents feeling as though they feel they have little respect for themselves and thus will not be respected by their community. In order for the adolescents in this study to thrive, youth workers must implement programs that help adolescents feel connected to their community through whatever means possible. It is important for adolescents to feel as though they have a safe place to develop skills and abilities that are needed in order to make their voices heard in the communities in which they live.

Bridging this gap is extremely important as the adolescents in this study are relatively comfortable in their individual and social context levels. What is left for these adolescents is for them to use their heightened feelings of self-esteem for good rather than mischief. If the adolescents are not able to move forward to the community context, they will also not be able to move forward to the society and cultural contexts. The

ability of adolescents to move forward and thrive in each context is very important.

Although the United States is an individualistic society, it is important that adolescents transcend past individualism and are able to thrive both individualistically and collectivistically.

Developmental Contextual Model of After School Program Attendance

Afterschool programs according to Lerner's theory of Developmental Contextualize would be in the adolescent social network context. This is an important context for adolescents as this is a time when contact with friends increases and contact with parents and family decreases. The adolescent's social context and the social network that they are a part of will influence most of the decisions the adolescents make whether the decisions are good or bad.

Adolescence is a time when decision making becomes a sort of gray area for the developing person. During this time, adolescents are trying to develop into their own person while still holding to some family values. The social network can often become problematic if the adolescent is involved with peers who are not making good choices and thus begins making poor decisions based on the social context in which they live.

During this increasingly impressionable time, afterschool programs become extremely important. The afterschool program provides adolescents with a place where they feel welcome and safe to make decisions that may not be pleasing to their peers. Community based and federally funded afterschool programs allow adolescents a place where they can not only feel safe, but can also receive homework help, and most importantly be supervised during the largely unsupervised hours of the afternoon. This is the time when most crimes are committed by adolescents due to the lack of

supervision. The afterschool program provides not only supervision, but a social network that is productive to the adolescent development.

Developmental Contextual Model of Community Connectedness

The community context for the adolescents in this study is somewhat lacking. The adolescents are having a difficult time bridging from the individual and social network context to the community context. Afterschool programs can have a big influence on an adolescent's ability to move forward to the community context level. In order for the adolescents in this study to move into the community context level of development, they must continue to grow individually and socially until they are able to integrate the members of the community into their social context.

In order to integrate the community into the adolescent's social context the adolescents in this study have indicated that they need to have more respect for themselves. They have indicated that having more respect for themselves will help them to feel as though they have a voice in their community. Adolescents not only to feel as though they have a voice in their community, but they also need to feel as though their voice makes a difference to those in their community. Adolescents must be seen by members of their community as assets rather than as problems. If this can be done, adolescents will be shown by the members of the community that they are important and they do make a difference. If adolescents are able to move into the community context they will not only further their personal development, but will also be able to feel valued by members of their community and be able to contribute to the community. If the adolescents can move into the community context they will begin to develop a respect for and take ownership of the communities in which they live.

Contributions to Literature

The current study makes contributions to the current literature in that it has identified areas where further research needs to be conducted. This study has indicated that there is some relationship between self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness. This study differs from previous research in that it identifies a relationship based solely on afterschool program attendance and not on further community involvement. It can add to the literature in that it leaves room for further study and identifies areas of interest that would most likely greatly contribute to the literature.

The current study also furthers the claim in previous research that afterschool programs are beneficial to the health and development of adolescents. Through this study afterschool programs and youth workers are made aware of areas where changes can be made to programs in order to help adolescents feel more connected to their communities and grow into mature and successful young adults who can contribute to the society in which they live. The important thing to remember is that not two afterschool programs can be alike because all adolescents are different and have different needs, but through specific groundwork all programs can help to bolster adolescent's self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations of this study include, but are not limited to; small sample size, convenience sampling and improper record keeping. The sample used for this study was a sample of convenience that consisted mostly of adolescents that were very similar in age, socio-economic status, and ethnic background. This limits the study in that variance among the group is difficult to determine.

Being that the sample was a group of adolescents whom attend a federally funded afterschool program in an area relatively far from the researcher, the attendance records had to be kept by a third party. This was a huge limitation to the study as it was found that the attendance records were not kept very accurately in that data had been collected on adolescents who had reportedly never attended the program.

A further limitation of the study is that the researcher did not collect data on the adolescent's involvement in activities outside of the afterschool program. Therefore, outside factors may be contributing to their sporadic attendance and also to their feelings of community connectedness and level of self-esteem. It would be beneficial to have a sort of activities study that the adolescents are able to indicate their school and community involvement.

Implications for Further

Research

For further research, the researcher would suggest that self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness measures be taken at least twice during the study. Collecting these two data sources twice will hopefully show variance in the scores that are collected and thus show a relationship between afterschool program attendance, self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness. Also, if measuring afterschool program attendance it is imperative that proper record keeping is taking place.

Afterschool program attendance has been identified as variable in many studies, but would be best suited if analyzed based on both frequency and consistency of attendance. Another suggestion for further research is to take self-esteem and community connectedness measures on both adolescents who do not attend the afterschool program and those who do attend. This would hopefully show some

variance between the two groups and indicate a relationship between afterschool program attendance, self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness.

In order to determine a relationship between self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness in further research, a larger sample size is suggested. Possibly a sample that spans ethnic groups and will identify differences and similarities in areas not limited to the relationship between self-esteem and community connectedness, but also the relationship between age, race, self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness. The larger sample size would hopefully yield a range of scores that range from low to high in both self-esteem and community connectedness. This range of scores will allow for further examination of the relationship and presumably reveal that feelings of community connectedness and self-esteem are directly related.

The researcher would also suggest that a new theory be designed that specifically includes afterschool programs as a developmental context in which the adolescent interacts. This is necessary as afterschool programs have been proven to be beneficial for adolescents and further research needs to be done about the exact areas of an adolescents life afterschool programs fit into. This improvement to Lerner's Model of Developmental Contextualism or even a new theory would provide youth workers a starting point when it comes to designing a successful afterschool program as it will be obvious what the adolescents tend to gain from this context whether it be social, academic or something else.

Practice

For youth workers, the results of this study are particularly important. Self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness are extremely important to an adolescent's

successful development into an adult who can thrive in any situation. Afterschool programs must be places that bolster self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness in order to create resilient adolescents.

In order to bolster adolescent self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness, it is important to get the adolescents out in the community in which they live so that they are able to elicit change and feel as though they are a part of the community, instead of a mere resident. In order to get adolescent's voices heard in the community, afterschool programs could hold community outreach events where the adolescents showcase talents and skills that they have learned while attending the afterschool program.

When adolescents begin to feel as though they have a voice in their community, according to the research, they will begin to feel greater respect for themselves. With greater feelings of respect for themselves, heightened self-esteem and greater feelings of community connectedness will follow. If possible, afterschool programs should have their participants sign a contract saying that they will regularly attend the program. Of course the parent will make the final decision, but if the adolescent feels as though they are valued and are given the opportunity to make decisions for themselves, great growth will occur.

Program Staff

For the staff of this afterschool program and afterschool programs like it, it is important that they use this research to make the changes that the adolescents who attend the program desire. Specifically, the adolescents need to be given a voice in what goes on not only in the program, but in the community as well. For adolescents to feel confident enough to let their voice be heard in the community, they must begin by

growing their confidence through the program by being given a voice. What this means is that the people who facilitate the program will give the adolescent the opportunity to make decisions about what goes on at the program. In doing this, the youth will not only begin to enjoy the program even more, but it may also give the program the opportunity to grow through word of mouth and community outreach.

Summary

The results of the study found that there was no significant relationship between an adolescent's afterschool program attendance and self-esteem or feelings of community connectedness among the adolescents who attend the federally funded afterschool program. Although no direct correlation was found between an adolescent's self-esteem and feelings of community connectedness, correlation was found between individual items. Adolescents felt that they could have greater respect for themselves if they had a voice in their community. This is significant because the adolescent's clearly feel as though they would respect themselves more if others also respected them.

The results of this study can be used to develop programs that allow adolescents to participate in community outreach events that allow them to get their voices heard. This will allow adolescents to take ownership of their community while developing a respect for themselves, their community, and the people in it. This can be focused on the development of afterschool programs that are community based and infuse self-esteem building activities. As youth workers strive to create effective youth programs they can consider the findings of this study and other similar studies. This study supports the evidence that afterschool programs and community connectedness do have an impact on an adolescent's self-esteem and positive identity development.

APPENDIX A
ROSENBERG SELF-ESTEEM SCALE

Identification Number: _____

Age: _____

Gender: Male Female

Race/Ethnicity: African American, Hispanic/Latino, White/Caucasian, Asian/Pacific Islander,
Other

Instructions: Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. If you strongly agree, circle **SA**. If you agree with the statement, circle **A**. If you disagree, circle **D**. If you strongly disagree, circle **SD**.

- | | | | | | |
|-----|---|----|---|---|----|
| 1. | On the whole, I am satisfied with myself. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 2.* | At times, I think I am no good at all. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 3. | I feel that I have a number of good qualities. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 4. | I am able to do things as well as most other people. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 5.* | I feel I do not have much to be proud of. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 6.* | I certainly feel useless at times. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 7. | I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane
with others. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 8.* | I wish I could have more respect for myself. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 9.* | All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 10. | I take a positive attitude toward myself. | SA | A | D | SD |

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APPENDIX B
YOUTH INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY ISSUES SURVEY (YICI)

ID # _____

Youth Involvement in Community Issues Survey – YICIS Pre test

Demographics

Circle the **ONE ANSWER** you feel best applies to you.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Ethnic Origin/Race	White	African American	Hispanic/Latino	Native American	Other
2. Sex	Male	Female			
3. Grade					
Middle School	6 th	7 th	8 th		
High School	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th	
4. Age	12-13	14-15	16-17	18 or Older	
5. What are your grades like	Mostly F's	Mostly D's	Mostly C's	Mostly B's	Mostly A's
6. What type of community do you live in?	Farm	Country	Small Town	City	Large City
7. How long have you lived in your community?	Less than 1 year	1-4 years	4-8 years	8-11 years	More than 11 years
8. Have you lived in the same community your whole life?	Yes	No			
9. What is your home zip code?					

You and Your Community

Select **ONE ANSWER** only for the following questions.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Community Environment	10. My community is a good place	1	2	3	4	5

	to live.					
	11. I feel safe in my community.	1	2	3	4	5
	12. My community does not have fun things to do.	1	2	3	4	5
	13. My community is clean.	1	2	3	4	5
	14. I enjoy being in my community.	1	2	3	4	5
Community Support	15. I feel supported by my community.	1	2	3	4	5
	16. My community cares about me.	1	2	3	4	5
	17. Adult leaders in my community are concerned about my needs.	1	2	3	4	5
	18. Adults in my community are my role models.	1	2	3	4	5
	19. There are adults I can talk to in my community.	1	2	3	4	5
Community Involvement	20. Youth are very involved in the local	1	2	3	4	5

	community.					
	21. I am very involved in my community.	1	2	3	4	5
	22. I would like to be more involved in my community.	1	2	3	4	5
	23. I am very motivated to be involved in my community.	1	2	3	4	5
	24. I feel valued by my community as a result of my community involvement.	1	2	3	4	5
Community Connectedness	25. Youth in my community have a voice.	1	2	3	4	5
	26. I feel connected to my community.	1	2	3	4	5
	27. I am not interested in what goes on in my community.	1	2	3	4	5
	28. I am able to influence decisions that affect my community.	1	2	3	4	5
	29. I do not feel I have a	1	2	3	4	5

positive impact on my community.					
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Future Plans

Select **ONE ANSWER** only for the following questions.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
30. I plan on graduating from high school.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I plan on attending college.	1	2	3	4	5
32. I plan on living in my community as an adult.	1	2	3	4	5
33. I plan on raising my family in my community.	1	2	3	4	5
34. I plan on living my community forever.	1	2	3	4	5

Reasons Involved in

Select **ONE ANSWER** only for the following questions.

Please tell us how much these reasons motivate your community involvement (working with community groups, volunteer projects, etc).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
35. I want to improve my community.	1	2	3	4	5
36. I am dissatisfied with the way things are in my community.	1	2	3	4	5
37. I hope others will get involved as a result of my efforts.	1	2	3	4	5
38. I feel I have a public duty as a citizen.	1	2	3	4	5
39. I want to help people in my community.	1	2	3	4	5

Reasons Not Involved in Community

Select **ONE ANSWER** only for the following questions.
Please tell us how these reasons limit your community involvement (working with community groups, volunteer projects, etc).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
40. I have too much to do.	1	2	3	4	5
41. I don't like the people in my community.	1	2	3	4	5
42. Others wouldn't approve of my involvement.	1	2	3	4	5
43. I would feel intimidated by others.	1	2	3	4	5
44. I don't have transportation.	1	2	3	4	5

Knowledge of Community

Please indicate your **BEST ESTIMATE** as to where your knowledge comes from of Community Issues (crime, recycling, unemployment, safety, drugs, etc).

<i>I learn about community issues from:</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Individuals					
45. Peers	1	2	3	4	5
46. Siblings (brother/sister)	1	2	3	4	5
47. Parents	1	2	3	4	5
48. Teachers	1	2	3	4	5
49. Community Leaders (Mayor, County Commissioners, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
50. Other Adults	1	2	3	4	5
Institutions					
51. School	1	2	3	4	5
52. Church	1	2	3	4	5
53. Community Centers	1	2	3	4	5
54. Community Agency (Fire Department, Police Department, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
55. Community Organizations (YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Media					

56. Newspaper/ Magazines	1	2	3	4	5
57. Books	1	2	3	4	5
58. TV	1	2	3	4	5
59. Movies	1	2	3	4	5
60. Music	1	2	3	4	5
61. Social Networking Websites (Facebook, MySpace)	1	2	3	4	5
62. Internet					

APPENDIX C
INFORMED CONSENT

***Informed Consent Script for
Florida After-School Enrichment Project
Seminole and Volusia County Sites***

The purpose of this after-school program is to provide support for you to grow in positive ways. This means not just as a student, but as a whole person. We try to help you and your family by giving you a safe place to stay after school. We also try to teach you things that may help you learn certain life skills that will stay with you as you grow up. We hope to teach you about the importance of being involved in your community and that you are able to help influence your community in a positive way. We have computers for you to use, volunteers to help you with your homework, and some fun activities and recreation time so that you also build a strong mind and healthy body.

The reason we want to give you this (survey/interview/focus group) is to discover what is helping you and what you are learning. Your role is to help us understand what you may have benefited most from the program as well as what support you feel is available to help you learn and grow as a whole person. We may also ask you questions in an (interview/survey/focus group) so that you can tell us what has helped you develop into a responsible young person.

In a few minutes, I will begin asking you a series of questions on these topics. There are no known risks to you as a participant in this information collecting (interview/survey/focus group). This will last approximately 10-15 minutes. Your participation is voluntary. If there is a question that you do not wish to answer, you are not required to do so.

With your permission, I would like to take notes during the (interview/focus group) to help create a more complete record of the discussion. Your name will not be written next to your comments and we will not identify individuals who participate in these interviews in any reports. Anything that you say during this interview will remain confidential.

We will remove all names and other identifying information from the transcripts of the interviews. [This paragraph is for interview/focus group only.]

If you have any questions about the (survey/interview/focus group) later, please contact Dr. Rose Barnett. I will give you her business card before you leave today. Any questions you may have about the project and participants' rights may be directed to the University of Florida Institutional Review Board Office, PO Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250

Thank you for your participation in this after-school program. If you agree that you are willing to participate in this (interview/survey/focus group) and there are no further questions, I will begin the (interview/survey/focus group) now.

APPENDIX D
ADDITIONAL TABLES

Table D-1. Demographic characteristics of Volusia county study participants

	n	f	%
Gender	11		
Male		6	54.5
Female		5	45.5
Age	11		
12 years old		2	18.2
13 years old		2	18.2
14 years old		3	27.3
15 years old		1	9.1
16 years old		3	27.3
Race/Ethnicity	11		
African American		3	27.3
Hispanic/Latino		6	54.5
White/Caucasian		2	18.2

Table D-2. Demographic characteristics of Seminole county study participants

	n	f	%
Gender	50		
Male		27	54
Female		20	40
Did not Respond		3	6
Age	50		
10 years old		1	2
11 years old		12	24
12 years old		11	22
13 years old		8	16
14 years old		10	20
15 years old		3	6
16 years old		0	0
17 years old		2	4
18 years old		1	2
19 years old		1	2
Did not Respond		1	2
Race/Ethnicity	50		
African American		44	88
Hispanic/Latino		1	2
White/Caucasian		1	2
Did not Respond		4	8

Table D-3. Attendance of Volusia county study participants

	n	f	%
Number of Days Attended	11		
20		1	9.1
30		1	9.1
32		1	9.1
35		1	9.1
69		1	9.1
73		1	9.1
77		2	18.2
87		1	9.1
104		1	9.1
117		1	9.1

Table D-4. Attendance of Seminole county study participants

	n	f	%
Number of Days Attended	50		
0		22	43.1
2		1	2
3		1	2
5		1	2
9		2	3.9
14		3	5.9
15		1	2
21		1	2
25		1	2
29		1	2
30		1	2
32		1	2
37		1	2
42		1	2
44		1	2
46		1	2
57		1	2
75		1	2
87		2	3.9
91		1	2
97		1	2
104		1	3
135		1	2
142		1	2

Table D-5. Self-Esteem of Volusia county study participants

	n	f	%
Self-Esteem Score	11		
18		1	9.1
19		1	9.1
20		1	9.1
21		2	18.2
22		1	9.1
23		2	18.2
25		1	9.1
26		1	9.1
30		1	9.1

Table D-6. Self-esteem of Seminole county study participants

	n	f	%
Self-Esteem Score	50		
15		2	3.9
16		1	2
17		2	3.9
18		2	3.9
19		3	5.9
20		3	5.9
21		4	7.8
22		5	9.8
23		1	2
24		1	2
25		6	11.8
26		5	9.8
27		5	9.8
28		2	3.9
29		3	5.9
30		5	9.8
Did not Report		1	2

Table D-7. Feelings of community connectedness of Volusia county study participants

	n	f	%
Youth in my community have a voice.	11		
Disagree		1	9.1
Undecided		3	27.3
Agree		7	63.6
I feel connected to my community.	11		
Undecided		4	36.4
Agree		6	54.5
Strongly Agree		1	9.1
I am not interested in what goes	11		

on in my community.			
Disagree		2	18.2
Undecided		2	18.2
Agree		5	45.5
Strongly Agree		2	18.2
I am able to influence decisions that affect my community.	11		
Disagree		2	18.2
Undecided		5	45.5
Agree		4	36.4
I do not feel I have a positive impact on my community.	11		
Strongly Disagree		1	9.1
Disagree		3	27.3
Undecided		4	36.4
Agree		2	18.2
Strongly Agree		1	9.1

Table D-8. Feelings of community connectedness of Seminole county study participants

	n	f	%
Youth in my community have a voice.	50		
Strongly Disagree		6	12
Disagree		2	4
Undecided		16	32
Agree		15	30
Strongly Agree		11	22
I feel connected to my community.	50		
Strongly Disagree		5	10
Disagree		1	2
Undecided		12	24
Agree		18	36
Strongly Agree		14	28
I am not interested in what goes on in my community.	50		
Strongly Disagree		7	14
Disagree		10	20
Undecided		13	26
Agree		7	14
Strongly Agree		13	26
I am able to influence decisions that affect my community.	50		
Strongly Disagree		7	14
Disagree		2	4
Undecided		16	32

Agree		16	32
Strongly Agree		9	18
I do not feel I have a positive impact on my community.	50		
Strongly Disagree		5	10
Disagree		7	14
Undecided		16	32
Agree		6	12
Strongly Agree		16	32

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Tina Loughlin was born and raised in Indian River County, Florida. She graduated from Sebastian River High School in 2006. She then attended Santa Fe Community College where she obtained an Associate of Arts degree in 2007. Tina then attended the University of Florida where she was awarded a Bachelor of Science degree in Family, Youth and Community Sciences with minors in Education, Leadership, and Non-Profit Organization. She went on to pursue a graduate degree in Family, Youth and Community Sciences at the University of Florida. Upon completion of her degree, Tina began a subsequent graduate degree in Mental Health Counseling. Upon completion of the degree in Mental Health Counseling, she will work with children and families with mental health needs.