Factors Associated with Female African American Adolescent Achievement Outcomes: Implications for Practice

Annotated Bibliography

Annunziata, D., Hogue, A., Faw, L., & Liddle, H. A. (2006). Family functioning and school success in at-risk, inner-city adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *35* (1), 105-113.

In this study, the researchers wanted to explore the relationship between family functioning and school achievement in a sample (*n*= 211) of inner-city 97% African American adolescents (6th through 8th graders). Multiple perspectives of the students and their caregivers were obtained. Questionnaires yielded data on family cohesion, parent monitoring, and school engagement; school records provided information on grade point averages. The researchers found that both family cohesion and parental monitoring predicted school engagement, but neither family characteristic predicted GPA. For females, the effects of cohesion and parent monitoring were additive. Females with both high family cohesion and high parent monitoring were more likely to be engaged in school. Notably, both types of family process elements were independently important.

Implications for Practice: These findings suggest that within inner- city African American families, family cohesion has a beneficial effect on school engagement, especially in the context of good parent monitoring. School engagement has been positively linked to school achievement, even when controlling for gender, grade level, cognitive function, and maternal education (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Sirin & Rogers-Sirin, 2005).

Bryant, A.L., & Zimmerman, M.A. (2003). Role models and psychosocial outcomes among African American adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *18* (1), 36-67.

This study examined who were the role models for 679 African American ninth graders enrolled in four public high schools in a large city in Michigan. The researchers also explored how these students' role model choices were related to substance use, delinquency, academic engagement, and psychological well-being. Fifty- one percent of the participants were female. The students ranged in age from 14 (52.6%) to 17 years (.4%). The average age of the respondents was 14.6. Only students with GPA's of 3.0 were selected to participate in the study. Close-ended, face-to-face interviews were conducted with students during school hours by trained interviewers. Participants also completed a self-report questionnaire about their drug and alcohol use. The researchers found that the majority of male and female adolescents identified their mother as their female role model and their father as their male role model. Twenty-three percent of the females reported that they did not have any male role models. Females who reported brothers as role models reported more violent behaviors and alcohol use than other females. They

also reported a lower likelihood of graduating than females who viewed their father as a role model. For female adolescents, having a father or extended family member role model compared to having no one was related to a better school attitude. The researchers found that the presence of a female role model was associated with academic engagement. They concluded that having adult role models, particularly within the family, was associated with the health and well-being of urban African American adolescents.

This study's findings have limited generalizability because all of the participants were from schools in the same urban environment and they had similar working-class socioeconomic backgrounds. Another limitation of the study was that all of the measures for academic achievement were based on the adolescents' self reports. In spite of these and other study limitations, their findings do add to the scant body of research on role models and African American adolescent development.

Implications for Practice: This study endorses the importance of adult kinship role models in the lives of urban African American adolescents. It also highlights the importance of identifying and examining the processes in the relationships that African American adolescents have with their role models in your efforts to provide individual, family or school level interventions and supports.

Clayton, M.A. (2008). *The effects of family, school and peer support on the achievement outcomes of African American adolescents*. Retrieved from Pro Quest Digital Dissertations. (AAT 3319756).

Survey research design methods were used to explore the relationship between protective influences (support from parents, teachers, and peers, social capital assets and social support use), contextual risks, and two achievement outcomes in a representative sample of male and female African American high school seniors (n= 317, 55.8% female & 44.2% male). Responses to two questionnaires, weighted cumulative grade point averages (GPA), and 11th grade Virginia English Reading Standards of Learning (SOL) test scores were analyzed.

In the quantitative analyses, the researcher found that some support variables were predictive of better achievement outcomes whereas others were associated with poorer outcomes. In the total study population, **Teacher Support** (a measure of student's perceptions about teachers' attitudes and behaviors toward the respondent), **Family Togetherness** (a measure of student's perceptions of emotional connections and bonding among family and household members), **Home Academic Environment** (items that assess whether students have discussed a variety of school-related topics, current events, and future plans with adults in the home) and **School Behavior Expectations** (a measure of the student's perceptions of parent/guardian expectations of their behavior and academic performance at school) were associated with GPA. High scores on the **Teacher Support**, **Home Academic Environment** and **School Behavior**

Expectation scales were associated with higher GPAs. However, a high score on the **Family Togetherness** scale was associated with lower GPAs. In the female sample, **School Behavior Expectations** and **Family Togetherness** remained as predictors. Notably, **Peer Group Acceptance**, a measure of student's perceptions of their relative standing in their peer group and their ability to be themselves and resist peer pressure was associated with lower GPAs. For females, **Friend Support** (a measure of a student's perceptions of friend support and satisfaction with peer relationships) was the only consistent predictor associated with higher SOL test scores.

Qualitative findings revealed that important gender differences exist with regard to perceptions of support within the samples' home, school and peer group environments. Females identified the receipt of **emotional support** as a success factor more than males. In contrast, males acknowledged the importance of behavioral support as a school success factor. Both males and females endorsed that **tangible support** was an important school success factor. *High-achieving* females (with GPA's 3.0 or higher) identified **emotional support** from parents as a school success factor more often than *middle- achieving* (those with GPAs between 2.0 and 2.9) and *low-achieving* females who had GPAs below 2.0. All three groups identified parents, teachers and peers as sources of **emotional support** and **guidance support**. However, *low-achieving* females also endorsed a need for more **guidance support** from parents. *High-achieving* females did not endorse this need. **Communication support** (defined as talking, listening and collaborating) was mentioned more by *high-achieving* and *middle-achieving* female*s* than *low-achieving* females. Qualitative analysis also confirmed that African American female adolescents have ambivalent feelings about the role of peer support. All of the groups, except *low-achieving* females commented more about the receipt of **behavioral support** (actions or behaviors that could potentially influence student engagement and performance such as monitoring, rewarding, disciplining, nothing, pushed etc.) from parents. *Low-achieving* females endorsed more often than the other groups the expectation that peers could provide **behavioral support**. Similarly, *low-achieving* females endorsed a need for more tangible support from peers than *high-achieving* and *middle – achieving* females in the study sample.

Even though 44% of the sample acknowledged a high level of exposure to contextual risks, its effects were more predictive of poorer outcomes for males than for females. This finding suggests that males may be more vulnerable to contextual risks' effects. Additionally, only two support variables, **Friend Support** and **Family Togetherness**, moderated the influence of contextual risks on achievement and this interaction was only found in the male sample.

Implications for Practice: Taken in combination, the study findings increase our understanding of the relationship between the context-linked experiences of urban African American adolescents and their achievement outcomes. Moreover, the findings suggest that *low-achieving* African American high school seniors may

have heightened needs for certain types of parent support during their senior year in high school, a point in time that determines the trajectory for years to follow. The study's findings also support the critical need to understand more about the role of contextual influences in our efforts to facilitate stronger connections between families, schools, and communities.

Fisher, T.A. (2000). Predictors of academic achievement among African-American adolescents. In Sheila T. Gregory (Ed.), *The academic achievement of minority students: Perspectives, practices, and prescriptions* (pp. 307- 334). Lanhan, MD: University Press of America, Inc.

In this study of 10th and 11th grade students (*n*=368), the researcher explored the relationship between the following predictors; academic self concept, perception of opportunity structure, perception of opportunity to succeed in school, support from significant others (parents, teachers, peers) and students' cumulative grade point averages. Academic self concept (the development of one's self-evaluation of his/her academic potential) was the most powerful predictor of academic achievement and support from parents was the second most powerful predictor. Students who perceived their significant others as giving them very limited academic support had a tendency to believe they had limited access to future opportunities. The researcher also found support for the thesis that African American male students may be treated differently at home and school, which may explain some gender differences in perceptions and achievement outcomes. For example, in their qualitative analysis the researchers found that females more often than males reported that their teachers were a major source of academic encouragement and motivation.

Implications for Practice: Fisher's findings highlight the important roles of teachers and parents in helping female students develop positive self- evaluations of their academic potential with the goal of changing their perceptions about opportunities to succeed in the academic setting.

Floyd, C. (1996). Achieving despite the odds: A study of resilience among a group of African American high school seniors. *Journal of Negro Education*, *65* (2), 181-189.

In this qualitative study, the researcher was interested in understanding what factors influenced students' sustained academic efforts and achievement in spite of adversity. All of the students (*n*= 20, 10 males and 10 females) were low income (qualified for free or reduced lunch) and each was a *high-achiever* (had taken a college preparatory course and qualified for college). Three protective factors were identified as operant in the students' lives; favorable personality traits (perseverance and optimism), a warm/supportive family and external supports. Support from mothers was identified as a significant influence as well as specific behaviors of teachers (teachers who challenged them or confirmed their academic self-concept).

Implications for Practice: This study highlights the importance of utilizing a knowledge-based approach when planning interventions that target low-income African American adolescents. Floyd argues that caution needs to be used in making generalizations about the factors that limit the academic potential of poor youth or about the families from which they originate.

Forsbach, T., Yanowitz, K., & Fiala, T. (2002). African-American students' perceptions of school success. *Academic Exchange Quarterly*, *6* (1), 186-191.

In this qualitative study, the researchers were interested in identifying what factors promoted or inhibited six African American high school seniors' school success. The sample included male and female students and no gender differences were found. Almost all students identified the following factors as having had an influence on their school achievement; personal initiative, self-image, family support, teacher's attitude and support, labeling/racism, and participation in school programs. Personal initiative and self-image were mentioned the most. Family support was cited by all of the students as a key factor for school success. Teachers' attitudes toward students, their willingness to offer help and the time they spend with students were also identified as important factors.

Implications for Practice: These findings are consistent with others studies that provide evidence about the influences of interpersonal relationships, within and outside of school, on school achievement. These findings call attention to the notion that educators should be cognizant of their own capacity and opportunities to have an impact on African American adolescents' academic self-concept.

Gonzales, N.A., Cauce, A.M., Friedman, R.J., & Mason, C.A. (1996). Family, peer, and neighborhood influences on academic achievement among African-American adolescents: One year prospective effects. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *24* (3), 365- 388.

The researchers in this study were interested in understanding more about the influence of family status variables (income, education & family structure), parenting variables (maternal support and restrictive control), peer support, and neighborhood risk on the school performance of 120 African American junior high school students enrolled in an metropolitan school district in the northwest. In this one year prospective study, the multiple perspectives of the adolescents and their mothers were obtained. Family status variables were not significantly predictive of adolescent school performance. However, the researchers found that maternal support was associated with better grades for African American adolescents irrespective of their neighborhood context. In this sample, maternal restrictive control appeared to have a negative influence on the school performance of students who resided in low-risk neighborhoods. Minimum control was associated with better grades for these students. Within high-risk neighborhoods, maternal restrictive control was positively associated with grades.

There was also a correlation between peer support and better grades for those who resided in low-risk neighborhoods. However, the potential benefit of strong peer support was greatly diminished for those who resided in high-risk neighborhoods.

Implications for Practice: These findings highlight the importance of understanding the ecological contexts that simultaneously influence African American adolescents' achievement outcomes. Their findings about peer support are particularly relevant, given what is known about the relationship between prosocial peer associations and more positive developmental outcomes (including achievement in school). These findings suggest that community-based initiatives that increase opportunities for prosocial peer activities may be especially beneficial for African American adolescents.

Note: One of the limitations of this study was that the sample included fewer males than females, which made it difficult to generalize about the males in the sample. No gender differences were found between the predictors and academic achievement. However, females reported significantly higher levels of peer support than males. This finding is consistent with others in the existing support literature on gender differences in friendship patterns.

Gutman, L.M., Sameroff, A. J., & Eccles, J.S. (2002). Academic achievement of African American students during early adolescence: An examination of multiple risks, promotive and protective factors. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *30* (3), 367-399.

This study examined the relationships between multiple risk, promotive, and protective factors and three achievement-related measures (i.e., grade point averages, number of absences and math achievement test scores) in a sample of seventh grade students (*n*=837, 48% were female). There were three major findings. Adolescents had lower grade point averages, more absences, and lower achievement test scores as their exposure to risk increased. Second, different promotive and protective factors emerged as significant contributors depending on the nature of the achievement-related outcome that was being assessed. For example, the researchers found that fewer opportunities for democratic decision-making were associated with higher grade point averages and math achievement test scores. This finding, although unexpected, suggests that parenting practices that are characterized by high levels of parenting controls may be more protective for youth who reside in high-risk communities. Third, protective influences were identified whose effects were magnified in the presence of multiple risks. They found that consistent discipline was a significant protective factor for African American youth exposed to multiple risks during early adolescence (especially for those who resided in risky communities). Parents who provided consistent discipline were more conscientious of their child's achievement and attendance. They also found that students exposed to multiple risks who perceived that they could depend on their peers for help with personal and school difficulties had higher achievement test scores than those who did not perceive peer support.

Implications for Practice: Protective and promotive influences may differ dependent on ecological contexts. Therefore, it is important to assess the interplay between environmental influences (including exposure to risk) when planning and implementing interventions to improve African American adolescent female students' academic achievement.

Hrabowski, F.A., Maton, K.I., Greene, M.L., & Greif, G.L. (2002). *Overcoming the odds: Raising academically successful African American young women*. New York: Oxford University Press.

This study was based on interviews and questionnaires completed by 66 young women who were students or graduates of the Meyerhoff Scholars Program at UMBC and 73 parents (46 mothers and 27 fathers). Data was also collected from other adults (teachers, principals, guidance counselors, church members etc.) who had a significant role in parenting prior to the female students' enrollment in the Program. Thirty-four additional students completed the questionnaires but were not interviewed. Data was collected in the fall when the students started the program and again during their third year in the program. Qualitative data was also collected from group interviews with parents in 1998 and 1999. Sixty percent of the parents had a college education and the sample included a wide array of backgrounds both economically and socially.

The researchers found six key strategies or aspects of parenting that appeared to influence their daughters' high level of achievement. They were; (1) showing love by being involved in their daughters' education, giving encouragement and support, and cultivating a belief in self, (2) creating an environment that includes clear limits on behavior and discipline when appropriate, (3) consistently setting high expectations for success, academic and otherwise, (4) engaging in open and strong communication with their daughters, (5) emphasizing positive identification as both a woman and an African American, and (6) using available community resources.

Implications for Practice: These findings point to the key role of parents and significant other adults in supporting the school success of African American female students. It also provides a "framework" of strategies or aspects of parenting that appeared to have an influence on their daughters' achievement prior to enrollment in college.

Honora, D. T. (2002). The relationship between gender and achievement to future outlook among African American adolescents. *Adolescence*, *37* (146), 301-316.

Qualitative methods were used to explore the connection between future outlook and achievement among low-income, urban African American adolescents. Future outlook is conceptualized as individuals' attitudes and expectations about

the construction of future events (Nuttin, 1974, 1985). Two dimensions of future outlook were examined, *content* (events hoped for or expected in the future) and *extension* (when one expects an event to occur in the future). In this sample of sixteen ninth graders who ranged in age from 14 to 16 years, the researchers found that *higher-achieving* students used family members as role models of what to expect in the future. Their family members offered guidance about future plans. *Lower-achieving* students did not acknowledge discussing future plans with family members. The researchers also found gender differences. *Higher-achieving* females listed more goals than *higher-achieving* males followed by *lower-achieving* males and females. *Higher-achieving* females also had a more extended view of the future than the other groups. Overall, *lower-achieving* students appeared less certain about the future (they did not appear to feel in control of their future and demonstrated little evidence of planning).

Implications for Practice: These findings highlight the importance of family support and guidance. The findings also point to the need for early intervention (perhaps before entrance into high school) that includes a focus on future planning. African American females may be exploring their future options within family, societal and academic arenas that constrain their beliefs regarding what is possible in the future.

Lagana, M. T. (2004). Protective factors for inner-city adolescents at risk of school dropout: Family factors and social support. *Children & Schools*, *26* (4), 211-220.

In this cross-sectional survey, the researcher investigated the relationship between six predictor variables (peer support, adult support, family cohesion, family adaptability, satisfaction with family cohesion and satisfaction with family adaptability) and level of risk (as indicated by group membership in three different groups). School dropout was measured by proxy, using group membership as an indirect indicator or risk. Group membership was defined as; low-risk (students enrolled in the mainstream school program), medium-risk (students who had irregular attendance, poor grades and behavior problems) and high- risk (students who had dropped out of school and were enrolled in an alternative evening school program). Results indicated that family cohesion, adult support and peer support were predictors of group membership in this sample of low-income African American adolescents. Students in the low-risk group had higher levels of family and peer support and students in the high-risk group reported significantly less peer and adult support.

Implications for Practice: These findings suggest that peer and adult mentors should be an integral part of school-based intervention initiatives for female adolescents who are at-risk for dropout. Efforts to increase parent and adult support would also be beneficial for these youth at this critical stage in their development.

McClendon, C., Nettles, S.M., & Wigfield, A. (2000). Fostering resilience in high school classrooms: A study of the PASS Program (Promoting Achievement in School through Sport). In M.G. Sanders (Ed.), *Schooling students placed at risk: Research, policy, and practice in the education of poor and minority adolescents* (pp. 289-307). Mahway, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

In their analyses, the researchers were particularly interested in PASS' impact on the academic achievement of African American high school students enrolled in five different school districts in two large metropolitan areas in the Midwest and West. They used a one-year prospective design to study the impact of the program on student achievement (cumulative grade point averages). The sample consisted of 900 students from 16 high schools. African Americans comprised 54% of the sample ($n = 468$). Sixty-eight percent of the sample was male and most students ($n = 673$) were high school juniors and seniors. The researchers found that African American students who participated in the PASS program achieved significantly higher post- GPAs than those in the comparison group. There were no significant differences in the pretest. The researchers also found that in PASS classroom settings, teachers engaged in forms of expression that conveyed care and support, high expectations of problem-solving strategies and skills, and opportunities for student participation.

Implications for Practice: The PASS model provided the framework for teachers that encouraged them to provide emotional and tangible support, set high expectations and engage students in the learning process. By doing so, the teachers created a "protective" classroom environment that enabled African American students to sustain or improve their grades.

Mickelson, R.A., & Greene, A.D. (2006). Connecting pieces of the puzzle: Gender differences in Black middle school students' achievement. *Journal of Negro Education*, *75* (1), 34-48.

This investigation focused on three sets of factors known to contribute to academic outcomes: (a) school factors, (b) family factors, and (c) student attributes. Survey research data was collected on 463 male and 551 female middle school students. Several measures of achievement were used including eighth grade standardized test scores in math and reading, fourth quarter grade point averages, and self-reported grade point averages. The researchers found that there were some notable gender differences. Females had higher, reading test scores, quarterly grades and self-reported grade point averages. They also had higher educational expectations than males. Higher track placement (a school level factor) had a positive effect for both males and females. Females who possessed college expectations, cultural capital, and had parents who were involved in their daughter's homework tended to have higher educational aspirations.

In this study, the researchers also analyzed existing student data and found that there were no gender differences in the participants' second grade math and reading achievement test scores. Yet by middle school, females had higher achievement outcomes than males in all domains measured except math achievement. This finding led the researchers to conclude that the gender differences found in the 8th grade participants' math and language achievement levels emerged some time between the 2nd and 8th grade.

Implications for Practice: The findings of this study indicated that a combination of school structure, family background, and individual characteristics and behaviors contribute to African American eighth graders' achievement, track placement, and educational aspirations. Female students' aspirations, track placement, and math scores were affected by their families' SES, their cultural capital, and by parental involvement.

Miller-Cribbs, J.E., Cronen, S., Davis, L., & Johnson, S.D. (2002). An exploratory analysis of factors that foster school engagement and completion among African-American students. *Children & Schools*, *24* (3), 159-174.

In this study, the researchers explored factors that contributed to school persistence in a cohort of African American high school students. The students attended an urban high school in a large metropolitan area. Participants ($n = 191$) were surveyed at the beginning of their freshman and sophomore school years. Key findings were that the students believed that school completion would help them prepare for the future and that the opinions of family members was most important in supporting their decisions to remain in school. The students identified the following as barriers to high school completion; family issues (including lack of family support), academic problems and personal issues. The students in this sample also identified a desire to participate in programs at the high school level that could help them secure employment and prepare for future careers.

Implications for Practice: Not only does this study add to the growing body of knowledge about the role of parent support, it also highlights the importance of helping African American adolescents "connect" to the future (to recognize the relevance of their school experiences to future goals). The researchers speculate that making the connection between school and employment may reduce dropout and increase school engagement. They also argue that involving parents in planned interventions may be particularly beneficial when working with African American adolescents.

Ryabov, I. (2010). Adolescent academic outcomes in school context: Network effects. *Journal of Adolescence*, *34*(5), 915-927.

National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health data from middle and high school students was analyzed to examine the relationships between social network

effects (peer preferences, social capital, race and ethnicity) and academic achievement. The final sample size was 19,117 students from 129 schools. African American adolescents comprised 16% of the sample. Study participants completed questionnaires and a selected sample (Wave I) also completed in-home interviews. Educational achievement was operationalized as GPA and obtained from the Wave III participants. Educational attainment was conceptualized as high school completion. The researchers found that adolescents in lower SES schools were more likely to experience lower achievement and attainment. They also found that peer networks and school racial/ethnic composition were significant predictors of educational achievement and attainment, while the socioeconomic status of fellow students was the most powerful of the three school-level measures examined. An important finding was that African American adolescents were the only group for whom achievement and attainment levels improved when peer network segregation increased.

Implications for Practice: The study's findings add to what is known about the complex relationships that exists within African-American adolescent peer networks. The findings suggest that the impact of peer networks on African American adolescents' achievement outcomes should be considered within school and/or community contexts.

Sanders, M. G., & Herting, J.R. (2000). Gender and the effects of school, family, and church support on the academic achievement of African-American urban adolescents. In M.G. Sanders (Ed.), *Schooling students placed at risk: Research, policy, and practice in the education of poor and minority adolescents* (pp. 141-161). Mahway, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

The researchers investigated the effects of gender on the relationships between institutionalized support, school-related attitudes and behaviors, and academic achievement in a sample ($n = 826$) of eighth graders in an urban school district in southeastern United States. The researchers found statistically significant differences between males and females on each of seven variables. Consistent with Fisher's (2000) findings, the females reported greater teacher support and had higher grades than the males. Even though males reported less teacher support than females, the effect of teacher support on male adolescent behavior was stronger than on female adolescent behavior.

Implications for Practice: These findings support Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence. This theory postulates that supportive adults in the home, school and community simultaneously affect school achievement through their combined impact on students' behaviors and attitudes.

Saunders, J., Davis, L., Williams, T., & Williams, J.H. (2004). Gender differences in self-perceptions and academic outcomes: A study of African American high school students. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *33* (1), 81-90.

This study explored gender differences in self-perceptions and two academic outcomes (intention to complete the school year and grade point average) among a sample of 243 African American high school sophomores enrolled at a predominantly African American high school in the Midwest. Four domains of self-perception were explored (self-efficacy, racial self-esteem, academic self-efficacy, and importance of school completion). In this sample, there were no gender differences on the measures of self-esteem and racial self-esteem. Two of the key findings were that male and female students who had more positive self-perceptions had stronger intentions of completing the current year of high school and both self-esteem and self-efficacy were predictors of grade point average. However, greater self-efficacy was a stronger predictor of GPA for females than for males.

Implications for Practice: This study's findings suggest that what African American youth think about themselves and their abilities plays a key role in their academic performance and intentions.

Note: Limitations noted by the researchers were the small sample size and their inability to gain GPA information on all of the participants. Given the fact that the students in this study were enrolled in a high school that was not very diverse, the researchers also speculated that the role of self-perceptions may be different if the students were enrolled in a more diverse school and/or community context.

Somers, C.L., Owens, D., & Piliawsky, M. (2008). Individual and social factors related to urban African American adolescents' school performance. *High School Journal* February/March, 1- 11.

This study examined the factors related to the academic achievement of 118 African American adolescents (43 males, 75 females). The study participants were ninth grade students enrolled at a large urban high school (96%) African American in the Midwest. Academic achievement was measured by the participants' grade point average on their first marking period report cards. The researchers explored the relationship between GPA and five dimensions of social support and six dimensions of educational attitudes and behaviors. They did not report gender differences in their findings.

The researchers found that social support was mildly correlated with better grades and that parent and peer support were relatively more important forms of support. They also found stronger associations between the five support variables and most of the educational attitudes and behavior variables, with support from parents, teachers and peers most strongly related to educational attitudes and behavior. The combined influence of all factors explained a larger percentage of variance in achievement, with educational intentions and personal persistence the strongest contributors on GPA.

Implications for Practice: These findings confirm those of others (Clayton, 2008; Fisher, 2000; Floyd, 1996; Forsbach et al, 2002; Gonzales et al., 1996; Gutman et al., 2002; Honora, 2002; Lagana 2004; Miller et al., 2002; Sanders & Herting, 2000) that social support can make a critical difference in the school success of African American adolescents. The study's finding that educational intentions or aspirations to complete high school was the strongest predictor of achievement, at the beginning of the high school years, provides additional evidence that there is a need to help young adolescents realize the long term effects of their educational behavior (Honora, 2002) and to help them understand the relevance of what they are learning. This study's findings also support the need for schools to find creative ways to increase the dialogue between parents and schools with the aim of improving the quality of parent involvement. Multimodal interventions at the student, family, school and community levels may have the greatest potential for providing a supportive context for scaffolding students' educational goals, plans, and daily progress toward meeting goals.

Taylor, R. D., & Lopez, E. I. (2005). Family management practice, school achievement, and problem behavior in African American adolescents: Mediating processes. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, *26*(1), 39-49.

Ninety- six male and 104 female African American adolescents and their mothers participated in this study. The average age of the adolescents was 14 years, 7 months. Twenty- four percent of the families were two-parent families and 44% of the mothers were unemployed. In this study, the researchers explored the relationships between family routines, parental expectations for achievement, school engagement, problem behavior in school, and school achievement. School achievement was based on participants' self-report of grades in major subjects. Problem behavior was also based on the participants' self-report. The researchers found that family routines were positively associated with all three measures of school engagement: students' attendance, attention, and sense of challenge. Conversely, they found that students from homes that were less managed and organized reported more problem behaviors. They also found that parental expectations were positively associated with students' school achievement. They concluded that attendance and attention in school appear to promote school achievement and diminish the likelihood that the adolescents engage in problem behavior.

Implications for Practice: These findings are consistent with others that highlight the important relationship between parental expectations and African American adolescents' achievement outcomes.

Note: The data obtained was based on the self-report of adolescents and their mothers, therefore the findings should be interpreted with caution. The study sample was not a random sample so the findings cannot be viewed as representative of the study population (the total student population).

Trask-Tate, A.J., & Cunningham M. (2010). Planning ahead: The relationship among school support, parental involvement, and future academic expectations in African American adolescents. *The Journal of Negro Education*, *79* (2), 137-150.

The purpose of this study was to identify the sources of social supports in the lives of African American adolescents that influenced resilient academic outcomes. 206 *high-achieving* African American high school students (135 females, 71 males) participated in the cross-sectional study. These students were considered "high-achieving" because they spent half of the school day at a science and mathematics center and the other part of the day at their home school. The students were in grades 9 through 12 and attended a public high school in a large, southern, and urban city. Many of the students belonged to families labeled as "working poor" and 50% of the students reported living in a single-parent household. The school's population was predominately female. The researchers found that overall the participants' reported moderate levels of school support from teachers, administrators, coaches, and staff. This was unanticipated. They expected that the participants would report experiencing low levels of school support. For those females perceiving low levels of parental involvement, there was a negative relationship between SES and future academic expectations. However, for females who reported high levels of parental involvement there was a positive relationship between their future academic expectations and SES. This finding suggests that high involvement from parents is an essential ingredient for African American females' development of future academic expectations.

Implications for Practice: This study illuminates the combined, beneficial effect of high levels of perceived school support and perceived parental involvement in efforts to increase the future academic expectations of African American adolescents.

Final Notes:
- A number of studies included in this review of the literature employed cross-sectional survey methodology. One of the limitations of cross-sectional survey research is that there are limits to the extent to which conclusions about causality can be made. However, this type of research methodology is often used to examine relationships that are present between variables at a point in time in a particular context.
- In most studies, generalizations about findings are limited to the population from which the sample was selected. Therefore, when you consider a particular study's relevance to a practice issue, it is important to know that you cannot assume that the same factors or findings are applicable. However, when several studies provide consensus it would be "safe" to consider their relevance to a particular practice issue, given that the practice issue exists in a similar context (such as… predominantly African American urban school setting or rural setting with few African American adolescent males etc.).

Additional References

Fredricks, J.A., Blumenfeld, P.C., & Paris, A.H. (2004). School engagement: Potential of the concept, state of evidence. *Rev. Educ. Res.*, *74*, 59-109.

Nuttin, J. (1974). *A relational theory of motivation and the dynamic function of cognitive events* (Psychological Reports (No. 4). Louvain: University of Louvain.

Nuttin, J. (1985). *Future time perspective and motivation: Theory and research method.* Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Sirin, S.R., & Rogers-Sirin, L. (2005). Components of school engagement among African American adolescents. *Applied Dev. Sci.*, *9*, 5-13.

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