

SEPARATED BY GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION AND LINEAGE: A CASE STUDY
DESIGN USING A QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY IN RESEARCH ON HOPE, LOVE,
AND RESILIENCE DURING A FAMILY REUNION

By

Cynthia Dee Reece

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

School of Behavioral Sciences

Liberty University

Lynchburg, VA

2023

APPROVED BY:

Richard Stratton, Committee Chair, PhD.

Sonya Cheyne, Committee Member, PhD.

Abstract

Family reunions are extensive functions in the African American community. The family members look forward to seeing one another, year after year, to share on various topics such as births, marriages, weddings, educational accomplishments, employment advancements, as well as deaths that have occurred. Often, some family members cannot attend reunions due to the distance or financial and economic hardships. Geographical location is a major hurdle to overcome when there is a lack of finances. Additionally, a mindset of not being accepted or assured of love in the family due to the perceived lineage of a family member or absence from the annual family reunion may prevent attendance. An individual's perception of the family or members greatly impacts their views and outlook.

Keywords: family, reunion, lineage, African American, spirituality, education, heritage

© By Cynthia D. Reece, 2023

All rights reserved

Dedication

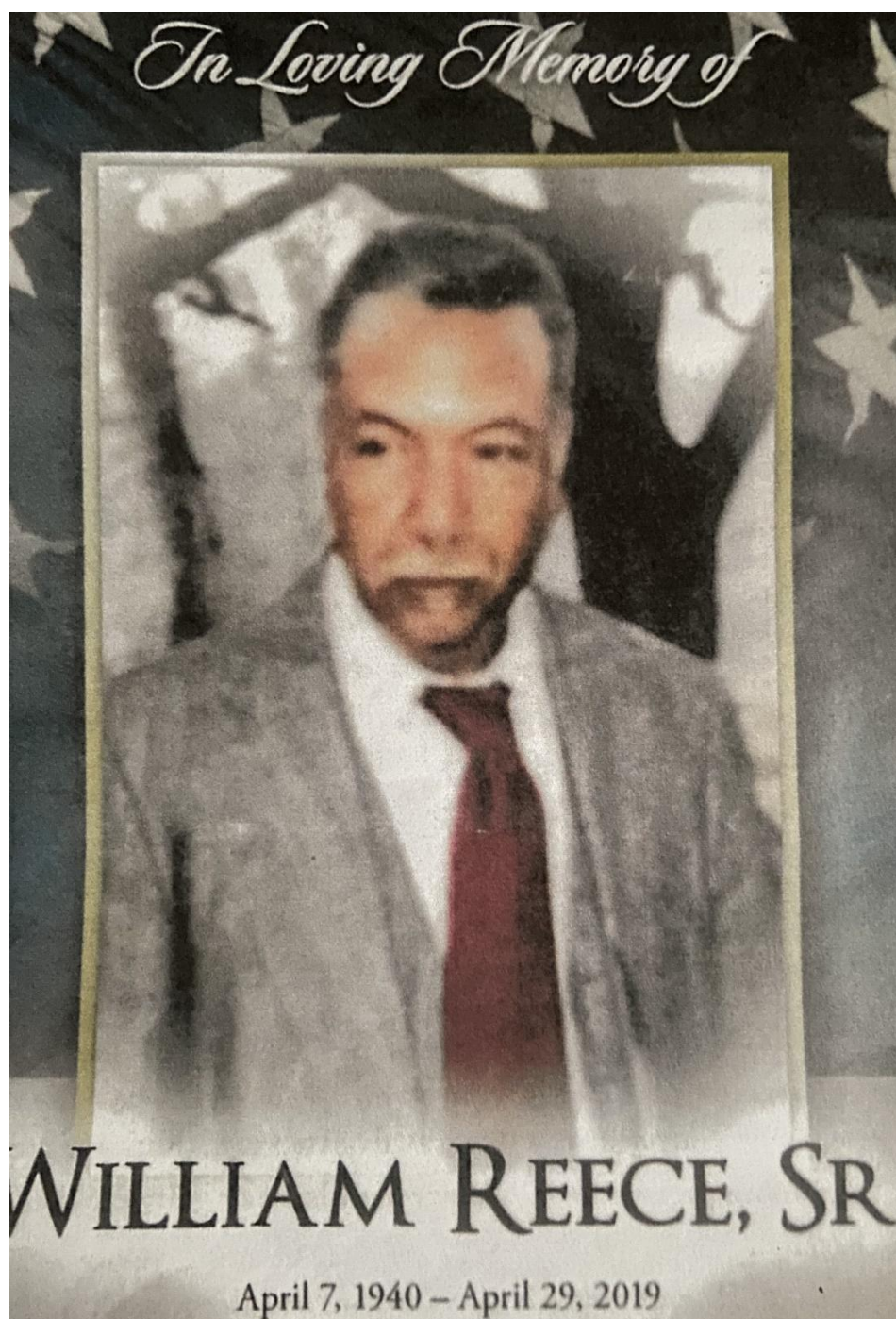
This dissertation is dedicated to all who have endured and attended the family reunion of Spriggs, Howard, and Reece. The love experienced during the reunion in 1995 caused this task to become a thought that formed a beautiful work of printed words. I give praise to our Most High Father, Jehovah, because it is through Him that our family has excelled and overcome.

Second, I dedicate this dissertation to my children (DeRaile, Renalda, Nicholas) and grandchildren (Thaylorah, Taylor, Jabez, Jalyn, Theodore, and Thaddeaus). I hope you take pride in your heritage and continue to yearn for knowledge of the family lineage.

Thirdly, I dedicate this dissertation to my late uncle, James Williams Cummings (mother's side), who highly encouraged family members to persevere and continue their education. It is because of his diligence that I persevered in writing this dissertation.

Last, but not least, I dedicate this dissertation to my dad, William Wayne Reece, Sr. While enrolled in online classes at Liberty University in the School of Behavioral Sciences, Community Care and Counseling Department to obtain a Doctor of Education degree with a concentration in Traumatology, I spent many hours alongside my son, DeRaile Reece (grandson to William Wayne Reece, Sr.) and my brother, William 'Wayne' Reece, Jr. helping to care for him, our dad, in the hospital and at home, while juggling classroom assignments. His death is deeply grieved. I miss him, still.

*Date of birth correction: April 17, 1940.



Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to honor God for His favor and strength over my life and for allowing me to follow His lead. Isaiah 41:10 (NIV) tells me to not fear for He is with me; do not be dismayed, for He is God. He has strengthened and helped me; He has been true in upholding me with His righteous right hand.

To my colleagues, past and present, I sincerely appreciate your patience and long-suffering with me as I approached many of you for your direction in words, grammar, or sentence structure. To Mrs. Cornelia Reece Goffney, aka “Sister” thank you for your beautiful words of wisdom shared on forgiveness. That conversation will forever be in my heart. I would also like to acknowledge each dissertation committee member for correction and guidance. Dr. Richard Stratton, my dissertation chair, thank you for showing great patience with me during this process and encouraging me to continue despite my shortcomings at times and thoughts of wanting to quit. I persevered through the hope that I have in Christ Jesus. Dr. Sonya Cheyne, my reader, thank you for sticking with me when it came to reading my paper and making necessary adjustments and corrections. And lastly, Linet Kendal, my editor, you showed more patience with me than I showed to myself. There were so many emails and copies of my dissertation (manuscript) that you sent back and forth between us. And, you always said yes, thank you and you are welcome. Thank you for editing this dream of mine to become Dr. Cynthia Dee Reece.

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Dedication	4
Acknowledgments	6
List of Tables	12
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	13
Overview	13
Background	15
Factors Contributing to Reunions among African Americans.....	15
Situation to Self.....	19
Problem Statement	20
Purpose Statement.....	21
Significance of the Study	21
Research Question	22
Definitions.....	23
Summary	23
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	26
Overview	26
Definitions of Key Terms	26
Family	26
Lineage and Family Reunions	36

Challenges Keeping Members from Attending Family Reunions	42
Experiences of Family Members	55
Theoretical Framework	57
Summary	59
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS	65
Overview	65
Design	66
Advantages and Drawbacks of a Case Study Research Design.....	70
Research Questions	72
Setting	73
Participants.....	74
Procedures.....	75
The Researcher's Role.....	76
Data Collection	77
Interviews.....	77
Surveys/Questionnaires.....	78
Document Analysis	80
Observations	80
Data Analysis	80
Open Coding	81

Constant Comparative.....	81
Trustworthiness.....	82
Reflexivity.....	82
Conformability	82
Transferability.....	82
Credibility	83
Ethical Considerations	83
Summary	85
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS	91
Overview.....	91
Participants.....	91
Betty	92
Sally	93
Daisy	93
Jeremy	94
Tom.....	95
Ann.....	95
Sam	96
Kate.....	96
Jeff.....	97

	10
Larry.....	97
Results.....	101
Theme Development.....	102
Research Question Responses.....	106
Summarization	114
Summary	118
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION	120
Overview.....	120
Summary of Findings.....	121
Discussion	122
Empirical Literature	124
Theoretical Literature.....	125
Theoretical Implications	127
Empirical Implications.....	127
Practical Implications.....	128
Delimitations.....	128
Limitations	129
Recommendations for Future Research	129
Summary	131
References	133

Appendix A: IRB Application Letter	157
Appendix B: Recruitment Flyer	158
Appendix C: Consent Form	159
Appendix D: Background Questions	162
Appendix E: Survey Questions	163
Appendix F: Interview Questions	164

List of Tables

Table 1 Participant Demographic Data	92
Table 2 Background Questions	98
Table 3 Responses Tallied for Interview Questions	99
Table 4 Survey	100
Table 5 Responses Tallied for Survey	100
Table 6 Theme Development	102
Table 7 Top Applied Themes	105
Table 8 Top Co-Occuring Codes	105
Table 9 Top Seven Coded Participants	106
Table 10 Dessert Responses	109
Table 11 Definition of Love	110
Table 12 Definition of Hope	112
Table 13 Definition of Resilience	113
Table 14 Word Frequency Table	117

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Family reunions, which serve many functions in the African American community because they date back to the cultural and historical roots, play an important part in African American culture and tradition passed down over many generations (McCoy, 2011). Some of the activities conducted include exchanging information through storytelling and sharing meals, among others, which result in members showing and feeling hope, love, and resilience (Sutton, 2004). With such activities, the presence of elders is an important anchor in bringing reassurance, an important part of building hope, love, and resilience (Boyd-Franklin, 2013). Through their story telling, the elders offer family members the ability to “rethink how we interact with each other” (Hey, 2018, p.351). Family members in the African American community may be compelled to attend family reunions to strengthen their family connection and renew their sense of hope and resilience. Understanding what factors motivate family reunions and what they contribute to individual family members becomes a crucial issue.

Family reunions have been part of African American heritage for generations and continue today. Despite being a common foundation for family and relationships, it has remained relatively unexplored. The under-researched nature of the topic, given its impact on resilience, love, and hope, is one motivation that compelled this researcher to examine the different underlying issues.

Few studies that have examined the importance of family reunions find that there are cultural, historical, social, and personal implications to individuals (Walsh, 2003). Understanding how reunions impact African Americans' coping abilities of African Americans may contribute to the literature on how best to utilize these family gatherings to respond to personal and social

issues. Furthermore, resilience is a necessary tool for health and well-being, as explained by Bennett and Windle (2015).

The study may contribute to research in relatively unexplored areas. Despite family reunions being an important part of the cultural and historical background of African American communities, they remain deeply misunderstood. Family reunions serve many functions, including preserving a culture passed down generations by word of mouth through storytelling, songs, and narratives (Scharp, 2013). The history through the years of slavery, segregation, and the civil rights movement is a significant reminder for the African American community of not only the struggles that they have endured, but also the progress that has been made and what could be done in the future (Diakhaté, 2021). Hearing these stories about past struggles can serve as a symbol of hope and, thus, contribute to resilience to build a better future.

The upcoming generation risks cultural and historical amnesia due to lack of teaching and education by elders, which may affect the progress made in fighting for justice and equal opportunity. However, simple family interconnectedness through the generations strengthens social bonds and can serve immediate and personal purposes of well-being in the community. Elderly members can help share their experiences within families and relationships that can serve as a lesson for the younger generations (McCoy, 2011). Therefore, family reunions serve both personal and short-term goals that have a more profound and long-term impact on the community.

Research on families attending a reunion has not been researched using the geographical location of residence of family members in reference to the locations of the family reunion. Also, important and relative to future prospects and further studies in this area is the perceived lineages that family members have internally maintained. The researcher for this study aspires to be a

contributing family member in the African American community that studies and builds in the role of advocating for the family members that feel left out due to geographical location or their ‘perceived’ position in lineage (Zulu, 2018).

The qualitative research investigated factors that may present challenges that prevent members from attending reunions, including geographical separation. The researcher analyzed the impact of distance as a barrier in detail to understand the emotional experience of family members and how it affects feelings of hope and love, and eventually, resilience. More importantly, both for those who attend or are unable to attend the family reunion, the study sought to understand how they were affected in terms of perceived position in the lineage, and, in turn, how this perception influences their resilience.

This chapter is organized into various sections explaining the underlying issues and introduces the aim and objectives of this study. Sections such as the problem statement, background, purpose statements, and definitions are detailed with relevant information to understand the topic and set the scene for the research. An analysis of the most critical literature used in the study, including conceptual and theoretical underpinnings, is reviewed in the background.

Background

Factors Contributing to Reunions among African Americans

Resilience. Resilience constitutes the ability of individuals or families to recover from tragedies, difficulties, or crises. Resilience is fueled by feelings of hope and love (Black & Lobo, 2008). According to Walsh (2003), resilience, especially one borne from family, significantly contributes to the ability of family members to rebound from adversity and crises. Various studies have investigated family reunions based on concepts such as traveling motivations and

their important contribution to resilience. Research finds that resilience from family interactions has resulted in strengthening families and couples that were at odds at some point, and this researcher advocated this because family reunions often encourage family members to talk during or beforehand to understand the differences between members and resolve them amicably, enabling good interactions and communication during reunions further serving to increase the feeling of interconnectedness and resilience (Littlejohn-Blake & Darling, 1993). This study focused on the aspects of resilience through family reunions and how impediments like geographical distance can impact one's view of their position in the family and their resilience. Important to note is that for many families, their encounters with family members from previous years strongly impact whether they want to make the trip to attend the reunion another year. The thought of driving a great distance to attend the reunion and not feeling loved can be intimidating or dreadful.

According to Saltzman et al. (2013), there are numerous pathways in resilience resulting from family relations based on different forms of diversity across families, the challenges, and the motivations. This researcher insisted that various interventions, such as reunions to strengthen family resilience, are relevant and timely because the resultant effects are increased confidence, competence, collaboration, and psychological well-being. The study also explored various challenges, including resource constraints and psychological issues, that could prevent family resilience from developing. The concepts and theories explored in the research are critical in understanding the challenges and motivations of family reunions.

Oh and Chang (2014) explored the concept of resilience in families through unions regarding considerations for methodological and conceptual issues that were addressed. While many ideas were useful for future research, the study found limited use of diverse

methodological applications in previous studies. Most of the studies found were either using descriptive or case study designs. This called for exploring the same issue using different perspectives on methods to expand insight and understanding.

The family, as a unit, is a group of paramount importance in this case study using qualitative methodology. Resilience during a family reunion is depicted by the desire to not only return the next year, but also include gathering multiple names, addresses, and phone numbers for continual contact. Thus, this study attempted to transform the dynamics of family functioning, regardless of separation and division, to love, hope, and resilience. For this researcher, during the formidable years, nothing was greater than the love, hope, strength, and resilience witnessed and encountered.

Geographical Factors. Geographical distance causes families to be scattered in a manner that hinders these members from seeing each other as often as they would like to. Moreover, economic and practical impediments to traveling could make geographical distance harder to resolve during family reunions. Despite these impediments, family elders make attempts to attend the reunions honoring the tradition, but life gets in the way compared to the young people in the family who do not know the family (Puig, 2002).

The geographical location is a component of the geographical distance. Geographical location refers to the actual location in which the family resides. The location of a family may be in the southeastern portion of the south, which could be of greater distance than the family that resides in the southern portion of the state of Texas, for example, where the reunion may be located in the south.

Love. Love is not only an emotion shared by family members. Love exudes a feeling of belonging and togetherness. When family members show love to one another, they are, in a

sense, telling the other family members that they (the family member) enjoy being in their presence. During the family reunion, love is shown by attendance and sharing and listening to shared stories of past, present, and future goals, achievements, and other endeavors of everyone attending and choosing to share.

Hope. Hope includes the paths of separation, and the division of family members reduces the hope that longs to be embraced. Hope has high potential and is never lost during the timeframe of a family reunion. This hope is obvious through the church services offered when the family is gathered and the networking that can be implemented several times over (Nguyen et al., 2016). Lack of hope can also be attributed to problems related to the economy, mishandling funds, or insufficient funds (Redd, 1988). It is critical to know how hope is defined by the family members who state they are losing hope or have lost hope (Kellas et al., 2017).

Travel Motivations. Kluin and Lehto (2012) investigated the factors influencing family reunion travel motivations. The study explored how families consider and plan their travel to join other family members during reunions and what challenges or motivations play a key role. Family history and togetherness, among other factors, play a key role in determining whether family members plan to travel for the next reunion. This means that families with closer relations and perceived feelings of importance in the family lineage are more likely to view travel plans as important despite the geographical distance. Kluin and Lehto (2012) noted that family cohesion and communication via phone calls are necessary when planning reunions. The frequency and ease of communication among family members and adaptability significantly affected how family members would choose to travel. Adaptability refers to the ability to communicate with other family members via phone calls or knowing that a phone call that needs to be made from one family member to another would be accepted when preparing to travel or while traveling.

More importantly, family members would choose to interact because their travel motivations coincide with their chosen travel activities. Therefore, family reunions are a function of the location and activities that family members do during the seasons. This would make sense when family members meet in a location where most members have the most access or most activities to do when hosting the reunion to increase convenience and motivation.

According to Yun (2009), geographical distance and how it influences family support is important during family reunions. Yun (2009) found that closer family members are likely to receive or offer more help than distant ones, indicating a strong impact of distance on family relations. The researcher for this study analyzed this aspect regarding the geographical distance's impact on love, hope, and resilience as mediated by the family reunion.

Situation to Self

When people know that in which they are a part of, they know that which can be a catalyst of change. Living in the state of Texas as a young woman, single, with three children, the first family reunion I attended was overwhelming. I had the opportunity to meet and greet family members when initially meeting them while attending an inaugural family reunion with unfamiliar family members. During that time, I met family elders. These elders were aware of my existence since infant and childhood. The love was abundantly clear, and there was nothing but hope for the future. There was extreme resilience among all the family members, specifically, the elders. This resilience was in part due to being able to look back upon past events and situations that have occurred in the lives of families from past to present.

Knowledge is important and remains an integral portion of legacy (Assari, 2019). However, due to lacking any knowledge of family members and relations, it was important for me to feel the love these family members had to offer, and to know the hope of family that has

gathered to honor past and present family members. It was also crucial to learn that resilience was the ability to keep on going and to go bigger and better through encouragement to be educated and give back to the community I was a part of.

Problem Statement

Family reunions are impacted by various factors, including family communication, geographical distance, and perception of a person in the family (Walsh, 2016a). This study sought to understand factors that affect family reunions such as geographical distance and lineage. The outcomes of the interactions of these factors during reunions include but are not limited to love, hope, and resilience. As defined above, resilience constitutes individuals' or families' ability to recover from tragedies, difficulties, or crises. Resilience is fueled by feelings of hope and love (Black & Lobo, 2008). Hope constitutes a desire or expectation of something specific to happen to an individual, while love is a strong affection and affinity someone has towards a person or something. Hope and love can propel an individual towards positivity and resilience (Higgins & Hamilton, 2014). Exploring how these factors interact was the current problem to uncover how and if families develop hope, love, and resilience amidst geographical distance and perceived position of lineage.

Love and hope are subjective feelings one must show and receive to reaffirm their experiences (Walsh, 2016b). When families gather for a reunion, the feelings of love and hope are easy to experience or show towards others, and in the end, foster strong resilience. However, members unable to attend these reunions because of geographical location could be negatively affected because they cannot show or receive love. With time, this could lead to questioning one's role within the family based on lineage.

Purpose Statement

This research aimed to understand the factors that affect family reunions such as geographical distance and lineage, and how these factors impact the outcomes of family reunions like love, hope, and resilience. The purpose of the case study was to describe the reunion's nature and the enduring relationships that evolve and continue. For this case study, the geographical location and lineage positions were generally defined as emerging factors that may contribute to love, hope, and resilience for family members during the reunion. A qualitative methodology helped to explore these relationships. The research design that was used for this study was case theory (Yun & Lehto, 2009), which explored the cases of three multiple individuals from various families that attend the reunion and experience relational emotions such as love, hope, and resilience among family members that are geographically separated who question their position of lineage in the family amongst the family members at each reunion.

Significance of the Study

The study may contribute to research in relatively unexplored areas. Despite family reunions being an important part of African American communities' cultural and historical background, they remain deeply understood. Family reunions serve many functions, including preserving a culture passed down generations by word of mouth through storytelling, songs, and narratives (Scharp, 2013). The history through the years of slavery, segregation, and the civil rights movement is a significant reminder for the African American community of not only the struggles that they have endured, but also the progress that has been made and what could be done in the future (Diakhaté, 2021). Hearing these stories about past struggles can serve as a symbol of hope and, thus, contribute to resilience to build a better future.

Upcoming generations risk cultural and historical amnesia due to lack of teaching and education by elders, which may affect the progress made in fighting for justice and equal opportunity. Bengtson et al. (2002) noted that throughout recorded history, the coming age of a new generation always had a conflict between elders and youth as they attempted to negotiate a balance between continuity and change, stability, and innovation over time. They further noted that individual characters who act as enablers of social order -their values, dreams, and self-concepts – were generated and kept as the family socialized through inheritance, influence, and transmission across generations. However, simple family interconnectedness through the generations strengthens social bonds and can serve immediate and personal purposes of well-being in the community. Elderly members can share their experiences within families and relationships that may serve as a lesson for the younger generations (McCoy, 2011). Therefore, family reunions serve both personal and short-term goals that have a more profound and long-term impact on the whole community, including future generations. This study may connect these aspects by exploring how family reunions may serve as gatherings for families sharing blood ties and close relations, thus, promoting resilience and hope of individual family members while simultaneously serving deeper purposes of community resilience, progress, and hope for future African American generations.

Research Question

The following research question guided this study:

CRQ: What are the challenges that may cause a reduction in the areas of love, hope, and resilience; therefore, abstaining from family reunion planning, attendance, and activities?

Definitions

1. *Family reunion* - a gathering that forms an occasion amongst family members within an extended family and, sometimes, close friends are included. The reunions are congregations sometimes held regularly and are planned for so that they may or may not mark a particular occasion. The main goals and aspects are that people related through family linkages meet, with these gatherings being large, celebrate, share a meal, and exchange information. Different communities have used family reunions for different purposes over time.
2. *Lineage* – a group of people descending from a common progenitor.
3. *Geographical separation* - isolation of people or an individual over a long distance.
4. *Resilience*- the ability of individuals or families to recover from tragedies, difficulties, or crises. Resilience is fueled by feelings of hope and love (Black & Lobo, 2008).
5. *Hope*- a desire or expectation of something specific to happen to an individual.
6. *Love*- a strong affection and affinity someone has towards a person or something.
7. *Geographical location*- the specific location where family members reside.

Summary

Geographical location and lineage impact hope, love, and resilience during family reunions. This study showed how geographical location and lineage are measured during a family reunion. The purpose of the study was to show whether relationships between family members are maintained and to identify a distributed measure of hope, love, and resilience between and within family members.

Reunions are the key force of families uniting to remember past events, deceased loved ones who contributed to the legacy through sacrifice and giving, learn about new births,

achievements, marriages, and facilitate hope, love, and resiliency. It is important to understand how family members connect despite geographical distance and questioning their lineage in the family. Hope, love, and resiliency are key determinants of the continuation of the reunions.

Families encounter challenges such as being separated from each other due to divorce or work assignments, but through love, hope, and resilience to overcome obstacles, they persevere to attend reunions. However, some cannot attend due to obstacles such as financial challenges and fear of not being accepted in the family lineage. Attending a family reunion can be difficult due to unfamiliarity, unresolved family issues, and lack of education regarding family heritage. However, resilience is key and evident among loved ones during the family reunion since a sense of belonging and need for acceptance was experienced.

The purpose of this research was to show the impact of the family reunion in offering love, hope, and resilience to members confronted with factors such as geographical location and questionable lineage. This research explored the importance of knowing family roots and motivated the family to retain certain beliefs when situations such as slavery separated the family yet led to strength and endurance through shared stories and artifacts.

This research was critical in analyzing the nature of relationships among generational family members. It was also essential to measure the true family dynamics among members. The views and opinions of this researcher were expressed in various segments of this study. This researcher explored the dynamics of a relationship and family system values derived from the origin of families concerning acceptance, commitment, and love within the families that currently contribute to the nature, ideation, and realization of family reunion. Also, noting any differences in communication and lifestyles that include the components of spirituality, education, and family knowledge. The following chapter explores related literature regarding

family reunions. Social constructivism was an essential part of the process, as explained in detail in the literature review under the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Definitions of Key Terms

Love, Hope, Resilience. This section of the literature review explores families separated by geographical location and lineage and the love, hope, and resilience experienced during a family reunion. Scioli and Biller (2009) described hope as an essential element of individuals' spiritual livelihoods. The authors emphasized the role of hope in overcoming feelings of helplessness, alienation, and fear. Hegi and Bergner (2010) described love as an investment in the well-being of a loved one for their own sake. Jackson (1995) described love as making someone else the center of the universe. According to Seville (2008), resilience is the process whereby people exhibit positive behavioral adaptation when encountering significant trauma or stress.

Cultural Group vs. Spiritual Group. Fang et al. (2016) explained a cultural group versus a spiritual group as follows: "a cultural group is defined in terms of their shared stories, beliefs, values, myths, and practices shaped by history and geography. A spiritual group is characterized in terms of religious, spiritual, and faith-based beliefs and practices" (p. 1). African Americans are highly religious people and have been since the time of slavery, according to Henderson (2016), who also insists that religion is a source of comfort, helps resolve family conflict, and can be used as a tool during adversity.

Family

Murdock (1965) described a family unit as a heterosexual, married, cohabiting couple and their biological children, commonly known as the nuclear family. On the other hand, extended families comprised at least three generations: grandparents, parents, and children

(Georgas, 2003). Georgas et al. (2006) noted a family could include people not related by genes or marriage. Olson (2000) also defined family as a unit defined by the emotional bonds between family members that promote positive health and well-being outcomes, agreeing with the emotional aspect of families illustrated by Bertolani et al. (2014).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes the family as a natural and fundamental group of society and is, therefore, entitled to protection by society and the State (Lauterpacht, 1948). Transnational families are those that negotiate relationships across international borders and who, in most cases, migrated at different times (Skrbiš, 2008). In most cases, parents migrated first, only to be joined by their children after a specific duration.

Family Rituals. Families do perform rituals as a way of maintaining family ties. Rituals are important in maintaining and reaffirming family ties across families separated by migration (Meng, 2018). Rituals transcend family separations to include a time of conflict, adversity, and difficulty, such as during the most recent COVID-19 pandemic in African American families (Imber-Black, 2020).

Family Separation. Today, many societies have witnessed the long-term separation of families. This separation may either be due to divorce or migration. In the context of migration, extended families and new lineages emerge from these separations. However, many families find it necessary to maintain close relationships with other family members. While maintaining close relations is essential, some challenges could hinder the development of such relationships. Many studies propose that such challenges can be conquered with love and hope. Hence, the parties need to be resilient such that they are not affected by the geographic separation (Thomas et al., 2018). Therefore, this study sought to analyze geographical separation and family reunion issues.

This section of the study reviews existing literature on the subject, particularly focusing on the role of hope, resilience, and love.

Even though families are separated from each other, it was further discovered that nuclear and extended families depended on each other and that nuclear families maintained relationships with extended kin even when they lived far apart (Georgas et al., 2001). Bertolani et al. (2014) further argued that reunited families were “intrinsically transnational” and also agreed with Georgas et al. (2001) on how families conducted relationships regardless of how far apart they lived. They further described transnational families as separated geographically, but still maintaining close contact relationally. Bertolani et al. (2014) observed that in transnational family reunions, a mixture of emotions was observed and that the migrants invested more heavily in maintaining contact with the family or their significant others left behind. They further observed that reunions were gatherings of transnational family members and were of tremendous significance in the life of the migrants, especially if the family was geographically dispersed across continents. Skrbiš (2008) observed that transnational families negotiated kinship relationships despite international borders, agreeing with Bertolani et al. (2014). African American families also extend beyond race to include people of mixed heritage from mixed couples of Black or White descent (Shoko & Sean, 2021).

Although families maintained significant bonds even when separated (Georgas et al., 2001), McNatt et al. (2018) concluded that separation weakened the family bonds. Savic et al. (2013) observed that separation was chaotic for many refugees. Thus, family members hold and maintain some level of confidence that they will be reunited (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011). Marsden (2018) also noted that involuntary separation led to cases of kidnapping associated with persecution. Such sudden separation significantly affected the family due to the uncertainty

surrounding the missing relative's whereabouts and fate. Boss (1999) described the uncertain situation after the sudden separation of a family member as an ambiguous loss that was considered traumatic due to the ongoing distress and uncertainty as to whether the said relative was dead or alive. McNatt et al. (2018) noted that reasons for family separation were diverse, including exposure to danger and precarious circumstances, ailing elderly folks, inadequate travel documentation, and some kin's decision to remain in their native country.

Savic et al. (2013) observed the effect of separation on refugee families, especially from an economic angle where increased financial pressure would be evident in cases where the breadwinner migrated. These circumstances would force children to discontinue their education and seek employment to contribute financially (McNatt et al., 2018). Further, women would be forced to take over roles formerly assigned to males (Marsden, 2018). The females in the family are a strong source of support with money, mentally and emotionally (Damiano, 2017).

Refugees who had settled in their country of migration were also bound to financial pressure due to limited opportunities in the country of migration and the sending of remittances to the separated family (Savic et al., 2013). Johnson and Stoll (2013) observed that remittances could be used to maintain kinship bonds for refugees unable to sponsor the reunion process. This portrayed an aspect of resilience where, despite the separation and tough economic times, the refugees felt compelled to send remittances back home to their families. Resilience is also observed within the families the refugees left behind, whereby, women and children took up roles that were initially not assigned to them.

Savic et al. (2013) noted that pressure to send money home was a high priority for the refugees. Although families were separated geographically, information communication technologies and family reunification allowed them to maintain contact with family members.

They also noted that separation harmed the mental health of refugees. The psychological effect of refugee family separation was significant (Miller, 2018). Marsden (2018) stated that the kin that remained in their native country experienced augmented stress, adverse living conditions, and exposure to violence and risk.

Miller (2018) observed that refugees spoke intensely about the separation from their kin, its effect on their families, and how it affected their day-to-day activities. Further, some refugees reported feeling guilty or depressed at gaining asylum, while some of their kin remained in hazardous situations in their native country (Marsden, 2018). Marsden (2018) further observed that refugees reported difficulties accessing social and cultural networks due to geographical separation from their families. Marsden (2018) also suggested that it was dangerous for separated families to frequently communicate since it increased the refugees' chances of vulnerability and further contributed to their distress. However, a family reunion was important for many refugees as they integrated into their new environment (Marsden & Harris, 2015).

Schafer (2002) quoted that the "principle of unity of the family" allowed refugee status to be expanded to include the family of the person to whom the refugee status had been granted. McCleary and Wieling's (2017) research on Karen refugee families, who resettled in the United States of America, reported that continuing linkage with the wider Karen community promoted the ability of the families to solve problems. The Karen refugees originated from Thailand and resettled in the United States. This was because the data suggested that families had indigenous ways of addressing problems, which could be channeled to develop culturally acceptable family-support services while reducing the stress experienced during family resettlement. McCleary and Wieling (2017) also noted that the refugee resettlement policy favored reuniting families and re-establishing connections while integrating within a new culture.

Factors Contributing to Family Separations. Park (2020) stated that the separation of families could be attributed to several factors. Despite the many factors, the author focused on violence in separating families. Park (2020) used the example of the Korean War (1950-1953) to analyze families' separation in Korean countries. The study found that political violence and national division were the primary reasons behind many families' separation. In the last five decades, political instability in several developing countries also contributed to the separation of societies. Despite these separations, many families have been able to reunite occasionally. The reunions have been filled with emotional expressions and stories of family traditions and legacies.

Pryor (2020) noted that families have, for a very long time, communicated through gestures and facial expressions. Therefore, the author asked how one endures such events to share these moments with their families. Therefore, Park (2020) proposed more studies to analyze factors that drive family reunions. Sarah et al. (2017) explored family separations during war and conflict in the African American context by examining the role of women, economic activities, financing, letter writing, and family. During this time of conflict during the revolution, Sarah et al. (2017) explained that the role of the family became more prominent as letter writing was used to convey heightened emotions during economic uncertainties and hard times that most African American women in marriages went through to contribute to the Boycott of English taxes being levied on imported goods. This shows that the African American family survived through resilience during times of war and conflict.

Family Reunions. Once a year, families gather at a specific location to unite and share past events that have occurred in their lives. Ramirez et al. (2007) narrated the story of Marcella, an Australian of El Salvadorian origin. She migrated to Australia as a young lady. She attended a

major transnational family reunion, which turned out to be a site for the politics of family envy, reciprocity, and celebration of family cohesion at the same time. It was an experience that etched itself into the memory of Marcela as emotionally intense, but also as an identity-affirming and disorienting experience at the same time. At this point, Marcella realized her “cultural Australianness” had changed her, permanently distinguishing her from her kin. This brought an aspect of resilience whereby although Marcela hoped to reunite with her family, regardless of the disorienting experience she felt, she still discovered that she had adapted to Australianness, although it still felt good to be affirmed as part of her indigenous family.

McKay (2005) observed that for Filipina migrant workers, their home villages were the site of familial, political, and economic ties that kept them connected to home as they lived abroad. These migrants were observed to activate some form of village relation before investing in their migrant country. McKay further noted that when Filipina migrant workers returned from contract work overseas, they had to re-engage their entwined understandings of place and subjectivity. It was also in their culture for close relatives to regularly exchange foods and labor. McKay’s research also noted that habitus linked emotions to embodied experiences of people and culture. In the case of Filipina workers, the emotions of hope and love were distinctly evident. Migrants worked intending to reunite with their families one day while their cultural exchange of food and labor showed love and care for each other.

Family reunions have become an essential aspect of human culture across the world. Therefore, McCoy (2011) examined the cultural aspect of family reunions in the United States. In particular, the author focused on African American families. The study found that family reunions have been the primary contributors to the survival and endurance of African American families. Family reunions have helped maintain cultural heritage. Additionally, they have been

known to create resilience during uncertain times. However, several differences have been observed in modern family reunions. Nevertheless, key elements that make up family traditions have remained constant. These constants have been known to generate power within family units. Thus, family reunions have been characterized by the elders' participation. In this case, elders are considered the primary keepers of the cultural and family legacy (McCoy, 2011).

Shifts Impacting African American Family Reunions. According to McCoy (2011), family reunions have experienced significant shifts in the past decades. These shifts have often occurred in the cultural aspects of the reunion. In African American communities, information about the civil rights movement and accessibility to economic growth has been shared. Significant aspects of legislative advancements have been known to take the center of discussion in the reunions. Information sharing has been through stories. Hence, new community generations have learned about the success and mistakes of the older generations. Therefore, McCoy (2011) described family reunions as the primary driver of integrity in the American society.

Dreby (2015) observed that families' separation has characterized the 21st century. Numerous factors including immigration, divorces, and work have caused these separations. In terms of immigration, the policies of the United States have been extremely restrictive. As a result, many parents fail to relocate with their children and other family members. Away from immigration, issues such as work have often separated many families. In these cases, family members have moved away from their primary residence due to employment-related issues. Thus, they are often absent from their families. Therefore, family reunions are the primary source of family interactions in such situations. Without family reunions, children in such families would harbor resentments, which could be the downfall of any society. The prospect of

meeting their families once in a while gives people in separated families hope and resilience to keep going.

Impact of Effective Communication to Family Reunions. A family reunion is a stronger and unified gathering of family members, young and old. African American families have endured many changes over the years, and the culmination of these changes has affected communication, travels, and gatherings called reunions (Marbley & Rouson, 2013). For reunions to be successful, members need to clarify when the chain of communication should begin for a reunion scheduled in the following year. Also, members need to discuss whether to have meetings at the end of the reunion or not. During the reunions, family members can establish whether communication helps to build a relationship amongst family members or relationships form the foundation for communication.

Communication and Lineage can be on a Continuum via Media Enhancements. Changes happen every day in the lives of families that lead to separation. Members use different communication methods to notify every member of the scheduled reunions. In lieu of attending the family reunion, numerous mailings are sent out via Facebook, word of mouth, postal service, emailing, phone, and Skype. These forms of communication are necessary and important to bridge gaps (Redd, 1988). It is important that even in these challenging times of COVID-19, where physical gatherings are minimal to reduce the spread of the virus, recent media enhancements such as Zoom have eased communication through virtual meetings. Maintaining an open line of communication and building relationships based on communication is important (Barton et al., 2017).

Impact of Non-effective Communication to Reunions. Lack of communication may prevent some family members from attending reunions and knowing their lineage. When there is

a disruption in communication, family members may lack knowledge of their lineage and fail to know of upcoming reunions; hence, they fail to attend reunions. Lack of communication in broken marriages might be a major cause for some family members questioning their lineage, especially the young generation, since parental differences might have led to miscommunication regarding their culture and lineage (Dickson, 1993). Lack of communication can bring about negative thoughts and behaviors in the presence of questionable family members. The preceding factor could play a major role in some of the family members questioning their lineage in the families in which they are a part. While one family may address their familial situations, another may ignore the problems until they fester, disrupting the close family and extended family (Mackensie & Jordan, 2019). Family relationships are built on effective communication, friendliness, and ease of connecting with others. However, some family members lack the courage or tenacity to open up to family members whom they have not had the opportunity to know. These family members could have low self-esteem and are, therefore, unable to open up as they want (Malaquias et al., 2014). For family reunions to be successful, effective communication is crucial.

Importance of Attending Reunions. Reunions are composed of many families that come together having been separated due to factors such as geographical location or lineage. Some men and women may have divorced and, ultimately, attend the reunion with their new or prospective spouses. Collectively, these family members share a bond that has moved or transpired from year to year and family to family from the earliest of times (Stewart, 2015). Most literature reviewed showed the foundation of African American families as having slavery and spirituality as a common topic (Bertocchi & Dimico, 2020). However, according to Taylor et al. (2016), “African Americans are very involved in reciprocal support networks with their extended

family, friends, and church members” (p. 332). These networks are bonded through several channels that incorporate overall relationships by coming together during reunions.

Attending family reunions helps members to familiarize themselves with other family members and enhances communication in cases of differences. The esteem of the reunion would cause family members to interact in communicating at various intervals. Family members can be a part of another family that loves and respects one another despite differences. To enhance communication and bridge the gap caused by familial differences, family members strive to attend these reunions to connect, even though geographical location can be a hindrance. Failure to attend reunions results in some family members not knowing the lineage to which they belong. Teenagers or teens are affected by attending or not attending a family reunion. Families faced with traveling difficulties due to geographical locations also have to endure the possibility of the younger generation not knowing where they come from. When the younger generation cannot define or share who they are based on their ancestry, serious mental health symptoms (problems) can surface (Malaquias et al., 2014). Therefore, it is critical that members attend reunions to connect and familiarize themselves with other family members.

Lineage and Family Reunions

Acknowledgment or Obscuring of the Position of Lineage during Reunions. Family reunions are associated with either acknowledging the position of lineage or obscuring it. Li (2018) carried out an ethnographic study on the Chinese rural-urban migrant workers’ annual Spring Festival to examine the relationship of family reunions with the position of lineage. The interviewed participants described the family reunion as an important ritual that acknowledges the position of lineage. During the reunions, the younger generation is taught about their ancestry, family ties and relations, identity, and culture. Andrea et al. (2019) maintained that

mutual trust and respect can develop from family gatherings. The participants also acknowledged that family reunions could obscure the position of lineage since they might reveal hidden tensions and traumatic experiences of family separation. Thus, they may prevent future gatherings since family members may avoid them for fear of reviving such memories. Edge (2017) insisted that African Americans get an important part of their legacy from genealogy, which is an important source of information passed down generations. Family reunions can be sources of understanding information about lineage and genealogy during such gatherings.

There are some challenges faced by family members when it comes to attending family reunions, some of which result in family members abstaining from the rituals. All of the reviewed literature shows geographical position to be the major obstacle to family reunions since it creates a sense of separation, a feeling of unshared values, culture, and traditions, and adds to the costs of travel expenses. The reviewed literature also indicates that despite the geographical barrier and other challenges, family members usually rely on feelings of love and hope to display resilience and participate in family reunions. Even though the reviewed literature shows the importance of family reunions in creating unity and acknowledging the positions of lineage, it reveals a research gap regarding obscuring positions of lineage by family reunions, which calls for more research to be done on the particular issue.

McCoy (2011) stated that family reunions have become an essential ritual in different parts of the world. The importance of the events stems from their contribution to health, endurance, and survival. Family reunions have been known to be critical in maintaining cultural heritage during uncertainties. While many families participate in these events, reunions vary from family to family. Despite the variation, some elements, such as power and participation of elders, are similar throughout the families (McCoy, 2011).

An analysis by Krobb (2014) indicated the importance of lineage during family reunions. Family reunions create a sense of community among the participants. Through these reunions, individuals have learned different aspects of their culture. Specifically, past knowledge, in terms of cultural structure and practices, is shared among the family members. Similar notions have been echoed in the works of McCoy (2011), where family is considered a ‘bedrock’ of the African American community. Through these reunions, the young generation can understand their lineage fully. Therefore, lineage is prioritized during these family reunions. These family reunions also explain their popularity in the United States and other regions of the world (Krobb, 2014; McCoy, 2011).

Mentoring Children during Reunions. Regarding lineage, Waldrop et al. (1999) concluded that grandparents were very influential in mentoring the lives of their grandchildren and the identity of the grandfathers. This could be an underlying factor in why family reunions were considered key by refugees, as the reunions would serve as an opportunity for mentoring grandchildren by their grandfathers. Mason and Tipper (2008) observed that children who had experienced parental separation were more inclusive and creative in who they considered relatives, which was attributed to the fact that they had to adapt to family complexity. This observation by Mason and Tipper (2008) agrees with Georgas et al. (2006), who noted that individuals could define family for themselves and conclude that unrelated people were part of the family.

Smith et al. (2004) categorized the child’s age during the family reunion, the duration of separation, and the level of contact as important factors to consider through the migration and family reunion processes. Their research was done on Caribbean children who migrated to

Canada. They observed that younger children coped better during family reunions, unlike older children, who were more likely to disobey their parents' requests after the family reunion.

When the younger generation comes in contact with an older family member, anything can happen through revelation. The meeting between these two parties could ignite flames that can live on through eternity. The information received by the younger generation may, someday, be the same information that may be told by them being the older generation, as "extended family members are an important source of informal support to African Americans" (Taylor et al., 2016, p. 326). The bottom line and source of any family reunion is the lineage. Without lineage, there can be no family. Without lineage, there can be no reunion or gathering of individuals from neighborhood to neighborhood, state to state, coast to coast, or country to country.

On the contrary, Tolfree (1995) observed older children were better placed to cope with family separation due to their improved language and mental skills compared to the younger generation, a view also held by Mann (2004). Smith et al. (2004) researched serial migration and its effect on parent-child relationships in Caribbean communities. They observed that serial migration, where parents migrated (leaving the children even though the children joined them later), potentially disrupted the parent-child bonding, affecting the child's self-esteem and behavior. The reunions were made less successful by the increased time lapse before the reunion as well as any addition of a new member to the family, a fact also noted by Lovato-Hermann (2017), where Mexican migrants could no longer assimilate after a family reunion, especially in cases where mothers had given birth or had new romantic relationships. Gindling and Poggio (2012) researched Latin American countries and found that children separated from their parents during migration lagged in schools and had higher chances of becoming school dropouts.

Reunions among Refugees. Correa-Velez et al. (2015) conducted a study in Australia on refugee youth from 12 different countries. Respondents reported that resettlement in new environments made their parents anxious and less trusting of them. They pointed out the benefits of having a supportive family as critical to their well-being. Addai (2019) studied family reunions in the UK and identified the refugees experienced family reunions as bitter-sweet: bitter since they had to leave family and friends in their country of origin and sweet since they were meeting their long-lost family in their country of migration.

Family Legacy. African American family legacy is built on days from slavery (Bowman, 2015), affecting not just those enslaved, but the problems passed down to their descendants (Abel, 2021; Bellani et al., 2021). Even legal and social policies during and after slavery dictated how African American families lived, where they lived, how they interacted, and what legacies they passed down (Perrone, 2019). Presently, several families have obtained land from their forefathers (Hitchner et al., 2017). As stated earlier, early acknowledgment is key to reducing the perception of a family questioning their place or lineage in the family (Kretsedemas, 2017). Family members engage in the reunion; as Hodge and Williams (2002) note, “Each member has a degree of spirituality that has allowed them to stay steadfast and to show love to another regardless of age or relation.” It can be difficult to critique “disregarding and looking behind” in accepting or not accepting the actual status of lineage versus the ‘perceived’ status of the family member (Cooper, 2014). Lineage is depicted through presented photographs, written documentation, and other papers that include maps adding additional information that can be generated and absorbed in the mind or through verbal statements (Bateman, 2016).

African American family legacy faced various challenges, causing separation of family members. Geographical location and perceived lineages also take a toll on the nature of the

family members. African American families have long endured trauma right from slavery, murders, and injustices witnessed throughout time (McFarlane, 2021). Even after slavery ended, social, economic, and environmental challenges still faced African American communities over the centuries (de Schweinitz, 2020; Lavanya & Sivasankari, 2020). Yet, the ability to come together is unique and helps to form and establish a bond that cannot be broken (Range et al., 2017).

It is of the utmost importance for lineage not to be an issue or a problem when thinking of not attending or attending a family reunion. Through this study, the researcher sought to understand what causes a family member to question their lineage, how long the family member has had this issue, possible ways to resolve the issue either through in-person or virtual meetings, and if there are other family members within that family with a similar issue. Also key to note is to identify if this issue would have caused these family members to skip family reunions.

DNA's Contribution to Reunions. DNA is important to ascertain an individual's lineage. Some family members may be discriminated against from attending family reunions due to factors such as being born out of wedlock. These individuals can trace back their families and lineage by conducting DNA. Once they have positive results, they can join the family reunions as acceptable family members since individuals from the same family share DNA through birth. From conception, a baby receives DNA from both the mother and the father; though not equal, substantial life qualities are inherited. The peculiarities and roles of DNA are transferred from adult to adult from the first conception. This is why related individuals may have similar looks, strengths, and perceptions (Chan, 2013). The role that DNA plays in actions, emotions, and thoughts is critical to daily choices and interactions. The nature of DNA can explain simple everyday interactions.

DNA helps unknown family members trace their lineage. Notably, a person's DNA has a gene called the "affinity gene," which is a definite signifier of being an individual member of the family (Chan, 2013, p. 984). The affinity gene is comparable to a gene that allows for a particular talent for which family members are known. One true way of knowing or observing this information is knowing one's lineage. However, some individuals may not know their lineage due to challenges experienced by their parents. For instance, some frowned upon teenage pregnancy more than others. Unwanted thoughts or intrusions of the mind can alter the perception of mindset. When young or single mothers have experienced negative reactions to having children out of wedlock, their status in the family or community may become questionable. Moreover, their ideology of not being accepted in the lineage during a family reunion may increase (Taylor & Conger, 2017). This could hinder them from attending reunions. It goes without saying that when a family refuses to attend a family reunion for reasons that demonstrate negativity toward other family members due to past or present issues, the youth in these families would be greatly impacted (Knopf, 2017).

Challenges Keeping Members from Attending Family Reunions

Geographical Location. Families have been separated due to migration to other countries to seek asylum, relocating for work as the military do, crossing borders to search for work, and improving education, among other factors. These family members, especially parents, relocate and are later joined by their children. Due to the distance involved, these family members occasionally meet to connect with others. However, some experience financial difficulties that prevent them from attending reunions.

The question involves whether geographical separation is an adequate reason or excuse to use for non-attendance for the annual family reunion. Most family reunions are scheduled at the

residence of the oldest family member or in the city/town where the great-grandparents lived. There are occasions when the family reunion moved from town to town. Of the three family reunions discussed in this dissertation, only one has been held in the same approximate location since its inception. It is good for a family reunion to be held in different places yearly (Jones, 1980). This research sought to understand if family members can choose where the family reunion could be held, if a vote can be taken to validate the choice of the location, and if the presiding board or governing members are in charge of choosing the location. Attending the annual family reunion can cause the family member to have a negative reaction, exhibiting behaviors that are not conducive to being at the reunion because of no desire to be there (Pindyck, 2013).

Each of these questions is important to family members and would provide ample opportunity to help or assist. Families have migrated due to educational opportunities, career choices, and job transfers. These travels have placed distance between families (Revell & McGhee, 2012). Geographical separation disrupts family members by disallowing children to maintain contact with an elder, such as a grandmother or grandfather. The bond is broken or cannot be built (Das et al., 2016).

For the man or woman responsible for moving their family for one of the above reasons, there should not be any negative responses or negative feelings for doing what is best for the family. Families have moved due to “urban renewal” (Hill, 2003, p. 122). Urban renewal is the result of new and affordable housing developments. Increases in incomes and changes in positions that lead to a greater salary also contributed to relocating geographically (Hill, 2003).

In the past decade, numerous studies on families have emerged. The studies on family separation and reunion have often focused on transnational families. In particular, these studies

have focused on the welfare of children. According to Mazzucato and Schans (2011), the focus on children stems from the notion that they are an important aspect of family units. As a result, they often influence decisions made by adults. For this reason, parents would go as far as crossing international boundaries to either provide for their children or see their children. Hence, the authors concluded that geographical distance plays a limited role in preventing individuals from attending family reunions. Despite the conclusion, the authors observed that analysis of family reunions has often been difficult. The difficulty results from the lack of a standard conceptual framework that can be used to analyze separated families. Such difficulty tends to increase when transnational families are involved. Also, the analysis faces numerous challenges in defining a methodology for analysis.

The geographical separation of families is often a complex subject. The complexity comes from the observed family relationship in the context of migrants. During family reunions, many family members often cover large geographical distances to reunite with their families. However, some fail to overcome such geographical separations. The failure is attributed to numerous factors that affect an individual's decision to forego these reunions. For instance, there are cases where resentment is aboard by some of the family members. Such situations are common where parents have left behind their children. Other reasons include a lack of resources and the presence of familial conflicts.

Many family members face several challenges when planning family reunions and family reunion activities that prevent them from attending. Varzally (2017) researched family reunions of Vietnamese families to establish the challenges the family members face in planning family reunions. The research established that most Vietnamese participants cited geographical differences as the major challenge when attending family reunions owing to immigration; the

different family members had moved to different countries, and traveling long distances was challenging.

Overcoming Geographical Separation to Attend Family Reunions. Nevertheless, Reisenauer (2018) stated that overcoming geographical distances has been done in many ways. Some have included the early accumulation of resources. In the case of Turkish migrants, technology has been exploited to overcome large geographical distances. In particular, the migrants have used transnational families and kinship networks to their advantage. Through these networks, families can remain in contact with one another and maintain their relationships. Where the relationships with relatives have been problematic, interaction through the network has helped smoothen these relationships. Hence, the network has been highly beneficial. Also, the network has been applied in Germany. However, its applicability in other regions of the world is yet to be documented. Nevertheless, it is a critical strategy to overcome geographical distance to attend family reunions. This is despite the lack of physical presence.

While new technologies have been adopted to counter distance issues, it is critical to acknowledge that distance is not usually discussed. For this reason, Ambrosini (2015) examined the concept of distance from a parental perspective. Specifically, the study focused on family reunions in southern Europe, with distance being one of the main factors. According to Ambrosini (2015), parents usually find it difficult to leave their children behind and live in another country. The situation is more difficult for single parents than the other categories of parents. However, during family reunions, there is a chance for the family to share and experience hope and resilience together.

Finance management plays a major role in determining whether one can attend a family reunion. Some families participate in these reunions while living “in different residential areas”

(Firebaugh & Farrell, 2015, p. 155). This arrangement needs a significant amount of resources to execute the event. These contributing factors can influence greater spending, leading to greater debt that appears to have reduced income when, in actuality, the income remained the same (Mimura, 2007). It may not be the geographical location that prevents some families from attending the annual family reunion, but possibly the mismanagement of income.

Geographical distance is a major cause of family separation. Over the years, individuals worldwide have been separating from their family members. This trend is still common today. The separation can either be voluntary or involuntary. According to Thomas et al. (2018), voluntary separation occurs when adults seek opportunities away from home. Involuntary separation, on the other hand, occurs due to the incarceration of individuals. Today, the most common reasons for separating families are divorce and migration. In the context of migration, families' new lineages emerge. Despite the different causes of separation, families have found it important to remain in touch. Due to the need to maintain close relationships, family members plan and engage in family reunions. During planning for these reunion events, many challenges emerge. Despite the challenges, various families have conducted their reunions successfully. Many individuals attribute this success to love and hope. Therefore, these individuals have to be resilient to different social and economic conditions.

The paths of separation and division for family members reduce the hope that longs to be embraced. Hope has high potential and is never lost during the timeframe of a family reunion. This hope is obvious through the church services offered when the family is gathered and the networking that can be implemented several times over (Nguyen et al., 2016). The lack of hope can also be attributed to problems related to the economy, mishandling funds, or insufficient funds (Redd, 1988).

It is critical to know how hope is defined by the family members who state they are losing hope or have lost hope (Kellas et al., 2017). Individual members of the African American community, as well as in their own individual families, are born with varying tones of skin color, hair textures, and body shapes. Thus, an unspoken acceptance or non-acceptance notion separates members of the African American community (Wilder & Cain, 2011).

A family reunion is a major component of African American families. Reuniting with members who have moved miles away or re-engaging with members after family squabbles is critical for the family during reunions. Education is an important milestone in families (Miller, 2018). When communicating, the level of education can profoundly affect the nature of relationships in African American families (Barton et al., 2017).

Planning of family reunions does not only depend on the number of people attending, but also on the finances needed to execute the event. Knowing the resources needed to maintain consistency in planning the family reunion is important. For this reason, implementing business knowledge is feasible, instrumental, and advantageous as a family reunion can be a business (Copeland, 2018). Family reunions allow children to see elders of the family for the first time, sharing various past aspects of how the family began, meals that were prepared, and observing a multitude of dances, art, and sculptures on display, among others. African Americans find meal time an important time to share, make memories, and talk with one another (Robin et al., 2016). Incorporating such aspects during family reunions increases the interaction and communication that strengthens family bonds. There is hope in knowing that without a doubt, one can more than likely rest assured that the reunion is scheduled for everyone to attend and enjoy themselves (Pratt & Zeckhauser, 1990).

To bring hope at the family reunion, family members sing old spiritual hymnals that evoke the spiritual realm while allowing others to embrace and talk while exhibiting true emotions (Goertzen, 2016). It is common to have a minimum of approximately 30 minutes set aside for a devotional service during the initial hour of the annual family reunion. With hope in themselves and the family, one can achieve an understanding and purpose in the family (Wakefield et al., 2016). Long-lasting and helpful gatherings are fundamental aspects of having and maintaining hope in the family (Knopf, 2017).

McCoy (2011), Dreby (2015), and Park (2020) called for the need to examine the critical factors that drive family reunions; for this reason, Suárez-Orozco et al. (2021) sought to examine the challenges of family separations. Specifically, the authors focused on issues such as stress and depression among immigrant families. Many immigrant families often lack documentation. At the same time, they experience a stressful moment searching for employment and dealing with separation from their families. This creates a wide range of uncertainties that may lead to deportation. However, the hope of reuniting with their families gives them the courage to continue. Therefore, Suárez-Orozco et al. (2021) found a significant positive correlation between hope and resilience within immigrant families in the United States. Thus, the authors concluded that hope for family reunions is the key driver of resilience during family separations.

According to Riggs and Riggs (2011), military families have become a notable subject of research. Military families have been studied in aspects such as mental health, suicide rates, and violence. Despite the main issues tackled within military families, little attention has been paid to family separation and reunion. For this reason, Riggs and Riggs (2011) sought to examine the issues of risk and resilience in the context of military families. These families have always separated many times. Each time, there is little knowledge of their family members' whereabouts

or the return. Such separations cause significant health issues to spouses and children. From the perspective of military personnel, the job entails many risks. As a result, their return home is often uncertain. Despite the risk taken, the hope of reuniting with their families facilitates their resilience. However, the author did not test the correlation between hope and resilience in the study.

Nichols (2013) stated that the family is one of the simplest units in a social setting. The author argued that simplicity is only visible when a family is analyzed from a wider community perspective. A closer examination of family unity reveals numerous complexities. These complexities emerge from different emotions and decisions taken by different members of the families. Amidst these complexities, issues of resilience and hardiness also emerge. Therefore, Nichols (2013) sought to examine the concept of resilience in the context of family units.

The analysis by Nichols (2013) provided a framework for observing different aspects of family reunions. Specifically, it allowed analysis of the concepts of love, resilience, and hope by observing different categories of individuals. However, the functionality of families in times of separation is highly complex. Drawing from the work of Zentgraf and Chinchilla (2012), family units need to be examined from different perspectives. For instance, the historical data used by Nichols (2013) focused on the universal notion of fatherhood and motherhood. This notion fails to recognize the various familial contexts and traditions. These contexts are the best scene when the transnational aspect of family separations is analyzed.

According to Zentgraf and Chinchilla (2012), many studies have focused on defining separated families from a pathological aspect. As a result, transnational parties are often blamed for the problems the youth left behind. When considering immigrant parents, they clearly conduct a cost-benefit analysis based on prospects and family economics. However, the basis of

their prospects is often characterized by inaccurate information, which tends to affect their families (Zentgraf & Chinchilla, 2012). However, their hope for a better life for the children is the key driver for their resilience (Yang, 2019). Hence, the authors concluded that hope is crucial in creating resilience in family units. Despite the hope, it is critical to consider other emotions, such as anger and resentment, during family reunions. Such emotions are particularly displayed by children left behind by their parents during the separation. Nichols (2013) stated that such resentment is the primary cause of abstinence from family reunions.

Nichols (2013) stated that many family psychologists define family units based on the concept of love. Often, love is referred to as the primary entity of family interaction. However, love is an abstract concept. Due to its abstract nature, it is not easy to quantify it. Thus, it is difficult to examine. Despite the difficulty in analysis, it is the primary driver of many family decisions. As a result, it is usually misinterpreted during decision-making. Using historical data, the author found that the concept of love and resilience in a family unit can be best understood by observing children. Children often learn from their experiences and adapt to different situations. Their adoption is often a reaction to a decision made by their parents. Despite being forced to adapt to various difficulties, they never lose trust in their parents. Therefore, Nichols (2013) concluded that children are the true definition of resilience and love. Also, adults in the family are usually associated with hope and resilience. This is because adults often rely on logic in decision-making instead of emotions.

The African American family demonstrates love for each other and for individuals outside of the family on a daily basis. Examining the relativity and degree of love between family members is crucial (Roberts & Dunbar, 2015). The members of these family reunions have all strived to overcome some type of obstacle. For some, that obstacle was difficult. For

some family members, the obstacle was devastating. But God, in his infinite mercy, wisdom, and love, has blessed each of us to continue gathering in a unique way, called a family reunion. Also discussed is how far the African American family has come by overcoming tremendous odds. To truly understand the nature, dynamics, and composition of the African American family, one has to live it in the present (Assari et al., 2017).

According to Pasura and Christou (2017),

Respectability is framed through conformity to the standards and expectations of a neoliberal society by being, among other things, a provider for one's family, working hard, and acquiring material possessions, such as a home, education, and some level of economic independence... (p. 523).

This statement is imperative to the legacy and value of fore-parents in these families. They struggled to acquire the land they owned and subsequent properties and belongings such as housing, vehicles, and livestock. As babies, each family member assimilated into the principles and instructions of the parents and remnants of the fore-parents (Thomas, 2012). The values of hope and resilience are incorporated into the family via the respect passed down and should be distributed by current family members by acknowledging their lineage, despite personal views.

Love is an essential element at the family reunion. When love is lacking, it is not uncommon for the family member to want to abstain from participating with others or in activities planned to unite and bring about change (Roberts & Dunbar, 2015). In African American families, love is an important facet of their lives that has important implications across generations, including in areas of owning land and property, and, most importantly, passing it down. Sarah et al. (2017) highlighted the conflicts and difficulty following African American families for generations when owning and retaining land as heir's property. For land near forests,

specifically, the struggle was to navigate the forest legal regulations while maintaining the productivity of land to pay land rates and other legal needs to maintain the land within the family and, thus, pass it down to their heirs. In times of such difficulty and conflict, love and resilience remain strong sources of family unions between different generations.

Birkland (2016) defined a resilient person as “one that can absorb a short-term shock to the system, and then can, in a reasonable span of time, return to the state of the ecosystem before the shock” (p. 117). Negative cognitions lead to negative perceptions; subsequently, resilience loses its strength. The resilience of these family members has been diminished (Price, 2014). For family members, resilience is bouncing back from the thoughts of not being accepted by members of the family to be accepted and “having interactions with them in spite” of the family members’ perceptions of “internal feelings,” which led to not being accepted (Horner, 2017).

Not feeling loved or denied as a family member has been identified as a fundamental factor that could lead family members to not attend the annual family reunion. These factors have had and could continue to affect non-attending family reunions and the family members that attend yearly and can cause unnecessary grief and other problems to the family (Range et al., 2017). When these situations occur, it is up to the members in good standing that have heard of the incidents to come together. They should initiate change that would result in positive outcomes in relationships between lower-status African Americans and higher-status African Americans and how the two can have a strong pull in minimizing the communication at a family reunion. Minniear and Soliz (2019) wrote about “double expectancy” (p. 338).

Resilience has been a force to reckon with for some African American families (Hill, 2003). The resilience allows them to interact and understand each other within the family and across communities to strengthen lives in a social, spiritual, and economic manner. Members of

African American families have a variety of socio-economic activities, such as politicians, educators, physicians, coaches, and many others, that result in significant interactions with wide-ranging members of different communities. African American families are eager to show love to one another. This love is shown by exchanging more support in the church, at home, and in communities. It could be because a lot of networking and socializing exists in the house of worship, making places like it a pillar of the community in enhancing resilience (Krause, 2015). The values practiced in the church and the good interactions in society start within the family and are embraced within family reunions. Thus, family reunions are the seed of personal, social, and economic well-being because it is from the reunions that people start to learn and appreciate family and friends close and far; thus, they learn to appreciate the world through having a renewed sense of resilience.

Factors that Extend Geographical Separation to Attend Family Reunions. While McCoy (2011) examined the various factors that promote family reunions, Suárez-Orozco et al. (2021) observed the need to examine the challenges caused by these separations. According to Park (2020), planning family reunions and reunion activities can be very stressful. It requires significant financial resources that may not be readily available. The inadequacy of these funds or financial resources leads to limited participation in these events. Despite the financial constraints, these reunions usually take place. Nevertheless, it is vital to consider the role of other external factors (Park, 2020; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2021).

Other external factors that promote abstinence from family reunions include separation by incarceration, work, and illness. According to Riggs and Riggs (2011), the reason behind abstaining from reunions varies from family to family. Families with members serving in the military tend to be separated due to work. The geographical distance further exacerbates the

work demand. As a result, the cost of participating in family reunions becomes higher than expected. To minimize the costs, some members opt to forgo physical participation. In the case of incarceration and illnesses, abstinence from these activities is involuntary. While the external factors are critical (McCoy, 2011; Park, 2020; Riggs & Riggs, 2011), these factors do not exist in isolation. They are often helped or complemented by internal factors. Internal conflicts between family members tend to influence decisions to attend family reunions. This is often the case in families separated through a divorce (Thomas et al., 2018).

Hubbard and Adams (2017) researched to establish the challenges faced by family members in terms of a family reunion and documented the experiences in a documentary. The documentary focused on a single family of three sisters and one brother who were separated as infants into different families across North America. The family members in the documentary highlighted different family cultures, different upbringing circumstances, no shared memories, and different values as the challenges that prevented them from planning the family reunion. Similarly, the documentary showed how these challenges played out in determining the family reunion activities as the members engaged in storytelling first to deal with the challenges of unfamiliarity.

Copeland (2018) researched the culture of African American family reunions. The study established that the dynamics of family reunions were changing to foster unity, including promoting cultural pride and supporting charitable community outreach programs. Individuals interviewed in the research outlined challenges with planning family reunion activities to cater to the new functions since they have to ensure the activities bring family members together, raise funds for a charitable program, and align with the laws.

Another challenge that arose recently preventing family reunions is the COVID-19 pandemic. Family members are used to having physical gatherings in one of the member's house or an agreed place to share stories, share meals, and learn about deaths, new opportunities, and births, among others. However, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the CDC discouraged physical meetings to reduce the spread of the virus. As a result, most physical meetings were turned virtual via communication platforms such as Zoom, Skype, and so on. Wong et al. (2021) researched the impacts of COVID-19 on family reunions by conducting interviews with community members, advocates, and leaders. The research established that with the COVID-19 pandemic era, family members faced the challenges of planning family reunions due to travel restrictions, financial constraints, and restrictions of certain activities, which have revolutionized family reunions. The study participants stated that they had to reinvent the traditional family reunions to align with the new times, including holding virtual family reunions rather than physical ones, limiting family reunion activities to indoor activities, and minimizing the costs of family reunions on family members by selecting cost-saving activities.

Experiences of Family Members

Legislation between different countries is a major factor for family members who need to cross borders to attend reunions. Usually, different family members live in different geographical locations and have to overcome these distances to attend family reunions. Alaameri (2021) researched the experiences of various family members in German and Austria traveling between countries to attend family reunions. The research established that the family members in Austria and Germany found their experiences of crossing geographical borders to attend family reunions easier and more pleasant than in other regions. The research established the reason for the pleasant experiences was the EU legislation, which made it easy for individuals in the region to

travel freely amongst the countries without needing legal documents. Thus, legislation's role in shaping family reunions and family members' experiences is evident.

Coffelt (2018) studied a multigenerational family with 59 members to establish their most meaningful and memorable family reunion memories. The participants expressed that among their meaningful memories, traveling to attend reunions was among the top. Despite traveling being costly and exhausting, especially when traveling to far-off locations for reunions, family members felt a sense of joy and satisfaction every time they traveled, whether together or individually.

Mazzucato and Schans (2011) observed the continued focus on family separation in transnational families. Within these analyses, most attention was directed toward children's welfare. This is because children are considered an important part of family units. As a result, their influence on decision-making is significant. Their influence is particularly seen when parents cross different boundaries to attend family reunions. As a result, Mazzucato and Schans (2011) concluded that geographical distance plays a limited role in preventing family reunions. Despite this proposition, it is critical to acknowledge the difficulties in analyzing family reunions. These difficulties arise from the lack of a standardized conceptual framework in analyzing separated families. The existence of transnational families further enhances the difficulty. It is difficult to develop a method of analysis when geographical location out-distances communication in transnational families (Mazzucato & Schans, 2011).

Despite the influence of children, the role of geographical distance remains significant in some regions. For instance, some family members often fail to overcome this distance due to many factors. Internal family conflicts and resentments may lead one to forego family reunions. Sometimes, this problem is coupled with a lack of financial resources. As a result, analyzing the

role of geographical distance and separation becomes more difficult. While the analysis is difficult, Reisenauer (2018) observed various techniques used to overcome geographical separations. Some have opted for early acquisition and accumulation of financial resources to facilitate their travels. In countries such as Turkey, technologies have been used to substitute physical presence during family reunions.

Theoretical Framework

Constructivism is a theory that explores how individuals experience different situations and incorporate what they have learned into their lives (Fosnot, 2013). This means that people are not just passive in absorbing information, but can actively participate in creation, understanding, and utilization. This case study took the same approach to understand the various dynamics of family reunions by looking at the interactions as not just people creating information, but as experiencers, learners, and users of new knowledge, which leads to impacts and outcomes. Specifically, social constructivism was used as the main theory in this research.

According to Amineh and Asl (2015), social constructivism is the understanding and responses of the participants based on their communication, livelihood, and observations with family members from year to year and with others during the annual family reunion. Each participant had the opportunity to verbalize their opinions, whether from experience, engagement, or observation. The researcher observed facial expressions from individuals because they communicated a lot. According to Pryor (2020), people have communicated through facial expressions for a long time, which is an important bridge to how people communicate.

Social constructivism, again, incorporates influential factors of the participants' upbringing, their connections held to the elders that lived during the first years of the reunion,

and any community involvement that has defined their developmental stages in life. One does not outweigh the other, nor does one have greater importance over the other. Family reunions are important because parental involvement among African American families is crucial (Latunde & Clark-Louque, 2016). Parental involvement in African American families has been cited as a fundamental tool to success in African American children's education, life, and overall performance (Latunde & Clark-Louque, 2016). Therefore, it holds significant importance at family reunions when parents become directly involved in the morale and possible success of the future of people attending family reunions. It is a significant event when a family member can embrace another and learn how the family began years ago (Coffelt, 2018).

The purpose of this research review was to understand not only the dynamics of family members attending a family reunion but also to embark on the frivolities of deciding to attend or not to attend based on the geographical location and distance from the actual site of the family reunion. The study further investigated the perception of lineage by a family member in direct association with attending relatives who are present or not present for the nearing family reunion or those family members who were present during a past family reunion.

Attendance at family reunions has had significant differences in the number of members showing up year after year for various reasons. For some family members, lineage and acknowledgment of elders is critical for the recognition and foundation of the reunion. Contributions of family members are generally known by the welcomes and greetings shown and given. It is a wonderful feeling to be in the presence of a family to help in times of need (Wilson, 2012).

Family reunions are a big function in the African American community (Copeland, 2018). The family members look forward to seeing one another, year after year, to share on

various topics such as births, marriages, weddings, educational accomplishments, employment advancements, as well as deaths that have occurred. Oftentimes, some family members are unable to attend due to distance and/or financial and economic hardships. Geographical location is a major hurdle to overcome when there is a lack of finances. With the geographical location being an obstacle to attending family reunions, there is also a mindset of not being accepted or assured of love in the family due to the perceived lineage of a family member.

The perception an individual holds towards the family or members greatly impacts their views and outlook of the family. This aspect was discussed by providing a case study framework to explain the significance of this research and how the research was presented. Philosophical assumptions, ontological, and epistemological views were defined by clarifying the role and purpose of this research when receiving and processing information. Also included was the Christian worldview of families and how they are supposed to live with one another and treat one another based on the word of God and through the life of Jesus Christ. Social constructivism gives an overview of the world in which the participant lives, that is, from the participant's viewpoint, which includes the days of childhood going into adulthood. The research on geographical location and perceived perception in lineage is demonstrated through six subtopics. The subtopics include building relationships and communication, geographical location, hope, resilience, love, and lineage.

Summary

Once a year, families gather at a specific location to unite and share past events in their lives. Generally, "family reunions are closed events" (Sutherland, 2012). However, there are always friends and friends of friends that attend the reunions because of past childhood friendships, events, or jobs that preceded the event. These families have known each other

throughout their lives and look forward to coming together to celebrate family, love, the hope that continues to reside within, and the resiliency of continuing each year despite grievances and deaths that have occurred in the previous year. Like family members unable to attend a family reunion every year or two, patients have had one to several missed opportunities to reconnect with their families. Listening to the stories of lost connections and unifications is heartbreaking at times. However, connecting to God allows people to transcend daily in building relationships, “hope,” and self-respect (Dilworth-Anderson et al., 2007, p. 357).

Stemming from days of slavery, African American families have made the fundamental aspect of calling the family together the foundation of a reunion (Copeland, 2018). When the foreparents of these families were separated and eventually found each other again, there was great rejoicing (Smit, 2011). Family reunions have downplayed the format that originated in the initial family reunions and disregarded the blood lineage into which people from the African American community were birthed. However, according to Fingerman et al. (2011), men and women of the African American culture tend to acknowledge and help the elderly, that is, the senior generation. Jackson (2021) insisted that it is critical to face and acknowledge the root causes of the problems in African American communities, including discussing slavery in public history.

Families in African American culture have long bonds of communication, resilience, strength, and support (Causey et al., 2015). African Americans who had been sold into slavery lost contact with their relatives while in transit from Africa to America. Likewise, many boys and girls born into slavery were taken from their families and sold to ‘masters’ at other plantations (Lewis, 2020). For this reason, gathering family members is extremely critical despite the geographical distance and perceived lineage (Morial, 2003). There are committees for

the family reunion. Plenty of meals are planned and prepared by a paid company or family members. The family reunion becomes similar to a small community, if only for a day.

Throughout the day, when family members are not listening to a speaker, they are involved in an activity, talking, and “always smiling” (Cimprich, 2012). This is when it can be stated that a family member has decided to be an active participant in the family reunion (Murry, 2019).

Family reunions are beautiful events to participate in. It is a beautiful experience when family members can embrace to reflect upon the past (Coffelt, 2018). Individuals share what has happened in their families in the past year(s). Discussions about past family experiences could elicit up to one hour of conversation, with enough people engaged and contributing to the discussion. There is a positive feeling and a meaningful experience for family members to share love during family gatherings, incorporating the knowledge and contributing factors of the ancestors and including the talents and roles of present-day family members (Copeland, 2018). Planning a family reunion means making plans to drive, meals to eat, finances for supplies and location, and establishments of committees and overseers. Also, preparing the backdrop for a family reunion can be tense if there are chaos in the family (Dacosta, 2006). Contributions can be made to provide fuel and/or lodging for geographically distant people.

Family reunions are comparable to a company arranging to bring in a few major prospects to the table or simply having a formal round table discussion (Sutherland, 2012). The family reunions discussed in this literature happen once a year. There is one of the reunions that happens approximately every two years. The family reunion is the largest table to be around during the year and may be the only important table of distinction for many in their lifetime (Jarrett et al., 2014).

Averagely, families come together once per year to celebrate the past and present and share the joys of the hope yet to come. Generally, the family comprises a father, a mother, and children. There are families in which a grandparent is in the house. Also, not everyone in the house has to be blood-related to call each other family. There is love in the air and resilience that has not only been spoken but visualized in terms of lives lived and shared.

Whatever the case, a family is a unit of people who depend on each other and have some level of relationship. There comes a time when a family member moves out of the house to begin their new life. Even though a family member has separated from the family geographically, they continue to stay in touch with the nucleus of the family. Once family members mature and start their own families, the heritage of African Americans becomes entangled, with love, with members of other nationalities.

A family reunion is a tradition and a ritual of love and belonging. And, as stated earlier, once families separate by moving from city to city, state to state, and across the water to other countries, they become transnational families. Separation of families is also caused by divorce, breaking families apart and opening the door for the continuation of extended families. Family separation and divorce can lead to a lack of knowledge about one's biological heritage. Geographical separation via family separation can be devastating for children and adults. In this case, women usually had to replace the missing spouse, and children were assigned tasks outside of their realm to help the family. Family members were challenged, leaving them, sometimes, vulnerable to many kinds of hardships. But, yet, there is always that hope of coming together for a reunion.

In the literature review, Marcela was away from her family since her very early years (Ramirez et al., 2007). Upon getting in touch with her biological family members, Marcela

considered attending the upcoming family reunion after living in Australia for years. Marcela soon realized that she was a part of the Australian culture and traditions more so than her biological family's culture and traditions.

Family reunions are about culture, heritage, and traditions passed by elders from one generation to another and the messages that have been carried over, as well as those lessons that have been learned and found to be true or untrue (McCoy, 2011). These interactions can form resentments, causing further separation and increased geographical distance among family members. Prolonged separation led to distress in the younger generation and some mental health symptoms due to a lack of understanding in the relationships or roles of family members in their lives.

Family genes run deep, from generation to generation. African American families hold family reunions that reflect a relative being a slave. Countless times, year after year, there was, and still remains an elderly family member that speaks of someone resembling a family member that is still alive or has passed on. The elders of the family reunions present documents to not only show love, hope, and resilience amongst family members attending but also to the family member who struggled so hard to be acknowledged or accepted in the face of divorce or geographical location that separated them from other family members (Birkland, 2016). Every family member wants to be accepted into the family and acknowledged during the reunion. Unknown family members question their perceived family lineage, and trust and respect are invisible due to the individual family member feeling unwanted or not feeling like they are part of the family.

This case study showed family dynamics and how perception can be formed in the face of the family reunion, the legacy, documentation, geographical location, love, hope, and

resilience. Social constructivism looks at each family member in the dynamics of the location and overall surroundings. Words, replies, observations, and posture are significant in lineage perception. For years to come, similar to times past, family reunions are here to stay. Family members must do everything possible to unite everyone through the hope, love, and resilience verbalized and observable for all to see.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

This chapter highlights the overall data collection strategy and the data collection and analysis procedures to achieve the aim of this study. This research aimed to explore the dynamics of a family reunion when factors such as love, hope, and resilience are impacted by geographical location and the perceived lineage of family members. Love, resilience, and hope can be lessened when a family member cannot attend a family reunion due to their geographical location, distance from the family reunion, and perceived lineage in the family tree. Several articles and studies have been written about family reunions, but the literature has not reflected the impact of geographical location nor the non-interested or unwanted family members that have previously expressed a sentiment of feeling unaccepted because they are not a member of the perceived main family. When an individual in the family or the family does not feel wanted or accepted, there is an obvious impact or reaction when around other family members (Taylor & Conger, 2017). “Dichotomizing,” which results from the separation of family members, may or may not have been the cause of the individual feeling unwanted (Reynolds & Zontini, 2014, p. 256). It is most important to interview factors that relate to the resiliency of family members. It is also important to identify what allows these members to continue communicating with family members regarding reunion activities despite their questions about why they feel lineage is not accepted or adequate.

This chapter describes the research methodology and the research design, which is about the researcher's paradigm or philosophical perspective and the research approach used. On the other hand, the research method focuses on the data collection strategy and the data collection and analysis procedures. The research design is also discussed.

Design

The methodology of this study was qualitative. The design was a live case study, which allowed this researcher to gather the data needed and obtain background information on a decision or choice. Using a qualitative methodology enabled this researcher to question unexplained statements or remarks to better understand what the interviewers stated or what may have been implied but not interpreted properly (Safdar et al., 2016). By applying a qualitative approach, this researcher posed not only the same question to all interviewees (not exposing who stated what), but also applied other information or visuals that had been presented, such as photographs or news clippings, to delve deeper for greater opportunities in understanding why a family member may have received or misunderstood signs that led them to question their lineage in the family. The questioning or the whole compass of the interviewing process was based on “understanding the complexity of people’s lives by examining individual perspectives in context” (Safdar et al., 2016). More important was the question related to geographical distance and how those family members who miss the family reunion could be assisted financially or in other ways. This researcher can build an ongoing blueprint that can be unique and viable to the readers. The “audience,” which consisted of the family members, was an exceptional target in writing a qualitative case study (Creswell et al., 2007, p. 237).

Using a qualitative approach allows the researcher to collect in-depth data on the research questions. Since the current study sought to explore the dynamics of a family reunion when factors such as love, hope, and resilience are impacted by geographical location and the perceived lineage of family members, there was a need for subjective views and a deep understanding of the explanations offered by the respondents to effectively achieve the research’s aim.

The research design for this study was a live case study, and among the key reasons why this research design was appropriate was the fact that by using this design, the researcher was able to collect in-depth data using different methodologies and data collection methods such as interviews and/or surveys (Hamel et al., 1993). This study relied on the case study method to obtain a meaningful and holistic characteristic of hope, love, and resilience through real-life events (Yin, 2005). Through reports of previous studies, case study research creates an understanding of complex issues. The method benefitted the research process by submitting intensive and context-dependent examinations of real-life situations as they occurred. Aiming to provide the desired holistic and in-depth investigation, the method was outlined as a robust research method through various analyses that yielded detailed and rich descriptions of the phenomenon being investigated (Flyvbjerg, 2011). The main reasons for using the research design were highlighted after scholars raised concerns over the drawbacks of qualitative methods in providing in-depth and holistic explanations behind behavioral and social challenges. Through the method, quantitative statistical results are achieved, and so is an understanding of the behavioral conditions from the respondent's perspective.

In the late 1940s and 1950s, as positivism in science dominated the field of research, quantitative methods developed into a popular focus (Harrison et al., 2017). Consequently, experiments, surveys, and statistical methods used in quantitative methods were assumed to be rigorous compared to qualitative methods (Johansson, 2003). Through the 1960s and 1970s, experimental designs dominated research as quantitative empirical results continued to be the golden standard of sources used as evidence (Johansson, 2003). As case studies continued to be implemented, they could only be used as a reference to a descriptive research study of a specific phenomenon or as a simple method in qualitative studies (Merriam, 2009). The most common

research studies are, in most cases, cited as being carried out in the “Chicago School of Sociology between the years of 1920s and 1950s” (Harrison et al., 2017, p. 3). Anthropologists practiced their techniques by conducting lengthy case studies involving field-based observations of different groups and the university's cultures to recognize their cultural and social lives (Hackstaff, 2010).

In quantitative and qualitative data, through complete observation, the process and results of the phenomenon are easily explained, and through analysis, the reconstruction of the investigated case is simplified (Tellis, 1997). Case studies are recognized as a tool in many social science studies, with their role becoming more prominent when discussing projects associated with sociology, education, and community-based issues such as poverty, unemployment, drug addiction, illiteracy, and unemployment (Zainal, 2007). For instance, an evaluative method was applied in an education research project to analyze the efficacy of educational initiatives and programs (Hoeve, 2018). In these research processes, restricting qualitative tools would only cloak important data that needs to be exposed. Among most recorded cases, the method is mostly applied to a small geographical area or an extremely small number of subjects in the case. In their true essence, case studies detail the relationship between a small number of individuals or an even smaller geographical region.

The objective of this chapter was not to criticize existing literature on family reunions' case studies, but to attempt to synthesize what is already known for new researchers, hence, saving them time and leading them in a different direction. The project presented a practical, easy-to-read, and experience-based guided path to choose, conduct, and complete a qualitative research method. Case studies (live) aim to provide a step-by-step guideline to researchers and research students during the exercise, and secondly, through various analyses, an application of

the provided step-by-step guide was provided. In the business and management field, case studies provide additional information to the limited sources of methodological approaches. Additionally, experts are extensively trained in quantitative methods, unlike qualitative methods. In the last four decades, the research design has undergone substantial evolution in applying various methodological designs. The growth is attributed to the parallel influences, from individual preferences of researchers to historical approaches and research perspectives to different interpretations of such research.

This type of approach answered questions of “when” and “how” (Daughtery, 2016, p.162). As stated by Daughtery (2016), it is mostly recommended when researchers cannot manipulate the behaviors of individuals involved in the study. Similarly, the method is recommended when researchers aim to cover contextual conditions they believe are relevant and significant to the phenomenon being investigated. Lastly, when the boundaries between a context and a phenomenon are unclear, a researcher is advised to use the case study research method. Baxter and Rideout (2006) investigated various decisions made by nursing students using case studies since the hypotheses could not be considered without context. As the setting focused more on clinics and classrooms, the researchers could not get a clear picture of the decisions made by the students without considering the context within which it occurred.

Depending on the overall purpose of the study and the set boundaries, the researcher chose to either describe, explore, or compare cases. After designing research questions, this project adopted a single or multiple case study method. A single-case research method is a basic form that uses a single case study with repeated and sequential measurements to gather in-depth data on a small unit (Flyvbjerg, 2006). On the other hand, a multiple case study design uses numerous sources with multiple experiments that have replicated real-life events. The

information is then used to predict similar or contrasting results. Constraints of geographical distances and lineage were classified through a structured approach, and based on this understanding, a type of case study research was developed to categorize variables and constraints. Considering the research problem being investigated, a multiple case study design was the most appropriate for this study.

In this project, a qualitative case study provided a structure to gain insights into the issue of family reunions across settings as it allowed comparison with and between different cases. The approach involved sequentially studying multiple families to generate a broader understanding of this issue. Unlike experimental designs, the collective case study approach sought to help understand and explain causal links and pathways, thus, creating a new policy initiative. As the method does not manipulate the environment, an existing gap is easily spotted; additionally, the method can aid in defining or refining a theory. As the researcher aimed to obtain a more naturalistic understanding of the issues, a collective case study approach was most suited.

Advantages and Drawbacks of a Case Study Research Design

The weakness of this method lies in its inability to provide the researcher with a generalizing inference in cases with rare events. A technique for overcoming this weakness is by incorporating other methods of research to aid in confirming the validity of the research process. Additionally, as a research tool, the method receives criticism for its lack of robustness. This problem can also be solved by drafting the design of the case studies beforehand. The pattern-matching replication technique links information from the same case to other theoretical propositions (Campbell, 1975). The method is often criticized for its inability to substructure generalizability and, thus, considered to provide limited value as a design (Johansson, 2003). As

a result, this disadvantage led to the philosophical division in different research approaches: those aligned with the qualitative methods support the interpretivist and constructivist paradigm, and those supporting quantitative approaches are aligned with the positivism paradigm. In addition, the research design guidelines are underdeveloped and mis-implemented, thus failing to synthesize a complete case study research with practical guidelines.

Researchers have often labeled case studies too long, producing large amounts of documentation. To some extent, a case study is considered too difficult to conduct. In particular, case studies of a longitudinal and ethnographic nature can draw out sizable data in a period. The danger arises when such information is mismanaged and not systematically organized. For beginners, famous books on the method fail to provide useful details. As stated by Merriam (2002), such books emphasize more on theory than the practical aspect. At the same time, the theory aspect fails to provide basic knowledge, which is a disadvantage for beginners. Case studies are, in most cases, accused of lacking rigor. Yin (1984) stated that “too many times, the case study investigator has been sloppy and has allowed equivocal evidence or biased views to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions.” The scholar considered the method ‘microscopic’ because of the limited sample cases. Hamel et al. (1993) and Yin (1994), however, believed that instituting parameters and setting research objectives is more fundamental than a large sample size.

Despite such drawbacks, several advantages have been reported from applying the case study method. The variations in collective, intrinsic, and instrumental approaches allow the use of quantitative and qualitative analyses of information. For instance, individual subjects for some longitudinal studies solely depend on qualitative data from journal articles. The source provides illustrative accounts of certain behaviors. Additionally, several case studies have sought evidence

from individual subjects in both categorical and numerical evidence. The method not only outlines real-life events but also explains the complexity of such situations that experimental or survey research designs might have failed to capture. For instance, case studies in a research project investigating reading strategies used by individuals give access to both numerical information on the techniques used and purposes for implementing such strategies. Similarly, the relationship between each reading strategy and the complex cognitive process is examined as each reading strategy is unexaminable in isolation (Zainal, 2003).

Case study designs support the use of multiple sources of data. This project adopted a multiple case study method after designing the research questions. Depending on the overall purpose of the study and the set boundaries, the researcher chose to either describe, explore, or compare cases. A multiple case study design uses numerous sources with multiple experiments replicating real-life events. A multiple case study is appropriate when the project explores complex and contextual multivariate conditions. The information is then used to predict similar or contrasting results (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Constraints of geographical distances and lineage were classified through a structured approach, and based on this understanding, a type of case study research was developed to categorize variables and constraints.

Research Questions

Research questions are formulated to seek information on the literature being studied or reviewed. A research question provides insight into understanding the nature of the phenomena, when it was experienced, for example, if it happened early in the event day or later. Perhaps, the phenomena may have been experienced or realized after hearing a word, statement, or simply in the presence of another. According to Vandenbroucke and Pearce (2018), “the research questions for case study are developed to provide a mechanism by which to understand the everyday lived

experiences of individuals and to explore what those experiences mean to the individuals.”

Research questions should be in a particular order from first to last, with the main subject of discussion being the first question (Sandberg & Alvesson, 2011). The research question was as follows:

CRQ: What are the challenges that may cause a reduction in the areas of love, hope, and resilience; therefore, abstaining from family reunion planning, attendance, and activities?

Setting

The 2022 Spriggs, Howard, Reece Family reunion was the designated site in Conroe, Texas, where the reunion was held. Family members united to have fun, share stories, hear about the progression of members in the family, and to listen to stories about the lineage and view pictures. The Spriggs, Howard, Reece family reunion has been an ongoing reunion for approximately 29 years. Each year, a new site is proposed for the following year. It has been a couple of years since the site changed. While at the reunion, this researcher made available every comfort possible to families and individuals of the Spriggs, Howard, Reece bloodline engaged in the research study. The optimal way to approach the family members was collectively and individually.

The use of social media aided participants’ solicitation. Facebook (see Appendix B), a social media page, was available to individuals aged 13 and up 99+ (Grimmelmann, 2009). The researcher used a private group page on Facebook (Spriggs, Howard, Reece). Also, the researcher arranged and implemented home visits (with those in nearby communities, less than 60 miles) for elderly individuals and those without transportation or internet connections on request.

Participants

For this qualitative research study utilizing a case study (live) approach, purposeful sampling with several individuals identified 10 participants selected for the research study. The family members were asked to complete generated questionnaires that focused on familial connections amongst family members. Also, participants responded to subjective questions that focused on their personal thoughts related to the research questions. The researcher selected participants based on chosen themes calculated by specific words and the background information of the ancestors.

The projected age range of participants was 18 to 99, consisting of males and females. The participants predominantly resided in Texas, with many others living in California and Pennsylvania. The participants were African Americans. The sample pool consisted of multiple participants and/or families from one family reunion. The sampling size chosen via purposeful sampling consisted of multiple participants from various families. After establishing and meeting the criteria, 10 family members (5 females and 5 males) participated in the study. Sharma (2017) stated, “to collect extensive detail about each site or individual studied, but to elucidate the particular, the specific.”

Participants consisted of 5 males and 5 females. Participants were not identified as members of any particular family branch but as members of the families composing the reunion. Current names were pseudonyms. This researcher sought IRB permission to utilize birth-given first names (see Appendix A, Appendix C). However, after conducting interviews, this researcher purposefully decided to use pseudonyms and coded numbers for each participant. Participants were as follows:

Betty

Sally

Daisy

Jeremy

Tom

Ann

Sam

Kate

Jeff

Larry

This researcher utilized judgment purposive sampling. This researcher intentionally interviewed family members to obtain research information, specifically addressing the history of the family lineage. Subsequently, the family lineage was derived from each family member as told in their own words.

While judgment and quota sampling was important to the research, this researcher had to implement convenience sampling due to the number of qualified participants. Quota sampling was also utilized because the researcher wanted to interview an equal number of male and female participants. The sample of candidates stemmed from multiple participants of the family branches that make up one family reunion. All participants were African American family members from the Spriggs, Howard, Reece group.

Procedures

Once the Liberty Institute Review Board (IRB) approved the study (see Appendix A), the researcher gave participants consent forms (see Appendix C) to sign, thus, approving to be interviewed as research participants. The researcher obtained some background information from

the participants (see Appendix D). Background information consisted of (1) the last reunion attended; (2) the number of missed reunions in the last five years; (3) how far did you travel; and (4) was lineage acknowledged at the reunion either (a) personally, or (b) publicly. Participants were notified via Facebook (see Appendix B) and in person at the Spriggs, Howard, Reece 2022 family reunion site as the base of reaching out to family members. The researcher interviewed participants and obtained more information from photos, newspaper clippings, booklets, and other printed material. Participants permitted the researcher to record them, and memoing of information was documented.

The Researcher's Role

Without knowing other family members, it was important for the researcher to feel the love these family members had to offer, and to know the hope of a family that had gathered to honor past and present family members. It was necessary to learn that resilience was the ability to keep on going and to go bigger and better through encouragement to obtain an education and give back to the community the researcher was part of. Knowledge is important because it remains an integral portion of legacy. When one knows that they are a part of, one can begin to understand and know what is needed to be a catalyst of change. Living in the state of Texas as a young woman, single, with three children, the first family reunion the researcher attended was overwhelming. During that time, the researcher met the elders of the family. These elders had known of her existence since she was a baby. There was love and hope for the future. Resilience was high. The resilience shown during a family reunion is depicted by the desire to not only return the next year, but also gather multiple names, addresses, and phone numbers for continual contact. For this researcher, nothing was greater than the love, hope, strength, and resilience encountered during these formidable years. Indeed, this researcher viewed this research as

critical in analyzing the nature of relationships among family members. It was also essential to measure the true family dynamics among members. It was important to note that this researcher's views and expressions would be exposed and expressed as a member of the family reunion. These expressions helped generate the creativity of the questions following responses and refine themes that surfaced. The researcher used note cards during the interviews to document her thoughts, questions, and other opinions.

Data Collection

Strategies used to obtain this information were one-on-one interviews with individuals in the family. The 2022 Spriggs, Howard, Reece Reunion was designated as the chosen site that was convenient for the family members. However, the researcher conducted one-on-one interviews in person with all family members who chose to participate. Individual interviews were a minimum of 45 to 60 minutes. Participants were selected via purposeful sampling from families that were direct blood line family members. Questionnaires focused on familial connections with other family members. These questions were subjective and focused on the personal thoughts of the individual. The interviewees' age range was 18 to 99 years. Family members and/or the participants resided in the state of Texas, California, Pennsylvania, and others as chosen. The ethnicity and race of the participants was African American. Information was also garnered from objects such as pictures or other documentation that could garnish a theme or concept.

Interviews

Communication between two individuals is important because it details a tone that signifies the relationship and the time of interest. This study incorporated responses based on communication, observations, and interactions between family members to facilitate a

comfortable environment for everyone to feel at ease. This researcher began the interviews with an icebreaker. Interview questions posed to family members consisted of the following:

1. If you were a dessert served at the reunion, what would you be, and why? (Hereafter, referred to as SQ1.) (See Appendix F)
2. When you think of love, hope, and resilience, what do they mean to you? (Hereafter, referred to as SQ2.) (see Appendix F)

Question one was asked as an “experiential” icebreaker to open the conversation, generate thoughts, and allow participants to relax (Roberts, 2020).

Question two was a “sensory” question (Roberts, 2020). This question was important for measuring data to identify phenomena (Doody & Noonan, 2013). The interviews were “semi-structured,” allowing the interviewer to ask deeper and additional questions that probe further into the given response (Weller et al., 2018).

Surveys/Questionnaires

1. Do you get a say in where the family reunions will be held?
 - a. Yes b. No
2. Do you get a say in the food and decorations in case of allergies or other reasons?
 - a. Yes b. No
3. Are you willing to travel far for reunions?
 - a. Yes b. No
4. Do you arrange your own accommodations during reunions?
 - a. Yes b. No
5. How many family reunions have you attended in the last decade?
 - a. All of them

- b. Half of them
 - c. A few
 - d. None
6. Do you invite friends and neighbors besides just family members to reunions?
- a. Yes b. No
7. Are you okay with alcohol being served in front of children during reunions?
- a. Yes b. No
8. What are the reasons why you would miss a family reunion?
- a. Work
 - b. School
 - c. Distance
 - d. Health
 - e. Any other-----
9. Is there a hierarchy or rank and order during family reunions?
- a. Yes b. No
10. Do elders and close family members get priority such as in speaking or decision-making?
- a. Yes b. No

Question 10 was particularly important because the elders are generally heard when they address issues, situations, or decisions that need to be made. Simultaneously, there is a committee in charge of the reunion. The committee refers to the delegating members with a final say on matters of importance. The relatives closely related to the committee members generally have firsthand knowledge of events or situations. This writer deemed the latter of this question

relevant to the research due to crossed boundaries that could cause conflicting perceptions in lineage (see Appendix E).

Document Analysis

The researcher asked family members if they would share documents to show evidence of reunions. These documents also helped the researcher gauge the mood and atmosphere of the reunions. The researcher examined documents like photographs, newspaper clippings, invitation letters, and any others with consent from family members for verification and accuracy for research purposes. It was the opinion and hope of this researcher that family members would bring various forms of documents to the interviews to show, share, and discuss events through observable data.

Observations

The researcher observed participants during the interviews. The researcher noted the observations during the interviews. This researcher measured the frequency and duration of participating family members eyeing the interviewer, as if asking for permission to state a response before speaking or obtaining validation of a response. This data depicted how comfortable individual family members were when engaging with the interviewer about a specific issue or situation. The measure or perception of lineage can be measured during the observation phase. The questionable perception of lineage could be valid or invalid in an open atmosphere.

Data Analysis

Using a qualitative methodology, the data obtained and reviewed depicting legacy, love, hope, and resilience could be explored and probed in various ways (Bernardi, 2011). The researcher analyzed all information received for common variances such as wording or the

quantity of sharing between family members. Data received were measured by other factors such as information presented via a picture, obituary, and so on.

Open Coding

Open coding allows the researcher to code the data into major categories, enabling axial coding to emerge, thus, identifying the core phenomenon (Deterding & Waters, 2021). The researcher analyzed data by re-reading the transcripts from the interviews and looking for meanings and expressions/themes that had been talked about by different participants. The researcher wrote the recurring expressions/themes on index cards to track the number of times it was mentioned and the information that was mentioned about the specific theme (Deterding & Waters, 2021). This is important, allowing for accurate measures and count of expressions, codes and/ or themes. To obtain a more accurate record of coded themes, this interviewer utilized ATLAS.ti (ATLAS.ti Scientific Software Development GmbH [ATLAS.ti 23 Windows], 2023). ATLAS.ti offered multiple codes that were not originally captured by the researcher.

Constant Comparative

The constant comparative approach attempts to “saturate” the categories made. Subcategories resembling properties that represent multiple perspectives about the categories are dimensionalized and presented on a continuum (Deterding & Waters, 2021), allowing a small set of themes about the process to emerge. It is important to measure expressions/themes other than those the researcher hopes to find. Family members could have other issues or events or address a different area. Data analysis in a qualitative study also incorporates procedures from the perspective of “Huberman and Miles” which details “a systematic approach to analysis that has a long history of use in qualitative inquiry” (St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014, p. 716). This researcher detected themes, found common variables in responses, and used a saying or acronym to note

responses and similarities in any of the responses, and used paper or a pad to note various comments or ideas (St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014). To reduce the number of codes generated with ATLAS.ti, a second analysis was run to further reduce the codes using constant comparative to generate minimal codes for the purpose of the research.

Trustworthiness

Reflexivity

Interwoven into the study were the researcher's statements and remarks based on the background and past encounters in all walks of life. Reflexivity allows for the additional information of the researcher to "informing my own interpretation of the information in the study" (Deterding & Waters, 2021, p.733).

Conformability

Conformability, according to Connelly (2016), is the degree to which other researchers can confirm the findings of a given research. This ensures and ascertains that the interpretations and the data in the research are not simply figments of the other researcher's imagination, but empirically derived. To enhance conformability, the researcher documented all the procedures used to check and recheck the data.

Transferability

According to Connelly (2016), transferability is the degree to which qualitative study results can be transferred or applied to other contexts with a different set of participants. In this study, the researcher enhanced the transferability of the research by describing the research context and assumptions thoroughly, ensuring that the person wishing to transfer the findings to other contexts has enough information to make informed judgments.

Credibility

Member checking, triangulation, and memoing were used to establish the credibility of a qualitative research study.

Member Checking. After transcribing the interviews, the participants reviewed the information to ensure accuracy and credibility. Member checking allows the researcher to solicit the participants' views of the credibility of the findings and interpretations (Deterding & Waters, 2021).

Triangulation. Triangulation involves measuring or confirming one source of information with another. Triangulation also links to a common expression, theme, statement, word, or behavior (Deterding & Waters, 2021). Triangulation is important because it allows for statements or behaviors that were not originally in the realm of coding. Triangulation is similar to the system of checks and balances for things that could have been overlooked.

Memoing. According to Deterding and Waters (2021), memoing is "writing notes in the margins of field notes or transcripts or under images." Memoing allowed this researcher to record her thoughts, opinions, or other unspoken behaviors. Memoing allows for additional capturing of a specific and sudden remark or movement.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher adhered to the study's ethical considerations in the following ways: submitted to IRB for approval, selected a site for interviews, and contacted and protected participants from harm by seeking approval to use birth names or pseudonyms (see Appendix A, Appendix C). In the past, many individuals gathered to discuss how humans should be represented in research. As a result, the Belmont Report was written as a condensed form of the decisions and actions that were agreed upon to ensure human subjects would be protected and

not harmed, coerced, or manipulated in any form or fashion (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). Specific to the Belmont Report were three binding principles: a) Respect for persons, which means having the choice or being given the act of self-permission to participate in the study or research without being coerced; b) Beneficence includes the human subjects having true and accurate knowledge of how the study or research can have a positive impact in their life or health. Beneficence is similar to benefits, being the individuals may receive information on how the research can become negative or could possibly bring to light a negative reaction which, in that case, the individual participating in the research will have the opportunity to continue with additional resources to help overcome or alleviate those negative reactions or results. The individual has the right to continue or withdraw from the research, and c) Justice allows the individual to refuse or discontinue the research without being threatened or intentionally harmed in any way. The researcher also reassured the participants that the study was voluntary. This was addressed by using assigned aliases for each participant (Lin, 2016).

The researcher-built trust by disclosing the use of the study and disclosure of comprehensive findings. This ethical issue was addressed by embedding member-checking strategies and opportunities for sharing procedures and results. The researcher assured participants that data and materials would be stored securely and reported multiple perspectives (Lin, 2016).

Seeking consent from the participants and any relevant institutions was critical. This ensured that participation was voluntary and that the respondents knew they could withdraw from the research at any time without any consequences. This researcher sought to utilize the actual family names of participants that voluntarily engaged in the research; however, due to

participants wanting privacy, pseudonyms were used. This researcher provided consent forms that were agreed to and signed for printing purposes.

Summary

The chapter highlighted the data collection methods and procedures. The study used a qualitative method with a live case study research design. More specifically, a collective case study was preferred because it provided a structure to gain insights into the issue of family reunions across settings as it allows comparison with and between different cases. The approach involved studying multiple family members to generate a broader appreciation of this particular issue. Since the study sought a more naturalistic understanding of the issues, a collective case study approach was most suited. Among the key reasons why the live case study research design was appropriate was that by using this design, the researcher could collect in-depth data using different methodologies and data collection methods such as interviews and/or surveys. As such, the case study method helped the researcher obtain a meaningful and holistic characteristic of hope, love, and resilience through real-life events, especially via collecting primary data through interviews.

Data collected and analyzed in this study reflected and served to help protect the family's lineage. A key factor was the will and art of resilience exhibited by family members. To date, few articles have been written depicting the travels, adventures, and family reunions encountered by African American families from slavery to the present. Families want their family members to not only speak of the love, hope, and resilience that has kept them, but also ensure that no family member feels neglected.

Using a qualitative methodology based on a (live) case study design allowed the researcher for this study to ask specific questions to obtain a clear and logical response from the

participants/audience. According to Creswell et al. (2007), the participating subjects of this research, being family members, were also referred to as “audience” (p. 237). The questions were in alignment; however, the researcher asked them (the questions) as a response was given or during a particular timeframe, as noted by the subject matter. The researcher allowed ample time and full disclosure by participating subjects without interruption. The questions were the same for each participant.

The live case study design allows for a variation in collecting information in a deeper and more complex format. The case study design involves observation among family members, known and unknown to one another, regardless of their individual perceptions, behaviors, and uninformed nature of the analysis of measuring tasks. A live case study design utilizing a qualitative methodology incorporates many facets of information to research. The subject matter and analysis are open and subject to various descriptors, giving an in-depth look for reasoning, understanding, and clarification if needed. The disadvantages of a live case study include limited information for comparisons due to a lack of literature on the subject or excessive information that is received beyond the study's limitations that cannot be properly measured or depicted in the research due to time constraints.

This case study sought to understand how family members engage with issues or situations involving the family reunion. The following research question guided the study:

RQ 1: What are the challenges that may cause a reduction in the areas of love, hope, and resilience; therefore, abstaining from family reunion planning, attendance, and activities?

The researcher interviewed individual family members at the family reunion, at their homes, places of employment and at an agreed-upon location. Family members who could not travel were interviewed over the phone or via Zoom. The researcher used purposeful sampling to

select 10 participants. These participants' ages ranged from 18 to 99 years. Most of the family members lived in the state of Texas. This researcher obtained IRB permission to publish birth names, if permissible by family members, with signed consent forms; however due to participants requesting privacy, pseudonyms were used. Several family members in Texas, with a few in California that participated.

The researcher collected data via interviews, documents, personal statements, questionnaires, and surveys. All information was recorded whenever possible. The researcher asked interview questions to gather in-depth information. These questions, taken directly from the interview portion of the methodology section, were as follows (see Appendix F):

SQ1. If you were a dessert served at the reunion, what would you be, and why?

SQ2. When you think of love, hope, and resilience, what do they mean to you?

Question one was asked as an “experiential” icebreaker to open the conversation, generate thoughts, and allow participants to relax (Roberts, 2020).

Question two was a “sensory” question (Roberts, 2020).

These questions were important for measuring data to identify phenomena (Doody & Noonan, 2013). The interviews were “semi-structured,” allowing the interviewer to ask deeper and additional questions that probe further into the given response (Weller et al., 2018). This researcher also incorporated a survey completed by all participants who volunteered for the case study (see Appendix E). The questions from the survey were as follows:

1. Do you get a say in where the family reunions will be held?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
2. Do you get a say in the food and decorations in case of allergies or other reasons?
 - a) Yes

b) No

3. Are you willing to travel far for reunions?

a) Yes

b) No

4. Do you arrange your own accommodations during reunions?

a) Yes

b) No

5. How many family reunions have you attended in the last decade?

a) All of them

b) Half of them

c) A few

d) None

6. Do you invite friends and neighbors besides just family members to reunions?

a) Yes

b) No

7. Are you okay with alcohol being served in front of children during reunions?

a) Yes

b) No

8. What are the reasons why you would miss a family reunion?

a) Work

b) School

c) Distance

d) Health

e) Lack of finances to travel

f) Any other-----

9. Is there a hierarchy or rank and order during family reunions?

a) Yes

b) No

10. Do elders and close family members get priority such as in speaking or decision-making?

a) Yes

b) No

Question 10 was of particular importance because the elders are generally heard when they address issues, situations, or decisions that need to be made. Simultaneously, there is a committee in charge of the reunion. The committee is the delegating members with the final say on matters of importance. The relatives closely related to the committee members generally have first-hand knowledge of events or situations. This writer deemed the latter of this question relevant to the research due to crossed boundaries that cause conflicting perceptions in lineage.

Contrast comparative showed the number of times a particular document was discussed or mentioned, and the discussion variations related to the data. There was ample time for the participating family members to review and check the information and data they provided to this researcher. This allowed participants to verify that the researcher had not attempted to fabricate information and/or data received.

Triangulation was used to search for certain words and phrases that were verbalized by family members (Deterding & Waters, 2021). Triangulation showed some common factors shared or believed between family members. For triangulation to be effective, proper and accurate memoing must be in place. Memoing was done by the researcher recording personal thoughts and responses, as well as any other observed behaviors. While memoing, this researcher engaged in reflexivity. Reflexivity is being able to provide verbal input and interpretation.

The researcher was responsible for obtaining credible information for this research. Also, the researcher was responsible for confirming the accuracy of the information received. Subsequently, this research should be viable for future and similar research with the correct documentation, analysis, and coding.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand how geographical location and lineage can have a varying effect on love, hope, and resilience. This phenomenological case study represented lived experiences amongst the members of the Spriggs, Howard, Reece family reunion and their offsprings who were central and necessary in documenting the lineage.

By using phenomenological design, the researcher captured the true and relevant experiences of each participating family member. The two research questions presented to participants precede Table 1 (last paragraph under participants) (Appendix F). Table 1 of this chapter includes a brief description of 10 randomly selected participants. This table also includes answers to the research questions shown prior to Table 1. Table 2 consists of the background questions (see Appendix D) posed to each participant. Table 3 shows responses to the questions and Table 4 depicts the 10 survey questions (see Appendix E) posed to each participant and Table 5 shows survey responses tallied. Table 6 addresses the study findings depicting themes and outlier data based on the evolvement of research received from participating family members, including a hermeneutical phenomenological reduction from Table 1. Only the participating family members recognized their given responses reflected in this paper.

Participants

Using purposeful criterion sampling, 10 participants were randomly selected from the Spriggs, Howard, Reece family members. All participants were of the bloodline. Those who married into the family were excluded from the study. The researcher invited participants to the study via Facebook (see Appendix B) and by word of mouth. Family members were also allowed

to participate in the research at the Spriggs, Howard, Reece reunion. All interested participants received an information packet containing a consent form (see Appendix C) to read and sign.

Pseudonyms were assigned to protect the confidentiality of the participants and the information received from each participating family member. All participants were asked two questions (see Appendix F). First, an icebreaker question was asked: SQ1 If you were a dessert served at the reunion, what would you be and why? And the second question: SQ2 What does love, hope, and resilience mean? Table 1 below depicts the demographic data for each participant via pseudonym.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Data

Participant Name*	Gender
Betty	F
Sally	F
Daisy	F
Jeremy	M
Tom	M
Ann	F
Sam	F
Veronica	M
Jeff	M
Larry	M

*Note. *Pseudonyms*

Betty

Betty is a family member of the lineage. Betty had been to every family reunion since its inception. Initially, as an ice breaker, Betty was asked, SQ1, “If you were a dessert served at the family reunion, what would you be and why?” She answered,

I would be a banana pudding because a banana pudding has several different ingredients in it, and the family is made up of different kinds of people, different personalities, and even different races. And we all mix in together to make one big, interesting family.

Betty's responses to the interview question, SQ2, was.

Love is the ability to see the best in others and to cling to them in spite of faults. Hope means expectation of a desirable expected end-never giving up. Resilience is the ability to rebound from undesirable obstacles to press forward when there seems to be little reason to do so. I keep my eyes focused on what I believe though it may seem impossible.

Sally

Sally is a family member of the lineage. Sally had missed a few of the reunions during the last five years. Initially, as an ice breaker, Sally was asked SQ1, "If you were a dessert served at the family reunion, what would you be and why?" Sally said, "I would be an apple pie because I got love in my heart for everybody." Sally's responses to the interview question, SQ2, was "Hope, let me see. I feel like to me, if you got God in your heart, they just automatically fall in place."

Daisy

Daisy is a blood member of the Spriggs, Howard, Reece family. Daisy reported attending only a couple of the reunions since they started. Initially, as an ice breaker, Daisy was asked SQ1, "If you were a dessert served at the family reunion, what would you be and why?" She said,

I would be a cheesecake because a cheesecake is extremely versatile and able to be fine-tuned to most people's liking. It's also very easy on the palate and can be topped however

you'd like according to your imagination. And of course, it's sweet and firm but not too overbearing just like me.

Daisy's responses to the interview question, SQ2, was

Love means real family and friend connections to me. Hope brings my faith to mind, and resilience is my life's work albeit at times involuntarily after having major life changes and family losses come my way over the years. Being resilient also comes from watching my elders overcome obstacles or share their past experiences, which required or caused them to be resilient, which helped me learn how to do the same.

Jeremy

Jeremy had attended every reunion. Initially, as an ice breaker, Jeremy was asked, SQ1, "If you were a dessert served at the family reunion, what would you be and why?" Jeremy said, "I would be an apple because an apple is firm, diet friendly, and isn't messy to eat." He also said, "I would be a slice of sweet potato pie. Sweet potato pie is very multipurpose. It could be part of a main course. It could be a dessert, or it could be eaten raw. And I think in order to compete in this society, you have to be pretty flexible."

Jeremy's responses to the interview question, SQ2, was "Something that has stability and endurance." He also said, "When I think of love, I think about I go back to the scripture, and I think about 'agape.' That's unconditional love, and that's basically the love that I have for my family." "Sometimes we don't always see eye to eye on things, but it doesn't delineate from the fact that I love them. And what was the second one?"

Hope. I think about hope, "I think about Eliza Stanley being born on a slave ship coming from Africa. That was a hopeless situation, but it ended in hope. And whenever I find

myself getting down, as I often do, I think about those who've gone before me, and I have hope.

Tom

Tom had only attended one reunion. Initially, as an ice breaker, Tom was asked SQ1, “If you were a dessert served at the family reunion, what would you be and why?” Tom answered, “I would be a sweet potato pie because we have already had everything else, and the pie is the dessert. Like me, I am coming in late.”

Tom’s response to the interview questions, (depicted by their corresponding numbers) SQ2, was as follows. “Love is better between two people; unconditional with no conditions on it.”

Ann

Ann reported attending the 25th-anniversary reunion last. Initially, as an ice breaker, Ann was asked, SQ1, “If you were a dessert served at the family reunion, what would you be and why?” She said,

I would be banana pudding because pudding goes down easy, meaning all you got to do is just show up and be nice. And I don't too much like the cookies because then you got a crunch, and that means conversation.

Ann’s response to the interview question, SQ2, was. “Love is unbiased. No matter what your background is, no matter what you've done, no matter what your experiences are, you're going to be loved, period.” He also said, “Hope is, like the Bible says, the essence of things not seen. You know you can achieve a [...] dream. You hope you can achieve a dream, but it's yet to be seen.” Ann added, “Resilience. Once you get past hope and you know that you're loved, you can do anything.”

Sam

Sam reported that the only reunion attended was the initial reunion. Initially, as an ice breaker, Sam was asked, SQ1, “If you were a dessert served at the family reunion, what would you be and why?” Sam said,

I would be a rice pudding. It’s an old-fashioned dessert, very nutritious and it’s easy to make. But, because it’s so easy and so nutritious, there’s no value for it. So, people’s opinions of rice pudding is like [sounds of disgust] [00:00:53] like that’s kind of disgusting [...] [00:00:56] but they’re not seeing the real value that it has to offer.

Sam’s responses to the interview question, SQ2, was “Love, hope, and resilience. I’ll reiterate the question, because to me, that’s something that means a lot. [Silence]. Altogether, unity. Unity. It also means to have a place in a perspective, to work as one, because you can’t have one say.”

Kate

Kate had attended only one of the reunions in the last few years. Initially, as an ice breaker, Kate was asked, SQ1, “If you were a dessert served at the family reunion, what would you be and why?” Kate responded,

I would be a strawberry shortcake because strawberry shortcake, one, is my favorite. And it's a delicious dessert where you got a variety of cake, the cool whip, the strawberries. So, you just got a diversity of different types of textures and things to eat and taste, and I'm a very diverse person.

Kate’s responses to the interview question, SQ2, was,

Hope, love, and resilience. [...] Well, I'll start with resilience. To me, resilience is, you know, like I feel like a person is resilient, a person that's gone through a lot of things in

their life that's been really hard, and they've had a tough life, but they've overcome it, and they still have a positive outlook on life. Then, to me, that's resilience. But with that also being said, you have hope. As in, you know, hope for me is like, on a spiritual level, you know. [...] It talks about how we hope for things not seen and that, you know, that just kind of puts your faith in God. And to me, love, love is God. Love is family. Love can be significant other, but most of all, to me, love revolves around God himself.

Jeff

Jeff had been to many reunions, only missing maybe two in the last five years. Initially, as an ice breaker, Jeff was asked, SQ1, “If you were a dessert served at the family reunion, what would you be and why?” Jeff mentioned, “I would be a pound cake. Because throughout the family, [...] through, you know, my years, I've noticed that most people like pound cakes.”

Jeff's responses to the interview question, SQ2, was,

Love, Jesus. And communion or strong relationship between the family. Hope In Christ.

An assured expectation that we believe Jesus will come through. It affects me physically through knowing spiritually that all is well and will be well. Sometimes, even through hard times and tribulation. Resilience is sticking to an accomplished task that you set out to do, and in some areas, that's my weakness. I don't always follow through in my latter years because of all the fights and struggles I have had in my life.

Larry

Larry had attended a few reunions but had not attended one since COVID. Initially, as an ice breaker, Larry was asked, SQ1, “If you were a dessert served at the family reunion, what would you be and why? Larry said, “I would be a cheesecake. Because I love it.”

Larry's responses to the interview questions (depicted by their corresponding numbers) for SQ2 was as follows: "Love is when you love everybody. Love your children, respect them, and hope they do the same to you." "Hope for a brighter future." "Resilience?" "I really don't know what resilience means." "Well, usually I have been. Yes, I'm resilient."

Participants were presented with the following background questions (see Appendix D): 1. What was the last reunion you attended?, 2. About how many reunions did you miss in the last five years? (All, Most, Some, A few, None), 3. How far did you travel? Specifically, how many miles. Estimate if needed (A great deal, A lot, moderate amount, A little, None at all), 4. Was your lineage acknowledged at the reunion? (yes/no). If yes, was it acknowledged personally or publicly?

Table 2

Background Questions

Participant Name	Last Reunion Attended	Reunions Missed in the last 5 Years	How Far Traveled	Was Lineage Acknowledged? Yes, No, Personally, Publicly
Betty	2022	0 None	moderate	Yes, publicly
Sally	2022	Some	A little	Yes, personally
Daisy	2005	All	A little	Yes, personally
Jeremy	2022	0 None	None	Yes, publicly
Tom	2022	All	Great Deal	Yes, personally
Sam	1995	A few	None	Yes, personally
Kate	2022	A few	A little	Yes, personally
Jeff	2022	A few	None	Yes, publicly
Larry	2019	A few	None	Yes, personally
Ann	2019	A few	Great Deal	Yes, personally

Table 3*Responses Tallied for Interview Questions*

Last Reunion Attended	Reunions Missed in the last 5 Years	How Far Traveled	Lineage Acknowledged
2022 (6)	None (2)	Moderate (1)	Yes (10)
2019 (2)	Some (1)	None (4)	No (0)
2005 (1)	All (2)	Little (3)	Personally (7)
1995 (1)	A few (5)	A Great Deal (2)	Publicly (3)
---	---	---	---

Participants were presented with the following 10 survey questions (see Appendix E):

1. Do you get a say in where the family reunions will be held? (yes/no)
2. Do you get a say in the food and decorations in case of allergies or for other reasons? (yes/no)
3. Are you willing to travel for reunions? (yes/no)
4. Do you arrange your own accommodations during reunions? (yes/no)
5. About how many family reunions have you attended in the last decade? (all/half/few/none)
6. Do you invite friends and neighbors besides just family members to reunions? (yes/no)
7. Are you okay with alcohol being served in front of children during reunions? (yes/no)
8. What are some of the reasons why you would miss a family reunion? Select all that apply
(work/school/distance/health/other)
9. Is there a hierarchy or rank and order during family reunions? (yes/no)
10. Do elders and close family members get priority such as in speaking or decision-making?
(yes/no).

Participants in Table 4 are not depicted by a pseudonym, but instead by a number. The numbered questions are presented horizontally, while the participants' responses are shown by their assigned number in a vertical format.

Table 4*Survey*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No 1	Yes 1	Yes 1	Yes 1	All 1	Sometimes 1	No 1	Distance 1	Yes 1	Maybe 1
Yes 2	Yes 2	Yes 2	Yes 2	Few 2	Yes 2	No 2	Distance 2	Yes 2	Yes 2
No 3	No 3	Yes 3	Yes 3	None 3	Yes 3	No 3	Health 3	Yes 3	Yes 3
No 4	Yes 4	Yes 4	Yes 4	Few 4	Yes 4	Yes 4	All 4	Yes 4	Yes 4
Yes 5	No 5	Yes 5	Yes 5	All 5	No 5	No 5	Work, School, Distance 5	Yes 5	Yes 5
No 6	No 6	Yes 6	Yes 6	None 6	No 6	No 6	Work, School 6	No 6	No 6
Yes 7	Yes 7	Yes 7	Yes 7	Few 7	No 7	Yes 7	Work 7	Yes 7	Yes 7
No 8	No 8	Yes 8	No 8	None 8	No 8	Yes 8	All 8	No 8	No 8
Yes 9	Yes 9	Yes 9	Yes 9	Few 9	No 9	Yes 9	Work, Health 9	Yes 9	Yes 9
Yes 10	Yes 10	Yes 10	Yes 10	All 10	Yes 10	Yes 10	Work, Health 10	Yes 10	Yes 10

Table 5*Responses Tallied for Survey*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Yes 5	Yes 6	Yes 10	Yes 9	A 3	Yes 4	Yes 5	A 7	Yes 8	Yes 7
No 5	No 4	No 0	No 1	B 3	No 5	No 5	B 4	No 2	No 2
---	---	---	---	D 4	Soti 1	---	C 5	---	---
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	D 5	---	---

Participants' information was tallied and placed in comparative tables depicting the information. Participant noted as 1 identified response to question 6 with an outlier denoted as “sometimes.” Also, the same participant noted the response to question 10 with a response denoted as an outlier “Maybe.”

Results

The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to present a case study design using lived experiences to show the relationship and impact of hope, love, and resilience with geographical location and lineage during a family reunion. This study was directed through one central research question and two sub-research questions (see Appendix F). The first question was an icebreaker. Following the icebreaker, the second question was asked, allowing for an opinion or definition of three words, love, hope, and resilience, when attending the Spriggs, Howard, Reece Family Reunions.

This researcher collected information via surveys, questionnaires, and interviews (see Appendices D, E, and F). All the data were gathered and compiled for analysis using ATLAS.ti, a software program specifically designed for qualitative dissertations. Ten participants completed background questionnaires, surveys, interview questionnaires, and an interview.

While collecting data, this researcher listened intently while coding, memoing, comparing, and triangulating the information as it was received. The researcher avoided bias by keeping personal opinions out of the participants' responses. Although the researcher asked for clarity of statements at various times, emotions did occur, and preconceived thoughts happened along the way. These were written in the researcher's journal as each participant completed their interview. The researcher coded information along the way while interviewing and transcribing the responses from all participants. The reasoning was to allow for deductions and repeating of any future codes that would be presented. After carefully coding and reducing several times, the researcher finalized the 4 main themes/codes for this research. The researcher took only the answers that were reflected upon and verbalized by the participants. Included also were the oral interviews that were transcribed and read for accuracy.

The researcher explored each response incorporating hermeneutical reductions, which were then coded using ATLAS.ti for phenomenological reduction (See Table 6).

Theme Development

Table 6

Theme Development

Pseudonym	Response
Ann	<p>"I would be banana pudding because pudding goes down easy, meaning all you got to do is just show up and be nice. And I don't too much like the cookies because then you got a crunch, and that means conversation." "Love is unbiased. No matter what your background is, no matter what you've done, no matter what your experiences are, you're going to be loved, period." "Hope is, like the Bible says, the essence of things not seen. You know you can achieve a [...] dream. You hope you can achieve a dream, but it's yet to be seen." "Resilience. Once you get past hope and you know that you're loved, you can do anything."</p>
Betty	<p>"I guess I would be a banana pudding because a banana pudding has several different ingredients in it and the family is made up of different kinds of people, different personalities, and even different races. And we all mix in together to make one big, interesting family."</p> <p>"Love is the ability to see the best in others and to cling to them in spite of faults. Hope means expectation of a desirable expected end-never giving up. Resilience is the ability to rebound from undesirable obstacles to press forward when there seems to be little reason to do so. I keep my eyes focused on what I believe though it may seem impossible." "When I think of love, I think of what the scriptures tells us. To love one another. And love is unconditional. And hope, to me, because I am a Christian, it doesn't mean something that may be so. I have hope because I believe in the foundation on which that hope is built. And the other one?" "Resilience. I believe in resilience because we, as a race of people and a family, we have shown that [...] [00:01:46] we are never defeated. We always bounce back and we rise to meet any occasion."</p>
Daisy	<p>"I would be a cheesecake because a cheesecake is extremely versatile and able to be fine-tuned to most people's liking. It's also very easy on the palate and can be topped however you'd like according to your imagination. And of course, it's sweet and firm but not too overbearing just like me."</p> <p>"Love means real family and friend connections to me. Hope brings my faith to mind and resilience is my life's work albeit at times involuntarily after having major life changes and family losses come my way over the years. Being resilient also comes from watching my elders overcome obstacles or share their past experiences which required or caused them to be resilient which helped me learn how to do the same." "Love, hope, and resilience to me, takes me back to my ancestors, to our elders, and the love that they show to us by either fixing a meal or warm hugs or sound advice for life and also all of the hardships that</p>

they have overcome. That gives me hope because it just lets us know that we can get through those things as well. And did you ask resilience as well in that question?"

"Resilience is just having the strength to continue to overcome those things, in my opinion." "Family reunion, to me, means that we can basically get together with family and friends and just talk about what's been happening in our lives since we last spoke or some of us hadn't seen each other in years or at all. It means to be able to catch up also, to be able to see loved ones that we may have not seen and some of the elders and loved ones that we may not get to see again from that point. Also, of course, can't have a reunion without good food and some music and fun activities and just getting to love on the children and just enjoy the moment with family."

Jeff

"I think I would be a pound cake." "Because throughout the family, [...] through, you know, my years, I've noticed that most people like pound cakes." "Love, Jesus. And communion or strong relationship between the family. Hope In Christ. An assured expectation that we believe Jesus will come through. It affects me physically through knowing spiritually that all is well and will be well. Sometimes even though hard times and tribulation. Resilience is sticking to an accomplished task that you set out to do and in some areas that's my weakness. I don't always follow through in my latter years because of all the fights and struggles I have had in my life."

Jeremy

"I would be an apple because an apple is firm, diet friendly, and isn't messy to eat." "I would be a slice of sweet potato pie. Sweet potato pie is very multipurpose. It could be part of a main course. It could be a dessert, or it could be eaten raw. And I think in order to compete in this society, you have to be pretty flexible." "Something that has stability and endurance." "When I think of love, I think about I go back to the scripture, and I think about 'agape.' That's unconditional love, and that's basically the love that I have for my family." Sometimes we don't always see eye to eye on things, but it doesn't delineate from the fact that I love them. And what was the second one? "Hope. I think about hope, "I think about Eliza Stanley being born on a slave ship coming from Africa. That was a hopeless situation, but it ended in hope. And whenever I find myself getting down, as I often do, I think about those who've gone before me, and I have hope."

Kate

"I would be a strawberry shortcake because strawberry shortcake, one, is my favorite. And it's a delicious dessert where you got a variety of cake, the cool whip, the strawberries. So, you just got a diversity of different types of textures and things to eat and taste, and I'm a very diverse person." "Hope, love, and resilience. [...] Well, I'll start with resilience. To me, resilience is, you know, like I feel like a person is resilient, a person that's gone through a lot of things in their life that's been really hard, and they've had a tough life, but they've overcome it, and they still have a positive outlook on life. Then to me, that's resilience. But with that also being said, you have hope. As in, you know, hope for me is like on a spiritual level, you know. [...] It talks about how we hope for things not seen and that, you know, that just kind of puts

Larry	<p>your faith in God. And to me, love, love is God. Love is family. Love can be significant other, but most of all, to me, love revolves around God himself.”</p> <p>“Cheesecake.” “Because I love it.” “Love is when you love everybody. Love your children, respect them, and hope they do the same to you.” “Hope for a brighter future.” “Resilience?” “I really don’t know what resilience means.”</p> <p>“Well, usually I have been. Yes, I’m resilient.”</p>
Sally	<p>“I would be an apple pie because I got love in my heart for everybody.” “Hope, let me see. I feel like to me, if you got God in your heart, they just automatically fall in place.”</p>
Sam	<p>“I would be a rice pudding. It’s an old-fashioned dessert, very nutritious and it’s easy to make. But, because it’s so easy and so nutritious, there’s no value for it. So, people’s opinions of rice pudding is like [sounds of disgust] [00:00:53] like that’s kind of disgusting[...][00:00:56] but they’re not seeing the real value that it has to offer.” “Love, hope, and resilience. I’ll reiterate the question, because to me, that’s something that means a lot. [Silence]. Altogether, unity. Unity. It also means to have a place in a perspective, to work as one, because you can’t have one without the other one. And if you do have one without the other, then something’s missing.”</p>
Tom	<p>“I would be a sweet potato pie because we have already had everything else, and the pie is the dessert. Like me, I am coming in late.”</p> <p>“Love is better between two people; unconditional with no conditions on it.”</p>

The various desserts mentioned had a definite meaning to the family members of Spriggs, Howard, Reece Family Reunion. Banana pudding was described as “going down easy” (Ann) and “several different ingredients in it and the family is made up of different kinds of people, different personalities, and even different races” (Betty). Sweet potato pie was described as “multipurpose” (Jeremy) and as being served after a meal since “we have had everything else...like me, I am coming in late” (Tom). Strawberry shortcake was compared to the family as “diversity of different types of textures” (Kate). Pound cake was described as something “most people like” (Jeff). Rice pudding was compared to the family as “very nutritious, easy to make” (Sam). And lastly, the descriptor of the family for cheesecake is because it is “extremely versatile and able to be finetuned to most people’s liking” (Daisy).

All responses from the 10 participants (Table 6) for SQ1 and SQ2 were typed in ATLAS.ti for input and analysis. Using ATLAS.ti, 16 top applied codes were created. See Table 7.

Table 7

Top Applied Themes

Resilience	8
Love	7
Hope	7
Food	3
Diversity	2
Metaphor	2
Spirituality	2
Family	2
Preference	1
Enjoyment	1
Observation	1
Flexibility	1
Undervalued	1
Inclusion	1
Belonging	1
Optimism	1

Utilizing ATLAS.ti, the analysis also depicted the top co-occurring codes noted in Table 8, as follows:

Table 8

Top Co-Occuring Codes

Love + Resilience
Hope + Resilience
Love + Hope
Resilience + Spirituality
Hope + Spirituality
Resilience + Family
Preference + Food

There were 10 participating family members (see table 1). Of the 10 participants, seven were quoted most frequently. The top seven coded participants and their frequencies are shown in Table 9 below:

Table 9

Top Seven Coded Participants

Daisy	10
Betty	9
Ann	8
Jeff	8
Kate	6
Sam	6
Jeremy	4

Themes, also known as codes, for triangulated responses regarding CRQ, SQ1, and SQ2 are presented in Tables 10, 11, 12, and 13 respectively under their own subheadings. Sixteen top applied codes were analyzed and presented in Table 7. The research focused on love, hope, and resilience as pertaining to geographical location and lineage of family members in the Spriggs, Howard, and Reece Family. For entertainment purposes, the icebreaker was included in the process, depicting the code food. Due to time constraints and study limitations, all 16 codes were not included in the final research findings. Four of the 16 top applied codes (also known as themes) were presented and discussed as the basis of phenomenological reduction. These four primary themes of resilience, love, hope, and food were the basis for this research and were, hence forth, depicted in this research project.

Research Question Responses

The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to present a case study design using lived experiences to show the relationship and impact of hope, love, and resilience with geographical location and lineage during a family reunion. This study was directed through one

central research questions and two sub research questions. The first question being the icebreaker. Following the icebreaker, the second question was asked, allowing for an opinion or definition of three words, love, hope, and resilience when attending the Spriggs, Howard, Reece Family Reunions.

This researcher collected information via surveys, questionnaires, and interviews. All the data were gathered and compiled for analysis using ATLAS.ti, a software program specifically designed for qualitative dissertations. Ten participants completed background questionnaires, surveys, interview questionnaires, and an interview (see Appendix D, E, and F).

While collecting data, this researcher listened intently while coding, memoing, comparing, and triangulating the information as it was received. The researcher avoided bias by keeping personal opinions out of the participants' responses. Although the researcher asked for clarity of statements at various times, emotions did occur, and preconceived thoughts happened along the way. These were written in the researcher's journal as each participant completed their interview. The researcher coded information along the way while interviewing and transcribing the responses from all participants. The reasoning was to allow for deductions and repeating of any future codes that would be presented. After carefully coding and reducing several times, the researcher finalized the 4 main themes/codes for this research. The researcher took only the answers that were reflected upon and verbalized by the participants. Included also were the oral interviews that were transcribed and read for accuracy.

The researcher explored each response incorporating hermeneutical reductions, which were then coded using ATLAS.ti for phenomenological reduction (See Table 6). The first theme discussed and introduced was food, which was the fourth on the list but the first of responses

related to the SQs, specifically, SQ1. The resulting analysis did not yield results for two of the participating members, Sally and Larry.

Food. Responses to this question, SQ1 (see Appendix F), were directly related to the theme of food. The first research question was asked of participating members of the Spriggs, Howard, Reece Family reunion as an icebreaker question to allow the participant to be at ease while responding to a question that would bring some humor, thereby reducing any tenseness, stress, or anxiety that they may be experiencing. SQ1 was stated as follows, “If you were a dessert served at the family reunion, what would you be and why?” The following responses were given from each participating family member. Note: some family members gave a different response when responding on paper versus the oral interview. This is noted by two responses from the same participant:

Table 10*Dessert Responses*

Participant	Quotation
Ann	"I would be banana pudding because pudding goes down easy, meaning all you got to do is just show up and be nice. And I don't too much like the cookies because they you got a crunch, and that means conversation."
Betty	"I guess I would be a banana pudding because a banana pudding has several different ingredients in it and the family is made up of different kinds of people, different personalities, and even different races. And we all mix in together to make one big, interesting family."
Kate	"I would be a strawberry shortcake because strawberry shortcake, one, is my favorite. And it's a delicious dessert where you got a variety of cake, the cool whip, the strawberries. So, you just got a diversity of different types of textures and things to eat and taste, and I'm a very diverse person."
Jeff	"I would be a pound cake. Because throughout the family I, [...] through, you know, my years, I've noticed that most people like pound cakes."
Jeremy	"I would be a slice of sweet potato pie. Sweet potato pie is very multipurpose. It could be part of a main course. It could be a dessert, or it could be eaten raw. And I think in order to compete in this society, you have to be pretty flexible."
Sam	"I would be a rice pudding. It's an old-fashioned dessert, very nutritious and it's easy to make. But because it's so easy and so nutritious, there's no value for it. So people's opinions of rice pudding is like [sounds of disgust] [00:00:53] like that's kind of disgusting[...] [00:00:56] but they're not seeing the real value that it has to offer."
Tom	"I would be a sweet potato pie because we have already had everything else, and the pie is the dessert. Like me I am coming in late."
Daisy	"I would be a cheesecake because a cheesecake is extremely versatile and able to be finetuned to most people's liking. It's also very easy on the palate and can be topped however you'd like according to your imagination. And of course, it's sweet and firm but not too overbearing just like me."

Love. The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to present a case study design using lived experiences to show the relationship and impact of hope, love, and resilience with geographical location and lineage during a family reunion. This study was directed through one central research question and two sub research questions (see Appendix F). This researcher collected information via surveys, questionnaires, and interviews. All the data were gathered and compiled for analysis using ATLAS.ti, a software program specifically designed for qualitative

dissertations. Ten participants completed background questionnaires, surveys, interview questionnaires, and an interview.

This research was based on SQ2 (see Appendix F): How would you define love when attending a family reunion? The following responses were given in their respective order from each participating family member:

Table 11

Definition of Love

Participant	Quotation
Ann	"Love is unbiased. No matter what your background is, no matter what you've done, no matter what your experiences are, you're going to be loved, period."
Betty	"When I think of love, I think of what the scripture tells us. To love one another. And love is unconditional."
Daisy	"Love means real family and friend connections to me. "Love, hope, and resilience to me, takes me back to my ancestors, to our elders, and the love that they show to us by either fixing a meal or warm hugs or sound advice for life and also all of the hardships that they have overcome."
Kate	"Hope, love, and resilience. And to me, love, love is God. Love is family. Love can be significant other, but most of all, to me love revolves around God himself."
Larry	"Love is when you love everybody. Love your children, respect them, and hope they do the same to you."
Sam	"Love, hope, and resilience. I'll reiterate the question, because to me, that's something that means a lot. [Silence]. Altogether, unity. Unity. It also means to have a place in a perspective, to work as one, because you can't have one without the other one. And if you do have one without the other, then something's missing."
Jeremy	"When I think of love, I think about I go back to the scripture, and I think about 'agapi." That's unconditional love, and that's basically the love that I have for my family." Sometimes we don't always see eye to eye on things, but it doesn't delineate from the fact that I love them."

An outlier for love that also qualifies under food is stated as follows: Daisy stated,

Family reunion, to me, means that we can basically get together with family and friends and just talk about what's been happening in our lives since we last spoke or some of us hadn't seen each other in years or at all. It means to be able to catch up also, to be able to see loved ones that we may have not seen and some of the elders and loved ones that we

may not get to see again from that point. Also, of course, can't have a reunion without good food and some music and fun activities and just getting to love on the children and just enjoy the moment with family.

Hope. The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to present a case study design using lived experiences to show the relationship and impact of hope, love, and resilience with geographical location and lineage during a family reunion. This study was directed through one central research question and two sub research questions. This researcher collected information via surveys, questionnaires, and interviews. All the data were gathered and compiled for analysis using ATLAS.ti, a software program specifically designed for qualitative dissertations. Ten participants completed background questionnaires, surveys, interview questionnaires, and an interview.

This section expounds on SQ2 (see Appendix F), how would you define hope when attending a family reunion? The quotations in table 6 were analyzed using ATLAS.ti and were as follows:

Table 12*Definition of Hope*

Ann	“Hope is like the Bible says, the essence of things not seen. You know you can achieve a [...] dream. You hope you can achieve a dream, but it’s yet to be seen.”
Betty	“And hope, to me, because I am a Christian, it doesn’t mean something that me be so. I have hope because I believe in the foundation on which that hope is built.”
Daisy	“Hope brings my faith to mind. Love, hope, and resilience to me, takes me back to my ancestors, to our elders, and the love that they show to us by either fixing a meal or warm hugs or sound advice for life and also all of the hardships that they have overcome. That gives me hope because it just lets us know that we can get through those things as well.”
Kate	“You have hope. As in, you know, hope for me is like on a spiritual level, you know [...] it talks about how we hope for things not seen and that, you know that just kind of puts your faith in God.”
Sally	“Hope, let me see. I feel like to me, if you got God in your heart, they just automatically fall in place.”
Jeff	“Hope in Christ. An assured expectation that we believe Jesus will come through. I affects me physically through knowing spiritually that all is well and will be well. Sometimes even though hard times and tribulation.”
Sam	“Love, hope, and resilience. I’ll reiterate the question, because to me, that’s something that means a lot. [Silence]. Altogether, unity. Unity. It also means to have a place in a perspective, to work as one, because you can’t have one without the other one. And if you do have one without the other, then something’s missing.”

An outlier for hope as depicted by ATLAS.ti stated by Jeremy is as follows:

Hope. I think about hope. I think about Eliza Stanley being born on a slave ship coming from Africa. That was a hopeless situation, but it ended in hope. And whenever I find myself getting down, as often as I do, I think about those who’ve gone before me, and I have hope.

Resilience. The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to present a case study design using lived experiences to show the relationship and impact of hope, love, and resilience with geographical location and lineage during a family reunion. This study was directed through one central research question and two sub research questions. This researcher collected information via surveys, questionnaires, and interviews. All the data were gathered and

compiled for analysis using ATLAS.ti, a software program specifically designed for qualitative dissertations. Ten participants completed background questionnaires, surveys, interview questionnaires, and an interview. This research was based on SQ2 (see Appendix F): how would you define resilience when attending a family reunion?

Table 13

Definition of Resilience

Betty	“Resilience is the ability to rebound from undesirable obstacles to press forward when there seems to be a little reason to do so. I keep my eyes focused on what I believe, though it may seem impossible.”
Betty	“I believe in resilience because we, as a race of people and a family, we have shown that [...] [00:01:46] we are never defeated. We always bounce back, and we rise to meet any occasion.”
Daisy	“Resilience is my life’s work, albeit at times involuntarily after having major life changes and family losses come my way over the years. Being resilient also comes from watching my elders overcome obstacles or share their past experiences, which required or caused them to be resilient, which helped me learn how to do the same. “.resilience to me takes me back to my ancestors, to our elders, and the love that they show to us by either fixing a meal or warm hugs or sound advice for life and also all of the hardships that they have overcome.”
Kate	“To me, resilience is, you know, like I feel like a person is resilient. A person that’s gone through a lot of things in their life that’s been really hard, and they’ve had a tough life, but they’ve overcome it, and they still have a positive outlook on life. Then, to me, that’s resilience.”
Jeff	“Resilience is sticking to an accomplished task that you set out to do, and in some areas, that’s my weakness. I don’t always follow through in my latter years because of all the fights and struggles I have had in my life.”
Jeremy	“I think about Eliza Stanley being born on a slave ship coming from Africa. That was a hopeless situation, but it ended in hope. And whenever I find myself getting down, as I often do, I think about those who’ve gone before me, and I have hope.”
Larry	“Resilience? I really don’t know what resilience means. Well, usually I have been. Yes, I’m resilient.”
Sam	“Love, hope, and resilience. I’ll reiterate the question because, to me, that’s something that means a lot. [Silence]. Altogether, unity. Unity. It also means to have a place in a perspective, to work as one, because you can’t have one without the other one. And if you do have one without the other, then something’s missing.”

ATLAS.ti showed surprising results to this researcher on love, hope, and resilience.

Resilience (8) surprisingly was higher than love (7) and hope (7) by a very slim margin.

Resilience in the Spriggs, Howard, Reece Family Reunion has always been strong and has endured for many years. There was a story told of an earlier (deceased) descendant “Eliza Stanley,” in the response given by Jeremy, relating to resilience. Love was discussed by family members of Spriggs, Howard, Reece as a necessary part and not being able to come together as one, such as we do, without it. Love was shared as a necessity and requirement of us given by God as His children. Hope which was strongly identified as the “essence of things not seen” (Ann); “we hope for things not seen” (Kate); “foundation” (Betty); “to know of God” (Sally).

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand how geographical location and lineage can have a varying effect on love, hope, and resilience. This phenomenological case study represented lived experiences amongst the members of the Spriggs, Howard, Reece family reunion and their offsprings who were central and necessary in documenting the lineage. By using phenomenological design, the researcher captured the true, relevant, and combined experiences of each participating family member. ATLAS.ti measured and composed a summarization of responses for each participating member of the Spriggs, Howard, Reece Family Reunion. The documented summarization is as follows:

Summarization

Ann: The person would choose to be banana pudding because it represents being easygoing and kind. They don’t like cookies because they signify the need for conversation. They believe that love is impartial and everyone deserves to be loved regardless of their background. Hope is described as believing in something that is not yet visible, like achieving a dream. They also emphasized the importance of resilience after having hope and knowing you are loved, as it allows you to accomplish anything.

Betty: These quotes illustrated the speaker's perspective on family, love, hope, and resilience. They compare their family to a banana pudding, highlighting the diverse mix of people and personalities that come together. Love, to them, is about seeing the best in others and accepting them despite their flaws. Hope is described as a belief in a desirable outcome and not giving up. Resilience is emphasized as the ability to overcome obstacles and bounce back, especially within the context of their race and family. The speaker's faith played a role in their understanding of love and hope.

Daisy: The person would be a cheesecake because it is versatile and can be customized to suit different preferences. They believe that love is about strong family and friend connections, hope is tied to their faith, and resilience is their response to life's challenges. They associate these concepts with their ancestors, elders, and the love and support they provide. They define resilience as the ability to continue overcoming obstacles. Family reunions are an opportunity to catch up with loved ones, share stories, enjoy good food, and have fun with activities and children.

Kate: The person would choose to be a strawberry shortcake because they love the dessert and appreciate its diversity in textures and flavors. They describe themselves as a diverse person. They believe that resilience is the ability to overcome difficult experiences and maintain a positive outlook on life. They also mentioned the importance of hope and how it relates to spirituality. Lastly, they defined love as encompassing God, family, and significant others.

Sally: The person compared themselves to an apple pie because they have love for everyone. They also believed that having God in one's heart brings hope, and everything falls into place.

Jeff: The person believed that pound cakes were popular in their family. They associated love, Jesus, and a strong family relationship with the pound cake. They also mentioned their belief in

Jesus and how it gave them hope and assurance. However, they admitted to struggling with following through on tasks due to the challenges they have faced in life. As a result, they felt that they would be similar to a pound cake.

Jeremy: The person chose to be an apple pie because it represents qualities like firmness and being diet friendly. Another person chose to be a slice of sweet potato pie because it is versatile and adaptable. They believed love is unconditional, like “agape” and they had hope in difficult situations, drawing inspiration from their family and historical examples.

Larry: The person loved cheesecake and believed love is about loving everyone and having a good relationship with their children. They hoped for a better future and admitted they are not sure what resilience meant but considered themselves to be resilient.

Sam: The speaker compared themselves to rice pudding, describing it as an old-fashioned nutritious and easy-to-make dessert. However, they felt that it was undervalued by society. The speaker also mentioned that love, hope, and resilience are important to them and believed that unity was necessary to achieve harmony and completeness.

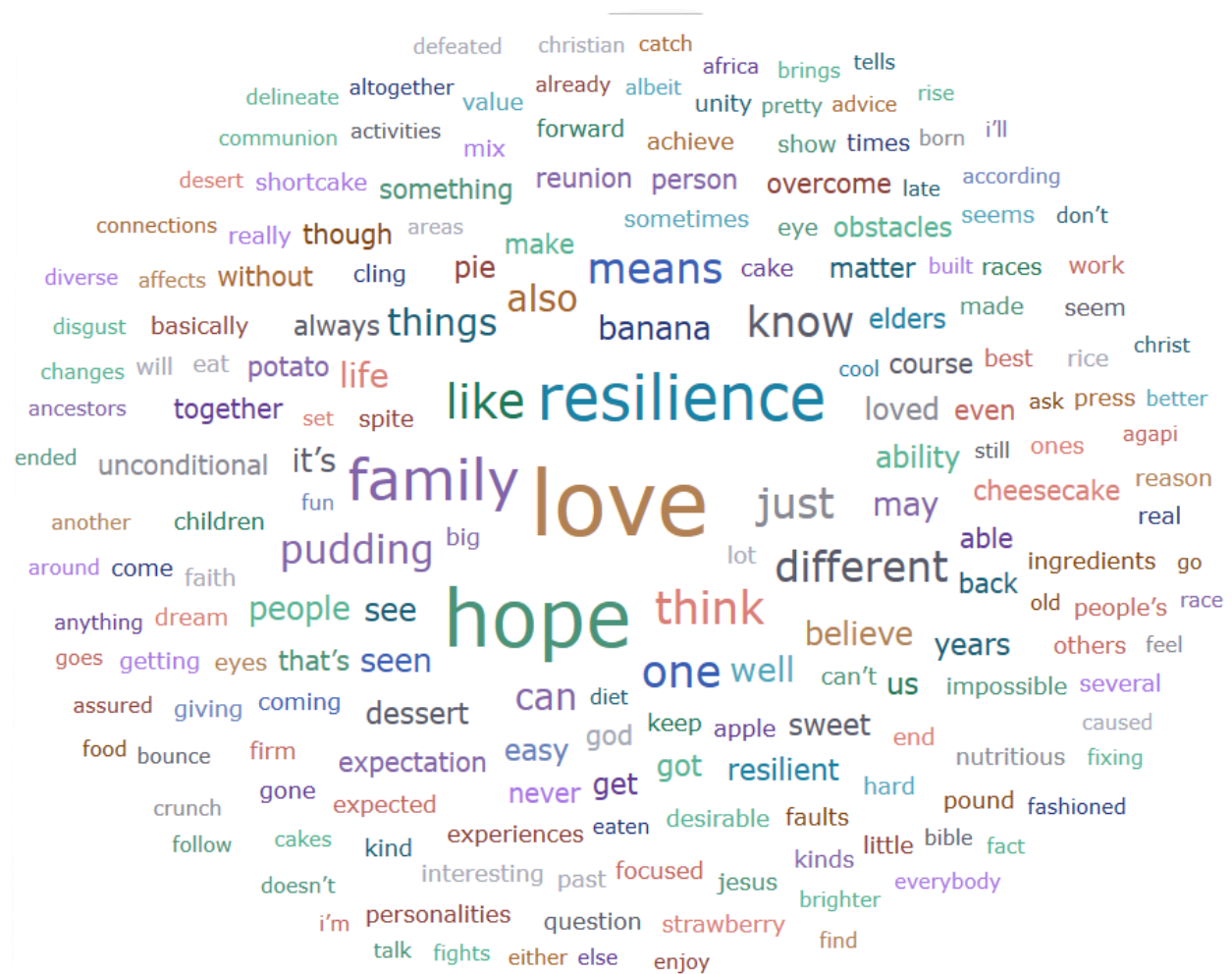
Tom: The person said that they would be a sweet potato pie because everything else had already been done, and the pie was a dessert. They also mentioned that they came in late, implying that they were entering a situation after others had already experienced it. In the second statement, they expressed the belief that love is best when it is between two people and is unconditional, without any conditions or limitations.

Lastly, with the assistance of ATLAS.ti as a tool, the researcher conducted a word count to show the frequency of words stated by the members of the Spriggs, Howard, Reece family members that participated in the research study. The list does not show the ranking of the words by tally. What is indicated is the size of print to show that the subject of the

research dissertation is noted as having been stated more frequently. The frequency of the words is not shown; however, from looking at the proportioned size of the words, love has the highest frequency at 27, hope follows with a frequency of 23, resiliency has a frequency of 16, and finally, family has a frequency of 12.

Table 14

Word Frequency Table



Summary

This chapter related to the findings of this phenomenological case study describing the lived experiences of members of the Spriggs, Howard, Reece Family Reunion. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand how geographical location and lineage can have a varying effect on love, hope, and resilience. This phenomenological case study represented lived experiences amongst the members of the Spriggs, Howard, Reece family reunion and their offsprings who were central and necessary in documenting the impact of love, hope, and resilience.

By using phenomenological design, the researcher captured the true and relevant experiences of each participating family member. The two research questions were presented to the participants. Ten participants were randomly selected to participate in the study. The only criterion for engaging in the research was to be a blood member of the Spriggs, Howard, Reece Family. The study was not permissible to spouses married into the family. The ten participants were 5 females and 5 males. Each participant responded to the following: consent form, demographic survey, background questions, CRQ, SQ1, and SQ2 (see Appendices C, D, E, F). The findings of the CRQ, SQ1, and SQ2 depicted that love, hope, and resilience are highly ranked among members of the Spriggs, Howard, Reece Family members. The data analysis findings reflected and resulted in 16n top applied themes, seven co-occurring themes, and the top seven coded documents according to participants. From the 16 top applied codes that emerged from the data analysis, the four that presented in frequency were (1) resilience, (2) love, (3) hope, and (4) food (Atlas.ti). The four emerging codes were ranked as a culmination of quotations from the 10 participants. These findings, as collected through ATLAS.ti, were representative of the impact of geographical location and lineage having no impact on family members. Participating

family members enjoyed family gatherings and believed that being with other family members and showing love was the basis of the family reunion every year. Resilience, having been defined as the foundational theme, depicted the willingness and ability to continue to show growth despite any differences, year after year, even when there may have been some discord. Resilience, as shared by participants, is largely described as the ability of early family members to overcome, therefore, reinforcing the current family members to persevere. Love, being the second established theme, was representative of the love of Christ, unbiased, and always present. Family members responded to love with a majority input on connections and respect for not only family, but also all humans. Hope was established as the third foundational theme amongst Spriggs, Howard, Reece family members. Hope was equated to scripture, having faith in God and having the assurance of a desired outcome. The fourth and final theme that emerged was that of food. Food was related to the responses regarding SQ1 (see Appendix F), the icebreaker. Participants enjoyed and responded with smiles and laughter when answering this question. Two outliers emerged from the research. One participant responded to love with a descriptor of the family reunion and what it means to them when in the presence of family members. Another participant responded to hope with the response of an elder family member (a primary and deceased descendant of the Spriggs, Howard, Reece) and how her life began on a slave ship yet ended in hope for future generations to come.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this research was to show the impact of geographical location and lineage on love, hope, and resilience when attending the Spriggs, Howard, and Reece Family Reunion, year after year. Ten participating members were asked to complete all requirements pertaining to paperwork, including consents, to be accepted for engagement in the study, background questions including demographic, and sub-questions that included what type of dessert they would be if served at a reunion and why and how do they defined love, hope, and resilience. Participants answered the questions on paper and completed an oral interview. The combined results were tallied using ATLAS.ti. This research aimed to explore the dynamics of a family reunion when factors such as love, hope, and resilience are impacted by geographical location and the perceived lineage of family members. Love, resilience, and hope can be lessened when a family member cannot attend a family reunion due to their geographical location, distance from the family reunion, and perceived lineage in the family tree. Several articles and studies have been written about family reunions, but the literature had not reflected the impact of geographical location nor the non-interested or unwanted family members that had previously expressed a sentiment of feeling unaccepted because they were not a member of the perceived main family. When an individual in the family or the family does not feel wanted or accepted, there is an obvious impact or reaction when around other family members (Taylor & Conger, 2017). In this chapter, the researcher details the findings or results of the data analysis, discusses the findings and implications that may have been revealed from past literature and any theories that may have been discussed or applied, and discusses the study's implications including

methodological and practical, the delimitations and limitations of the research are outlined, and recommendations for future research are made.

Summary of Findings

The summary of findings resulted from responses to SQ1 and SQ2 (see Appendix F) in a general but precise format that related to the input of participants, written and orally, as analyzed using ATLAS.ti. As a result, there were 10 documents that detailed 16 top-applied codes with 21 quotations that were identified to verify and support the corresponding codes. Also, the top three codes were shown to co-occur in many of the responses elicited from the participants. SQ1 related to being a dessert served at the reunion and why that dessert was stated. The participants' responses varied in the following: banana pudding 2, sweet potato pie 2, cheesecake 1, pound cake 1, rice pudding 1, and strawberry shortcake 1. Also asked of the participants was SQ2, asking the participants what love, hope, and resilience mean as they relate to the family. Participants' responses related to love included: "Love is unbiased" (Ann), and scriptural related to the love of God and His love for His children. Hope elicited many responses that were similar in nature, such as "the evidence of things not seen" and a step in "hope brings my faith to mind" (Daisy). Resilience, being last on this list, was not the least due to having acquired the largest frequency. Participating members responded to resilience by sharing the following responses: "rebound from undesirable obstacles" (Betty).

The findings do show that when it comes to attending the Spriggs, Howard, Reece Family Reunions, geographical location and lineage have no impact on love for one another in the family, even those other family members have not met; it has no impact on the hope that family members have endured from the early years to the present years into years to come; has no

impact on the resilience of family members due to deaths of older ancestors into the lives of everyone that attends now.

Discussion

The statements in this section of the research show that participating family members of the Spriggs, Howard, Reece Family Reunion have closely related and similar responses, definitions, and experiences when it comes to the challenges that may cause a reduction in the areas of love, hope, and resilience; therefore, abstaining from family reunion planning, attendance, and activities. This was preceded by participants comparing themselves to a dessert being served at the Spriggs, Howard, Reece Family Reunion. The phenomenological study related to the continued need and showing of love, hope, and resilience amongst family members. The lived experiences of these participating family members were exciting and positive when expressing their responses.

The ATLAS.ti results indicate that desserts were popular amongst family members, and the thought of comparing themselves to a dessert was received well by everyone despite the various responses to their chosen dessert. Also, love, hope, and resilience ranked high amongst the family members.

The research showed that desserts (SQ1) were well-liked, being that banana pudding and sweet potato pie were shared the most with a tally of two each, followed by strawberry shortcake, pound cake, rice pudding, and cheesecake. These responses were ranked fourth in ATLAS.ti as food, with a corresponding number of 3. All desserts were not captured under food initially. Responses for food were identified as food or as a metaphor. Research also concluded that the rankings between love, hope, and resilience (SQ2) were as follows: resilience 8, love 7, and hope 7.

Asking the question about desserts was fun and exciting. Just listening to the family members' responses added humor and laughter to the research process. The various desserts mentioned had a definite meaning to the family members Of the Spriggs, Howard, Reece Family Reunion. Banana pudding was described as “going down easy” (Ann) and having “several different ingredients in it, and the family is made up of different kinds of people, different personalities, and even different races” (Betty). Sweet Potato Pie was described as “multipurpose” (Jeremy) and as being served after a meal means “we have had everything else...like me, I am coming in late” (Tom). Strawberry shortcake was compared to the family as “diversity of different types of textures” (Kate). “Pound cake was described as something “most people like” (Jeff). Rice pudding was compared to the family as “very nutritious, easy to make” (Sam). And lastly, the descriptor of the family for cheesecake was “extremely versatile and able to be finetuned to most people’s liking” (Daisy).

ATLAS.ti showed surprising results to this researcher on love, hope, and resilience. Surprisingly, resilience (8) was higher than love (7) and hope (7) by a very slim margin. Resilience in the Spriggs, Howard Reece Family Reunion has always been strong and has endured for many years. There was a story told of an earlier (deceased) descendant “Eliza Stanley,” in the response given by Jeremy, relating to resilience. Love was discussed by family members of Spriggs, Howard, Reece as a necessary part and not being able to come together as one, such as we do, without it. Love was shared as a necessity and requirement of us given by God as His children. Hope which was strongly identified as the “essence of things not seen” (Ann); “we hope for things not seen” (Kate); “foundation” (Betty); “to know of God” (Sally).

Empirical Literature

Family reunions have been part of the African American heritage for generations and continue today. Despite being a common foundation for family and relationships, it has remained relatively unexplored. The under-researched nature of the topic, given its impact on resilience, love, and hope, is one motivation that compelled this researcher to examine the different underlying issues.

Few studies that have examined the importance of family reunions find that there are cultural, historical, social, and personal implications to individuals (Walsh, 2003). Understanding how reunions impact African Americans' coping abilities may contribute to the literature on how best to utilize these family gatherings to respond to personal and social issues. Furthermore, resilience is a necessary tool for health and well-being, as explained by Bennett and Windle (2015).

The study may contribute to research in relatively unexplored areas. Despite family reunions being an important part of the cultural and historical background of African American communities, they remain deeply misunderstood. Family reunions serve many functions, including preserving a culture passed down generations by word of mouth through storytelling, songs, and narratives (Scharp, 2013). The history through the years of slavery, segregation, and the civil rights movement is a significant reminder for the African American community of not only the struggles that they have endured, but also the progress that has been made and what could be done in the future (Diakhaté, 2021). Hearing these stories about past struggles can serve as a symbol of hope and, thus, contribute to resilience to build a better future.

However, simple family interconnectedness through the generations strengthens social bonds and can serve immediate and personal purposes of well-being in the community. Elderly

members can share their experiences within families and relationships that may serve as a lesson for the younger generations (McCoy, 2011). Therefore, family reunions serve both personal and short-term goals that have a more profound and long-term impact on the whole community, including future generations. This study diverged from previous research in that it was not depicting quantities but a variation of qualities, specifically love, hope, and resiliency. This study contributes to a family reunion's core principles and/or foundations by shedding new light on the true essence of gathering, year after year, and how it should be seen and viewed.

Theoretical Literature

Once a year, families gather at a specific location to unite and share past events in their lives. Generally, “family reunions are closed events” (Sutherland, 2012). However, there are always friends and friends of friends that attend the reunions because of past childhood friendships, events, or jobs that preceded the event. These families have known each other throughout their lives and look forward to coming together to celebrate family, love, the hope that continues to reside within, and the resiliency of continuing each year despite grievances and deaths that have occurred in the previous year. Like family members unable to attend a family reunion every year or two, participating members have had one to several missed opportunities to reconnect with their families. Listening to the stories of lost connections and unifications is heartbreaking at times. However, connecting to God allows people to transcend daily in building relationships, “hope,” and self-respect (Dilworth-Anderson et al., 2007, p. 357). This study connected those aspects by exploring how family reunions serve as gatherings for families sharing blood ties and close relations, thus, promoting resilience, love and hope of individual family members while simultaneously serving deeper purposes of family resilience, progression in love, and continued hope for future generations of the Spriggs, Howard, Reece families and all

Americans. Upcoming generations risk cultural and historical amnesia due to lack of teaching and education by elders, which may affect the progress made in fighting for justice and equal opportunity. Bengtson et al. (2002) noted that throughout recorded history, the coming age of a new generation always had a conflict between elders and youth as they attempted to negotiate a balance between continuity and change, stability, and innovation over time. They further noted that individual characters who act as enablers of social order -their values, dreams, and self-concepts – were generated and kept as the family socialized through inheritance, influence, and transmission across generations.

Stemming from days of slavery, African American families have made the fundamental aspect of calling the family together the foundation of a reunion (Copeland, 2018). For this reason, gathering family members is extremely critical despite the geographical distance and perceived lineage (Morial, 2003). This is when it can be stated that a family member has decided to be an active participant in the family reunion (Murry, 2019).

Family reunions are beautiful events to participate in. It is a beautiful experience when family members can embrace to reflect upon the past (Coffelt, 2018). This research study confirms the importance of family members coming together as much as they can, preferably each year, to show honor and respect not only to the elders in the family but to everyone as a part of the bloodline. In saying that, this research did diverge from previous studies in that there have been very few recent studies depicting a live family reunion and its ongoing respect for one another. This study focused on the values of love, hope, and resiliency purposefully to depict the true nature of the Spriggs, Howard, Reece Family Reunion. This research shed light on the research of family experiences in a live situation and how the essence of love, hope, and resilience are the epitome of a family reunion.

Theoretical Implications

Few studies that have examined the importance of family reunions find that there are cultural, historical, social, and personal implications to individuals (Walsh, 2003). Understanding how reunions impact African Americans' coping abilities may contribute to the literature on how best to utilize these family gatherings to respond to personal and social issues.

The importance of researching the reduction in the areas of love, hope, and resilience has been made prevalent in this research by showing and bringing to light that when strong affections such as love and hope exist, there is room for nothing but resilience. Most importantly, geographical location and lineage do not reduce love, hope, and resilience but are evident in maintaining and sustaining according to research results. This research also shows that the family members participating in the study have a love of God that compares to no other. Spriggs, Howard, Reece family members thirst for hope through Jesus Christ and believe in family values. Most significantly, this research draws attention to the importance of holding family reunions, even in difficult times.

Empirical Implications

Family members in the African American community may be compelled to attend family reunions to strengthen their family connections and renew their sense of hope and resilience. Understanding what factors motivate family reunions and what they contribute to individual family members becomes a crucial issue.

Family reunions have been part of the African American heritage for generations and continue today. Despite being a common foundation for family and relationships, it has remained relatively unexplored. The under-researched nature of the topic, given its impact on resilience,

love, and hope, is one motivation that compelled this researcher to examine the different underlying issues.

The research depicted in this study shows that love, hope, and resilience bear no challenges to abstaining from family reunion planning, attendance, and activities. The research shows the importance of love, hope, and resilience amongst family members, as depicted by the analysis of ATLAS.ti. This research appears to show some evidence of Christian love and love of God, as well as family members in the Spriggs, Howard, Reece Family.

Practical Implications

The research has practical implications for counselors, administrators, policymakers, teachers, and parents. Individuals in these prospective roles should be careful not to deny African Americans the opportunity to be in the presence of family members during a scheduled family reunion. As stated in the Overview section, Family members in the African American community may be compelled to attend family reunions to strengthen their family connection and renew their sense of hope and resilience...Family reunions have been part of the African American heritage for generations.

Delimitations

Delimitations of this study were necessary due to the volume of responses gathered initially. At the onset of this research, there were seven sub-questions to be answered. Realizing that many of the questions held no true bearing on the research of love, hope, and resilience, these questions were removed. Conducting a qualitative study did not restrict the responses of the participating members of Spriggs, Howard, Reece Family Reunion. The number of participating family members was reduced from 16, initially, to 10 due to a lack of participants volunteering and completing all aspects of the requirements for the research. The time frame to

acquire 10 family members was extended by approximately one year. Originally, the time frame was predicted to be three to four months at the longest. Participants were asked to be blood members of the family rather than include spouses.

Limitations

The limitations related to this research were several. These limitations have a possibility of being controllable, but for this study, they could not be controlled. The limitations are as follows but are in no order of importance. A sample size of 10 participants completed the consent forms and other requirements. A family reunion has numerous individuals attending; to acquire a more accurate analysis, this researcher believed a representative of each attending family should participate. The research for this study included members from various families participating in the Spriggs, Howard, Reece Family Reunion. However, not every family had a willing and consenting participant. There were participating family members from the same family. For example, in one family two of three individuals consenting to take part in the research. A second limitation was that of preparation. A setup at the intended family reunion should have been readily available with a table, a minimum of 2 chairs, with one of the chairs being for the researcher and the other for, at minimum, the participating family member. All paperwork and equipment (consents, questionnaires, pens, recorder) should be at the table. At the time of this research, the researcher was meeting and greeting family members as they approached to inquire about interest in participating.

Recommendations for Future Research

The study may contribute to research in relatively unexplored areas. Despite family reunions being an important part of the cultural and historical background of African American communities, they remain deeply misunderstood. Family reunions serve many functions,

including preserving a culture passed down generations by word of mouth through storytelling, songs, and narratives (Scharp, 2013). The history through the years of slavery, segregation, and the civil rights movement is a significant reminder for the African American community of not only the struggles that they have endured, but also the progress that has been made and what could be done in the future (Diakhaté, 2021). Hearing these stories about past struggles can serve as a symbol of hope and, thus, contribute to resilience to build a better future.

The upcoming generation risks cultural and historical amnesia due to lack of teaching and education by elders, which may affect the progress made in fighting for justice and equal opportunity. However, simple family interconnectedness through the generations strengthens social bonds and can serve immediate and personal purposes of well-being in the community. Elderly members can help share their experiences within families and relationships that can serve as a lesson for the younger generations (McCoy, 2011). Therefore, family reunions serve both personal and short-term goals that have a more profound and long-term impact on the community.

Research on families attending a reunion has not been conducted using the geographical location of residence of family members in reference to the locations of the family reunions. Also, important and relative to future prospects and further studies in this area is the perceived lineages that family members have internally maintained and a qualitative design is strongly urged. The researcher for this study aspires to be a contributing family member in the African American community that studies and builds in the role of advocating for the family members that feel left out due to geographical location or their 'perceived' position in lineage (Zulu, 2018).

Summary

This research aimed to understand the factors that affect family reunions such as geographical distance and lineage, and how these factors impact the outcomes of family reunions like love, hope, and resilience. The purpose of the case study was to describe the Spriggs, Howard, Reece Reunion's nature and the enduring relationships that evolve and continue. For this case study, the geographical location and lineage positions were generally defined as emerging factors that may contribute to love, hope, and resilience for family members during the reunion. A qualitative methodology helped to explore these relationships. The research design that was used for this study was case theory (Yun & Lehto, 2009), which explored the cases of multiple individuals from various families that attend the reunion and experience relational emotions such as love, hope, and resilience among family members that are geographically separated, who question their position of lineage in the family amongst the family members at each reunion.

The research yielded 16 themes, as listed in Table 7. Of these 16 themes, only four were used for the primary purpose of this research study: “Resilience”, “Love”, “Hope”, and “Food” (which was the theme utilized for the desserts). Desserts were also coded as outliers under other themes.

The research found that the geographical locations of family members have no overall impact on the measure of love, hope, and resilience held or portrayed by members of the Spriggs, Howard, Reece Family members before, during, or after a family reunion. The research also found that the overall responses related to love, hope, and resilience had no impact (reduced or increased) on lineage or ‘perceived’ lineage amongst participating members of the Spriggs, Howard, Reece Family members.

When beginning this research, the researcher initially believed that hope would prevail as the top coded theme for the research. The researcher was surprised to see that the resilience of the participating family members topped out over love and hope. Resilience is, not surprisingly, fueled by feelings of hope and love (Black & Lobo, 2008). Love and hope tying for a second position appears prominent amongst the family members, with desserts being served farther down the quota list. One of the most important takeaways was the results of the desserts being served at the reunion analyzed as a few other codes other than food. Although at the gathering of family desserts were being served as necessary elements to the family reunion, it was a fun and humorous occasion to listen to these responses. Spriggs, Howard, Reece Family members are dessert lovers and do not mind bringing their A dessert to be served to others.

References

- Abel, S. (2021). Linked descendants: Genetic-genealogical practices and the refusal of ignorance around slavery. *Science, Technology, & Human Values*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01622439211021656>
- Addai, C. A. S. S. A. N. D. R. A. (2019). *"It was bittersweet": Young people's experience of having undergone the refugee family reunion process in the UK* (Doctoral dissertation, University of East London). <https://repository.uel.ac.uk/item/874xq>
- Alaameri, L. (2021). *Family reunions in Austria and Germany: EU-legislation as only common ground?* (Doctoral dissertation, Universität Linz).
- Ambrosini, M. (2015). Parenting from a distance and process of family reunification: A research on the Italian Case. *Ethnicities*, 15(3), p. 440–459.
<https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1468796814547059>
- Amineh, R. J., & Asl, H. D. (2015). Review of constructivism and social constructivism. *Journal of Social Sciences, Literature and Languages*, 1(1), 9-16. <https://bit.ly/3rEFjgi>
- Andrea, G. H., Selma, C., Shuntay, Z. T., Melvin, H., & Anne, F. (2019). Social capital, parenting, and African American Families. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 28, 547–559. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-018-1282-2>
- Assari, S. (2019). Race, education attainment, and happiness in the United States. *International Journal of Epidemiologic Research*, 6(2), 76–82. <https://doi.org/10.15171/ijer.2019.14>
- Assari, S., Thomas, A., Caldwell, C. H., & Mincy, R. B. (2017). Blacks' diminished health return of family structure and socioeconomic status: 15 years of follow-up of a national urban sample of youth. *Journal of Urban Health*, 95(1), 21-35.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-017-0217-3>

ATLAS.ti Scientific Software Development GmbH [ATLAS.ti 23 Windows].

(2023). <https://atlasti.com/>

Barton, A. W., Beach, S. R., Lavner, J. A., Bryant, C. M., Kogan, S. M., & Brody, G. H. (2017).

Is communication a mechanism of relationship education effects among rural African Americans? *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 79(5), 1450-1461.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12416>

Bateman, C. (2016). The lineages of play. *Journal of Playwork Practice*, 3(2), 95-106.

Baxter, P., & Rideout, L. (2006). Decision making of 2nd-year baccalaureate nursing students.

Journal of Nursing Education, 45(4), 121-128. <https://doi.org/10.3928/01484834-20060401-05>

Bellani, L., Hager, A., & Maurer, S. (2021). *In brief... The long shadow of slavery* (No. 600).

Centre for Economic Performance, LSE.

<https://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/cp600.pdf>

Bengtson, V. L., Roberts, R. E., Biblarz, T. J., & Roberts, R. E. (2002). *How families still*

matter: A longitudinal study of youth in two generations. Cambridge University Press.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272159311_How_Families_Still_Matter_A_Longitudinal_Study_of_Youth_in_Two_Generations

Bennett, K. M., & Windle, G. (2015). The importance of not only individual, but also

community and society factors in resilience in later life. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*,

38, 79. <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1017/S0140525X14001459>

Bernardi, L. (2011). A mixed-methods social networks study design for research on transnational

families. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 73(4), pp. 788-803.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2011.00845.x>

- Bertocchi, G., & Dimico, A. (2020). *Bitter sugar: Slavery and the black family*. CEPR Discussion Paper No. DP14837, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3628157>
- Bertolani, B., Rinaldini, M., & Tognetti Bordogna, M. (2014). Combining civic stratification and transnational approaches for reunited families: The case of Moroccans, Indians, and Pakistanis in Reggio Emilia. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 40(9), 1470-1487. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1080/1369183X.2013.868302>
- Birkland, T. A. (2016). Conceptualizing resilience. *Politics and Governance*, 4(4), 117. <https://repository.lib.ncsu.edu/handle/1840.20/doi.org/10.17645/pag.v4i4.823>
- Black, K., & Lobo, M. (2008). A conceptual review of family resilience factors. *Journal of Family Nursing*, 14(1), 33-55. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1074840707312237>
- Boss, P. (1999). *Ambiguous loss: Learning to live with unresolved grief*. Harvard University Press. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1111/famp.12130>
- Bowman, M. (2015). Completing an incomplete history: The African American narrative in civil war Helena. *Race, Gender & Class*, 22(1-2), 236-247.
- Boyd-Franklin, N. (2013). *Black families in therapy: Understanding the African American experience*. Guilford Publications.
- Campbell, D. (1975). Degrees of freedom and the case study. *Comparative Political Studies*, 8, 178-185. Centre for Economic Performance, LSE. <https://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/cp600.pdf>
- Causey, S. T., Livingston, J., & High, B. (2015). Family structure, racial socialization, perceived parental involvement, and social support as predictors of self-esteem in African American college students. *Journal of Black Studies*, 46(7), 655-677. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0021934715592601>

Chan, K. (2013). Our DNA family reunion. *Public Health*, 127(11), 984-986.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2013.09.010>

Cimprich, V. (2012). The Black family. *African American Review*, 45(3), 440-441.

<https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A342678992/AONE?u=anon~c65b1494&sid=googleScholar&xid=a3b728d9>

Coffelt, T. A. (2018). A paragon of family ritual: The Zimmerman family reunion. *Communication Studies*, 69(2), 161-179.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10510974.2018.1425215>

Connelly, L. M. (2016). Trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Medsurg Nursing*, 25(6), 435.

<https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1849700459/fulltextPDF/A900CC40984E46A7PQ/1?accountid=12085>

Cooper, G. (2014). Cultural divisions: The rivalry between family and chancery. *Trusts & Trustees*, 20(8), 815-819. <https://doi.org/10.1093/tandt/ttu146>

Copeland, R. W. (2018). Ensuring the continuity of the African-American family reunion by organizing a nonprofit Entity. *Western Journal of Black Studies*, 42.

<https://www.proquest.com/openview/6a372ee8ab97dfa1d34bdeedd99aebf1/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=47709>

Correa-Velez, I., Gifford, S. M., & McMichael, C. (2015). The persistence of predictors of wellbeing among refugee youth eight years after resettlement in Melbourne, Australia. *Social Science & Medicine*, 142, 163-168. <https://www-sciencedirect-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/science/article/pii/S0277953615300691?via%3Dihub>

- Creswell, J. W., Hanson, W. E., Plano, C., Vicki, L., & Morales, A. (2007). Qualitative research designs: Selection and implementation. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 35(2), 236-264.
<https://journals-sagepub-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/doi/abs/10.1177/0011000006287390>
- Dacosta, K. M. (2006). Off the chitlin circuit: Madea's family reunion (Lionsgate, 2006), Directed by Tyler Perry. *Contexts*, 5(4), 71-73.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1525/ctx.2006.5.4.71>
- Damiano, S. T. (2017). Writing women's history through the revolution: Family finances, letter writing, and conceptions of marriage. *William & Mary Quarterly*, 74(4), 697-728.
<https://doi.org/10.5309/willmaryquar.74.4.0697>
- Das, M., Valk, H., & Merz, E. (2016). Mothers' mobility after separation: Do grandmothers matter. *Population, Space and Place*, 20(2), 1-14. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1002/psp.2010>
- Daughtery, C. (2016). An exercise in rigor: A review of Robert K. Yin's case study research design and methods. *The Qualitative Report: An Online Journal Dedicated to Qualitative Research Since 1990*. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2009.2842>
- de Schweinitz, R. (2020). "Loving hearts" and "brave ones": Slavery, family, and the problem of freedom in antebellum America. *Slavery & Abolition*, 41(3), 479-504.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0144039X.2020.1744264>
- Deterding, N. M., & Waters, M. C. (2021). Flexible coding of in-depth interviews: A twenty-first-century approach. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 50(2), 708-739.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124118799377>
- Diakhaté, B. (2021). The evil of slavery and master-slave relationships in Toni Morrison's beloved (1988). <https://doi10.36349/easjhcs.2021.v030i01.003>

- Dickson, L. (1993). The future of marriage and family in Black America. *Journal of Black Studies*, 23(4), 472-491. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002193479302300403>
- Dilworth-Anderson, P., Boswell, G., & Cohen, M. D. (2007). Spiritual and religious coping values and beliefs among African American caregivers: A qualitative study. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, 26(4), 355-369. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0733464807302669>
- Doody, O., & Noonan, M. (2013). Preparing and conducting interviews to collect data. *Nurse Researcher*, 20(5). <https://doi.org/10.7748/nr2013.05.20.5.28.e327>
- Dreby, J. (2015). U.S. immigration policy and family separation: The consequences for children's well-being. *Social Science and Medicine*, 132, pp. 245-251. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S027795361400567X?via%3Dihub>
- Edge, T. (2017). Who do you think you are? Examining the African-American experience in slavery and freedom through family history television. *The Journal of American Culture*, 40(4), 341-354. <https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1976404712?pq-origsite=summon>
- Fang, M. L., Sixsmith, J., Sinclair, S., & Horst, G. (2016). A knowledge synthesis of culturally- and spiritually-sensitive end-of-life care: Findings from a scoping review. *BMC Geriatrics*, 16(1), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-016-0282-6>
- Fingerman, K. L., Pitzer, L. M., Chan, W., Birditt, K., Franks, M. M., & Zarit, S. (2011). Who gets what and why? Help middle-aged adults provide to parents and grown children. *Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 66(1), 87-98. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbq009>

- Firebaugh, G., & Farrell, C. R. (2015). Still large but narrowing: The sizable decline in racial neighborhood inequality in metropolitan America, 1980–2010. *Demography*, 53(1), 139-164. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-015-0447-5>
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(2), 219-245. <https://journals-sagepub-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/doi/abs/10.1177/1077800405284363>
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2011). Case study. *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, 163-203.
- Fosnot, C. T. (2013). *Constructivism: Theory, perspectives, and practice*. Teachers College Press.
- Georgas, J. (2003). Family: Variations and changes across cultures. In W. J. Lonner, D. L. Dinnel, S. A. Hayes, & D. N. Sattler (Eds.), *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture (Unit 13, Chapter 3)*, (<http://www.wvu.edu/~culture>), Center for Cross-Cultural Research, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington USA.
- Georgas, J., Mylonas, K., Bafiti, T., Poortinga, Y. H., Christakopoulou, S., Kagitcibasi, C., Kwak, K., Ataca, B., Berry, J., Orung, S., Sunar, D., Charalambous, N., Goodwin, R., Wang, W., Angleitner, A., Stepanikova, I., Pick, S., Givaudan, M., Zhuravliova-Gionis, I., & Konantambigi, R. (2001). Functional relationships in the nuclear and extended family: A 16-culture study. *International Journal of Psychology*, 36(5), 289-300. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00207590143000045>

- Georgas, J. E., Berry, J. W., Van de Vijver, F. J., Kağıtçıbaşı, Ç. E., & Poortinga, Y. H. (2006). *Families across cultures: A 30-nation psychological study*. Cambridge University Press.
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2247450/?tool=pmcentrez&report=abstract>
- Gindling, T. H., & Poggio, S. (2012). Family separation and reunification as a factor in the educational success of immigrant children. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 38(7), 1155-1173. <https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/doi/full/10.1080/1369183X.2012.681458>
- Goertzen, C. (2016). Freedom songs: Helping Black activists, Black residents, and White volunteers work together in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, during the Summer of 1964. *Black Music Research Journal*, 36(1), 59-85. <https://doi.org/10.5406/blacmusiresej.36.1.0059>
- Grimmelmann, J. (2009). Facebook and the social dynamics of privacy. *Iowa Law Review*, 95(4), 1-52.
- <https://ciberdemocracia.victorsampedro.com/recursos/textosrelevantes/facebook.pdf>
- Hackstaff, K. B. (2010). Family genealogy: A sociological imagination reveals intersectional relations. *Sociology Compass*, 4(8), 658-672.
- <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2010.00307.x>
- Hamel, J., Dufor, S., & Fortin, D. (1993). *Case study methods*.
- Harrison, H., Birks, M., Franklin, R., & Mills, J. (2017). Case study research: Foundations and methodological orientations. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 18(1). <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs1701195>

- Hegi, K. E., & Bergner, R. M. (2010). What is love? An empirically-based essentialist account. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 27(5), 620-636.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0265407510369605>
- Henderson, A. K. (2016). Jesus didn't teach us to juggle: Religious involvement, work-family conflict, and life satisfaction among African Americans. *Journal of Family Issues*, 37(1), 1558-1584. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0192513X14561520>
- Hey, E. (2018). The universal declaration of human rights in "The Anthropocene". *AJIL Unbound*, 112, 350-354. <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1017/aju.2018.87>
- Higgins, L., & Hamilton, K. (2014). Faith, hope and love: Doing family through consuming. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0267257X.2014.929162>
- Hill, R. B. (2003). *The strengths of Black families*. University Press of America.
- Hitchner, S., Schelhas, J., & Gaither, C. J. (2017). "A privilege and a challenge": Valuation of heirs' property by African American landowners and implications for forest management in the Southeastern US. *Small-scale Forestry*, 16(3), 395-417.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11842-017-9362-5>
- Hodge, D. R., & Williams, T. R. (2002). Assessing African American spirituality with spiritual ecomaps. *Families in Society*, 83(5), 585-595. <https://doi.org/10.1606/1044-3894.57>
- Hoeve, C. D. (2018). Finding a place for genealogy and family history in the digital humanities. *Digital Library Perspectives*, 34(3), 215-226. <https://doi.org/10.1108/DLP-11-2017-0044>
- Horner, G. (2017). Resilience. *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*, 31(3), 384-390.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pedhc.2016.09.005>

- Hubbard, T., & Adams, B. A. (2017). *Birth of a family*. National film board of Canada.
<https://www.cbc.ca/cbcdocspov/episodes/birth-of-a-family>
- Imber-Black, E. (2020). Rituals in the time of COVID-19: Imagination, responsiveness, and the human spirit. *Family Process*, 59(3), 912–921. <https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12581>
- Jackson, M. (2021). The enslaved people and the Tylers too: Why it is imperative to discuss slavery in public history". *Undergraduate Honors Theses*. Paper 1684.
<https://scholarworks.wm.edu/honorstheses/1684>
- Jackson, S. (1995). Love: Complicity, resistance and change. *Romance Revisited*, 49.
<https://bit.ly/3SOM4Is>
- Jarrett, R. L., Bahar, O. S., & Kersh, R. T. (2014). "When we do sit down together". *Journal of Family Issues*, 37(11), 1483-1513. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513x14547417>
- Johansson, R. (2003). Keynote speech at the international conference "methodologies in housing research". Stockholm: Royal institute of technology in cooperation with the international association of people–environment studies. http://www.psyking.net/htmlobj-3839/case_study_methodology-_rolf_johansson_ver_2.pdf
- Johnson, P., & Stoll, K. (2013). Impact of remittances on refugees' lives in Canada: Views of Sudanese and Vietnamese leaders and settlement counsellors. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, 29(1), 53-64.
<https://refuge.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/refuge/article/view/37506>
- Jones, Y. V. (1980). Kinship affiliation through time: Black homecomings and family reunions in a North Carolina County. *Ethnohistory*, 27(1), 49-66. <https://doi.org/10.2307/481627>

- Kellas, J. K., Castle, K., Johnson, A., & Cohen, M. (2017). Communicatively constructing the bright and dark sides of hope: Family caregivers' experiences during end of life cancer care. *Behavioral Sciences*, 7(4), 33. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs7020033>
- Kluin, J. Y., & Lehto, X. Y. (2012). Measuring family reunion travel motivations. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(2), 820-841. <https://www-sciencedirect-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/science/article/pii/S0160738311001563?via%3Dihub>
- Knopf, T. A. (2017). *Rumors, race and riots*. Routledge.
- Krause, N. (2015). Assessing the relationships among race, religion, humility, and self-forgiveness: A longitudinal investigation. *Advances in Life Course Research*, 24, 66-74. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.alcr.2015.02.003>
- Kretsedemas, P. (2017). Genealogy: Inaugural editorial. *Genealogy*, 1(1). <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/329f/dcf6d6dcd5347ff2dc13277adde0b964b7859.pdf>
- Krobb, F. (2014). Family reunions in German adventure literature on Africa of the 1880S –a vision for colonial intervention: Karl Burmann and Karl May. *German Life and Letters*, 67(3), 301-319. <https://doi.org/10.1111/glal.12044>
- Latunde, Y., & Clark-Louque, A. (2016). Untapped resources: Black parent engagement that contributes to learning. *The Journal of Negro Education; Washington*, 85(1), 72-81. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7709/jnegroeducation.85.1.0072>
- Lauterpacht, H. (1948). The universal declaration of human rights. *Brit. YB Int'l L.*, 25, 354.
- Lavanya, K., & Sivasankari, R. (2020). Blacks' struggles after slavery in Chester Himes' the third generation. *European Journal of Molecular & Clinical Medicine*, 7(11), 1744-1746. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1080/13528165.2018.1512210>

- Lewis, S. (2020). Cultural deprivation and slavery. 1619-1865. In *African American Art and Artists* (pp. 7-22). Berkeley: University of California Press. <https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520354876-006>
- Li, M. (2018). Maintaining ties and reaffirming unity: Family rituals in the age of migration. *Journal of Family Communication*, 18(4), 286-301. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15267431.2018.1475391>
- Lin, K. (2016). Integrating ethical guidelines and situated ethics for researching social-media-based interactions: Lessons from a virtual ethnographic case study with Chinese youth. *Journal of Information Ethics*, 25(1), 114-131, 150. <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fscholarly-journals%2Fintegrating-ethical-guidelines-situated-ethics%2Fdocview%2F1806969411%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>
- Littlejohn-Blake, S. M., & Darling, C. A. (1993). Understanding the strengths of African American families. *Journal of Black Studies*, 23(4), 460-471. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002193479302300402>
- Lovato-Hermann, K. (2017). Crossing the border to find home: A gendered perspective on the separation and reunification experiences of Mexican immigrant young adults in the United States. *International Social Work*, 60(2), 379-393. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1177%2F0020872815611197>
- Mackensie, M., & Jordan, S. (2019). Family communication and messages about race and identity in Black families in the United States. *Journal of Family Communication*, 19(4), 329-347. <https://doi:10.1080/15267431.2019.1593170>

- Malaquias, S., Crespo, C., & Francisco, R. (2014). How do adolescents benefit from family rituals? Links to social connectedness, depression and anxiety. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 24(10), 3009-3017. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-014-0104-4>
- Mann, G. (2004). Separated children. *Children and youth on the front line: Ethnography, armed conflict and displacement*, 14, 3. <https://bit.ly/3CJr3t7>
- Marbley, A. F., & Rouson, L. (2013). Indigenous systems within the African-American community: Stories, studies, & statistics of the resiliency of the African-American family. *Multicultural Education*, 20(3-4), 81+. https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A411196914/BIC?u=vic_liberty&sid=summon&xid=0fd989f6
- Marsden, R. (2018). *Voices of strength and pain: Impacts of separation, loss and trauma on health and wellbeing of reuniting refugee families*. British Red Cross.
- Marsden, R., & Harris, C. (2015). *We Started Life Again: Integration experiences of refugee families reuniting in Glasgow*. British Red Cross. <http://www.migrationscotland.org.uk/marsden-ruth-harris-catherine-2015-%E2%80%9Cwe-started-life-again%E2%80%9D-integration-experiences-refugee-families>
- Mason, J., & Tipper, B. (2008). Being related: How children define and create kinship. *Childhood*, 15(4), 441-460. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568208097201>
- Mazzucato, V., & Schans, D. (2011). Transnational families and the well-being of children: Conceptual and methodological challenges. *Journal of Marriage and The Family*, 73(4), pp. 704-712. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2011.00840.x>

- McCleary, J. S., & Wieling, E. (2017). Forced displacement and alcohol use in two Karen refugee communities: A comparative qualitative study. *British Journal of Social Work*, 47(4), 1186-1204. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcw076>
- McCoy, R. (2011). African American elders, cultural traditions, and the family reunion. *Generations*, 35(3), 16-21. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26555789?pq-origsite=summon>
- McFarlane, W. (2021). The wet frontier of slavery: Plantation slavery and freedom on Texas' Trinity River. *Slavery & Abolition*, 1-22. <https://www.tandfonline.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/doi/full/10.1080/0144039X.2021.1887705>
- McKay, D. (2005). Migration and the sensuous geographies of re-emplacement in the Philippines. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 26(1-2), 75-91. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07256860500074052>
- McNatt, Z., Boothby, N. G., Al-Shannaq, H., Chandler, H., Freels, P., Mahmoud, A., Majdalini, N., & Zebib, L. (2018). Impact of separation on refugee families: Syrian refugees in Jordan. <https://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/impact-separation-refugee-families-syrian-refugees-jordan>
- Meng, L. (2018). Maintaining ties and reaffirming unity: Family rituals in the age of migration. *Journal of Family Communication*, 18(4), 286-301. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15267431.2018.14753911>
- Merriam, S. B. (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Jossey-Bass.

- Miller, M. C. (2018). Destroyed by slavery? Slavery and African American family formation following emancipation. *Demography*, 55, 1587–1609. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-018-0711-6>
- Mimura, Y. (2007). Housing cost burden, poverty status, and economic hardship among low-income families. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, 29(1), 152-165. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10834-007-9085-4>
- Minnear, M., & Soliz, J. (2019). Family communication and messages about race and identity in Black families in the United States. *Journal of Family Communication*, 19(4), 329-347. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15267431.2019.1593170>
- Morial, M. H. (2003). Black America's family matters. *Black America's Family Matters*, 9-12. <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F223590676%3Faccountid%3D12085>
- Murdock, G. P. (1965). *Culture and society: Twenty-four essays*. University of Pittsburgh Pre. <https://doi:10.1525/aa.1966.68.6.02a00270>
- Murry, V. M. (2019). Healthy African American families in the 21st century: Navigating opportunities and transcending adversities. *Family Relations*, 68(3), 342-357. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1111/fare.12363>
- National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. (1979). *The Belmont report: Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/belmont-report/read-the-belmont-report/index.html>

- Nguyen, A. W., Chatters, L. M., & Taylor, R. J. (2016). African American extended family and church-based social network typologies. *Family Relations*, 65(5), 701-715.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12218>
- Nichols, W. C. (2013). Roads to understanding family resilience: 1920s to the twenty-first century. In D. S. Becvar (Ed.), *Handbook of family resilience* (pp. 3–16). Springer Science + Business Media. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-3917-2_1
- Oh, S., & Chang, S. J. (2014). Concept analysis: Family resilience. *Open Journal of Nursing*, 4(13), 980. https://file.scirp.org/Html/10-1440384_52692.htm
- Olson, D. H. (2000). Circumplex model of marital and family systems. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 22(2), 144-167. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1111/1467-6427.00144>
- Park, J. (2020). Voices from war's legacies: Reconciliation and violence in inter-Korean family reunions. *Anthropology and Humanism*, 45(1), pp. 25-42.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/anhu.12260>
- Pasura, D., & Christou, A. (2017). Theorizing Black (African) transnational masculinities. *Men and Masculinities*, 21(4), 521-546. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X17694992>
- Perrone, G. (2019). Back into the days of slavery: Freedom, citizenship, and the Black family in the reconstruction-era courtroom. *Law and History Review*, 37(1), 125-161.
<https://doi:10.1017/S0738248018000433>
- Pindyck, M. (2013). To the girl who mistakes family for reunion, and: If Leonardo. *Prairie Schooner*, 87(1), 48-49. <https://doi.org/10.1353/psg.2013.0024>
- Pratt, J. W., & Zeckhauser, R. J. (1990). The fair and efficient division of the Winsor family silver. *Management Science*, 36(11), 1293-1301.
<https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.36.11.1293>

- Price, J. (2014). Resilience! *Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities*, 1(1).
<https://doi.org/10.5250/resilience.1.1.16>
- Pryor, L. A. (2020). The mask. *Nephrology Nursing Journal*, 47(6), 509-501.
<https://doi.org/10.37526/1526-744X.2020.47.6.509>
- Puig, M. E. (2002). The adultification of refugee children: Implications for cross-cultural social work practice. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 5(3-4), 85-95.
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1300/J137v05n03_05
- Ramirez, M., Skrbish, Z., & Emmison, M. (2007). Transnational family reunions as lived experience: Narrating a Salvadoran autoethnography. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 14(4), 411-431.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10702890701578456>
- Range, B., Gutierrez, D., Gamboni, C., Hough, N. A., & Wojciak, A. (2017). Mass trauma in the African American community: Using multiculturalism to build resilient systems. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 40(3), 284-298. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10591-017-9449-3>
- Redd, L. N. (1988). Telecommunication, economics, and Black families in America. *Journal of Black Studies*, 19(1), 111-123. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002193478801900109>
- Reisenauer, E. (2018). Distant relationships in transnational families and kinship networks: The case of Turkish migrants in Germany. In *Making Multicultural Families in Europe* (pp. 109-126). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-59755-3_7
- Revell, M. A., & Mcghee, M. N. (2012). Evolution of the African American family. *International Journal of Childbirth Education*, 27(4). <https://bit.ly/3RVDias>

- Reynolds, T., & Zontini, E. (2014). Bringing transnational families from the margins to the center of family studies in Britain. *Families, Relationships and Societies*, 3(2), pp. 251-268. <https://doi:10.1332/204674314X14008543149532>
- Riggs, S. A., & Riggs, D. S. (2011). Risk and resilience in military families experiencing deployment: The role of the family attachment network. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 25(5), pp. 675-687. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21875201/>
- Roberts, R. E. (2020). Qualitative interview questions: Guidance for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 25(9), 3185-3203. <https://bit.ly/3T43Qak>
- Roberts, S. B., & Dunbar, R. I. (2015). Managing relationship decay. *Human Nature*, 26(4), 426-450. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12110-015-9242-7>
- Robin, L. J., Ozge, S. B., & Renique, T. K. (2016). When we do sit down together: Family meal times in low income African American Families with preschoolers. *Journal of Family Issues*, 37(11), 1483-1513. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0192513X14547417>
- Safdar, N., Abbo, L. M., Knobloch, M. J., & Seo, S. K. (2016). Research methods in healthcare epidemiology: Survey and qualitative research. *Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology*, 37(11), 1272–1277. <http://doi.org/10.1017/ice.2016.171>
- Saltzman, W. R., Pynoos, R. S., Lester, P., Layne, C. M., & Beardslee, W. R. (2013). Enhancing family resilience through family narrative co-construction. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 16(3), 294-310. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10567-013-0142-2>

- Sandberg, J., & Alvesson, M. (2011). Ways of constructing research questions: Gap-spotting or problematization? *Organization*, 18(1), 23-44.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508410372151>
- Sarah, H., John, S., & Cassandra, J. G. (2017). A privilege and a challenge: Valuation of heirs' property by African American landowners and implications for forest management in the Southeastern U.S. *Small-Scale Forestry*, 16, 395-417.
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11842-017-9362-5>
- Savic, M., Chur-Hansen, A., Mahmood, M. A., & Moore, V. (2013). Separation from family and its impact on the mental health of Sudanese refugees in Australia: A qualitative study. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 37(4), 383-388.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1753-6405.12088>
- Schafer, L. H. (2002). True survivors: East African refugee women. *Africa Today*, 29-48.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/at.2003.0015>
- Scharp, K. M. (2013). Making meaning of domestic adoption reunion in online narratives: A dialogic perspective. *Qualitative Communication Research*, 2(3), 301-325.
<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Making-Meaning-of-Domestic-Adoption-Reunion-in-Scharp/1f132189aa454925a440138e0dc72c4246892755>
- Scioli, A., & Biller, H. (2009). *Hope in the age of anxiety*. Oxford University Press.
- Seville, E. (2008). Resilience: Great concept but what does it mean?
<https://ir.canterbury.ac.nz/handle/10092/2966>
- Sharma, G. (2017). Pros and cons of different sampling techniques. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 3(7), 749-752. <https://bit.ly/3TaTxBw>

- Shoko, W., & Sean, M. L. (2021). Disgust toward interracial couples: Mixed feelings about black–white race mixing. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 12(5) 769-77.
<https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1948550620939411>
- Skrbiš, Z. (2008). Transnational families: Theorising migration, emotions and belonging. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 29(3), 231-246.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07256860802169188>
- Smit, R. (2011). Maintaining family memories through symbolic action: Young adults' perceptions of family rituals in their families of origin. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 42(3), 355-X. <https://bit.ly/3MhCwDb>
- Smith, A., Lalonde, R. N., & Johnson, S. (2004). Serial migration and its implications for the parent-child relationship: A retrospective analysis of the experiences of the children of Caribbean immigrants. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 10(2), 107-122. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1099-9809.10.2.107>.
- Stewart, P. E. (2015). You moved up, did you forget us?: The influence of African American intra-familial social mobility on extended family relationships. *Journal of African American Studies*, 19(2), 214-232. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12111-015-9300-6>
- St. Pierre, E. A., & Jackson, A. Y. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis after coding*.
- Suárez-Orozco, C., Bang, H. J., & Kim, H. Y. (2011). I felt like my heart was staying behind: Psychological implications of family separations & reunifications for immigrant youth. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 26(2), 222-257.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558410376830>

- Suárez-Orozco, C., López Hernández, G., & Cabral, P. (2021). The rippling effects of unauthorized status: Stress, family separations, and deportation and their implications for belonging and development. In: *P. Tummala-Narra, ed. Cultural, racial, and ethnic psychology. Trauma and racial minority immigrants: Turmoil, uncertainty, and resistance. s.l.: American Psychological Association*, p. 185–203.
<https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2021-05763-011>
- Sutherland, S. (2012). Conferences and family reunions. *Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research*, 7(2).
<https://doi.org/10.21083/partnership.v7i2.2006>
- Sutton, C. R. (2004). Celebrating ourselves: The family reunion rituals of African-Caribbean transnational families. *Global Networks*, 4(3), 243-257.
<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Celebrating-Ourselves%3A-The-Family-Reunion-Rituals-Sutton/cb1eaeb3f2ed922837d740c800830877ef4f6361>
- Taylor, R. J., Mouzon, D. M., Nguyen, A. W., & Chatters, L. M. (2016). Reciprocal family, friendship and church support networks of African Americans: Findings from the National Survey of American Life. *Race and Social Problems*, 8(4), 326-339.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s12552-016-9186-5>
- Taylor, Z. E., & Conger, R. D. (2017). Promoting strengths and resilience in single-mother families. *Child Development*, 88(2), 350-358. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12741>
- Tellis, W. (1997). Introduction to case study. *The Qualitative Report*, 3, 1-14.
<http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR3-2/tellis1.html>

- Thomas, K. J. (2012). Migration processes, familial characteristics, and schooling dropout among Black youths. *Demography*, 49(2), 477-498. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-012-0091-2>
- Thomas, M. J., Mulder, C. H., & Cooke, T. J. (2018). Geographical distances between separated parents: A longitudinal analysis. *European Journal of Population*, 34, pp. 463-489. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10680-017-9437-1>
- Tolfree, D. (1995). *Roofs and roots: The care of separated children in the developing world*. Arena. <https://archive.crin.org/sites/default/files/images/docs/Roofs%20and%20Roots.%20%20The%20care%20of%20separated%20children%20in%20the%20deve.pdf>
- Vandenbroucke, J. P., & Pearce, N. (2018). From ideas to studies: How to get ideas and sharpen them into research questions. *Clinical Epidemiology*, 10, 253. <https://doi.org/10.2147%2FCLEP.S142940>
- Varzally, A. (2017). *Children of Reunion: Vietnamese Adoptions and the Politics of Family Migrations*. UNC Press Books.
- Wakefield, J. R., Sani, F., Herrera, M., Khan, S. S., & Dugard, P. (2016). Greater family identification—but not greater contact with family members—leads to better health: Evidence from a Spanish longitudinal study. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 46(4), 506-513. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2171>
- Waldrop, D. P., Weber, J. A., Herald, S. L., Pruett, J., Cooper, K., & Juozapavicius, K. (1999). Wisdom and life experience: How grandfathers mentor their grandchildren. *Journal of Aging and Identity*, 4(1), 33-46. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1023/A:1022834825849>

- Walsh, F. (2003). Family resilience: A framework for clinical practice. *Family Process*, 42(1), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.2003.00001.x>
- Walsh, F. (2016a). Family resilience: A developmental systems framework. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 13(3), 313-324. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2016-27061-003>
- Walsh, F. (2016b). Applying a family resilience framework in training, practice, and research: Mastering the art of the possible. *Family Process*, 55(4), 616-632. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27921306/>
- Weller, S. C., Vickers, B., Bernard, H. R., Blackburn, A. M., Borgatti, S., Gravlee, C. C., & Johnson, J. C. (2018). Open-ended interview questions and saturation. *PloS One*, 13(6), e0198606. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0198606>
- Wilder, J., & Cain, C. (2011). Teaching and learning color consciousness in Black families: Exploring family processes and women's experiences with colorism. *Journal of Family Issues*, 32(5), 577-604. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X10390858>
- Wilson, L. L. (2012). Family reunion, 1993. *African American Review*, 45(1-2), 238-239. link.gale.com/apps/doc/A325094037/AONE?u=anon~70e6afaf&sid=googleScholar&xid=b91167e3.
- Wong, A., Ho, S., Olusanya, O., Antonini, M. V., & Lyness, D. (2021). The use of social media and online communications in times of pandemic COVID-19. *Journal of the Intensive Care Society*, 22(3), 255-260.
- Yang, P. Q. (2019). Title transnationalism and genealogy: An introduction. *Genealogy*, 3(3), 49. MDPI AG. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/genealogy3030049>
- Yin, R. K. (1984). *Case study research: Design and methods*. <https://bit.ly/3CJyobZ>

- Yin, R. K. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods*, 2nd edition. <https://bit.ly/3T44k08>
- Yin, R. K. (2005). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. SAGE Publications.
<https://bit.ly/3TaLhRZ>
- Yun, J. (2009). An investigation of the US family reunion travel market: Motivations and activities. *Purdue University, West Lafayette*.
<https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/dissertations/AAI1470179/>
- Yun, J., & Lehto, X. Y. (2009). Motives and patterns of family reunion travel. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 10(4), 279-300.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15280080903183375>
- Zainal, Z. (2003). *An investigation into the effects of discipline-specific knowledge, proficiency and genre on reading comprehension and strategies of Malaysia ESP students*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis., University of Reading.
https://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=view_citation&hl=en&user=YfRusD4AAAJ&citation_for_view=YfRusD4AAAAJ:u-x6o8ySG0sC
- Zainal, Z. (2007). Case study as a research method. *Jurnal Kemanusiaan*. 9.
<https://jurnalkemanusiaan.utm.my/index.php/kemanusiaan/article/view/165>
- Zentgraf, K. M., & Chinchilla, N. S. (2012). Transnational family separation: A framework for analysis. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 38(2), pp. 346-366
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1369183X.2011.646431>
- Zulu, I. M. (2018). Past and present African-Centered African American scholar activists in the African American community: An introductory biographical résumé. *The Journal of Pan African Studies (Online)*, 11(8), 64-113. <https://bit.ly/3fY9i0k>

Appendix A: IRB Application Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

June 14, 2022

Cynthia Reece
Richard Stratton

Re: IRB Approval - IRB-FY21-22-682 SEPARATED BY GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION AND LINEAGE: A CASE STUDY DESIGN USING A QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY IN RESEARCH ON HOPE, LOVE, AND RESILIENCE DURING A FAMILY REUNION

Dear Cynthia Reece, Richard Stratton,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval is extended to you for one year from the following date: June 14, 2022. If you need to make changes to the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit a modification to the IRB. Modifications can be completed through your Cayuse IRB account.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

Appendix B: Recruitment Flyer

ATTENTION FAMILY MEMBERS OF SPRIGGS, HOWARD, and REECE REUNION: I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctor of education at Liberty University. The purpose of my research is to better understand the effects of geographical location and lineage and their impact on hope, love, and resilience during a family reunion. To participate, you must be 18 years of age or older (if applicable), and a direct descendant of the family. Ineligible participants are those that have married into the family. Participants will be asked to complete an interview question form, background information form, interview questionnaire, survey questionnaire in person at the local library, or on Zoom, *excluding* screening and signing the consent form. Member check will also will occur. Member checking will allow participants to review the information that has been shared to ensure accuracy and credibility. Member checking will allow this researcher to validate received information. Member checking should take no more than 30 minutes to complete with each participant.

If you would like to participate and meet the study criteria, please direct message me or contact me at 936-443-6992/cyn.reece@yahoo.com for more information or to schedule an interview. I will ask for your email address, as well. A consent document is provided as the first stage of this research process. Interview questionnaires and other forms will be emailed to you following the receipt of your consent to participate. Upon receipt of your signed consent, you will receive the link to complete all questionnaires.

Appendix C: Consent Form

Consent Form

**Title of the Project : SEPARATED BY GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION AND LINEAGE:
A CASE STUDY DESIGN USING A QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY IN
RESEARCH ON HOPE, LOVE, AND RESILIENCE DURING A FAMILY REUNION**
Principal Investigator: Cynthia Reece, Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University

Invitation to be part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be 18 years of age or older, male or female, a blood family member through lineage (not a spouse married into the family), and a member of the Spriggs, Howard, and Reece family.
Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe family members' experiences at a family reunion in Texas. For this study, the geographical locations and positions of lineage will be generally defined as emerging factors that may lead to reduced love, hope, and resilience for family members during the reunion. A phenomenological research design will be used to conduct this study. The research design that will be used for this study is phenomenology theory (Moustakas, 1994) as it explores the phenomena of relational emotions such as love, hope, and resilience among family members that are geographically separated and question their position of lineage in the family amongst the family members that attend a family reunion.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Complete a hard-copy background information survey (5 minutes).
2. Participate in an audio-recorded in-person interview (30-45 minutes).
3. Complete two (2) hard copy surveys (10 minutes each). You can return them to a manila envelope provided by the researcher or mail them to the researcher.
4. 3-4 select participants will be asked to participate in a focus group (1 hour).
5. Review the interview transcripts to ensure accuracy (15 minutes).

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from participating in this study.

Benefits to society include empowering family members to feel connected regardless of where they live and their lineage in the family.

What risks might you encounter from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

Liberty University IRB-FY21-22-682 Approved on 6-14-2022
--

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. Actual birth names will be written in the final summarization, as noted on the consent form. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored in a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will be compensated for this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision on whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from this study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in the study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Cynthia Reece. You may ask questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at creece8@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Richard Stratton, Ph.D., at rstratton@liberty.edu.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515, or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy of the study records. If you have any questions about the study,

Liberty University
IRB-FY21-22-682
Approved on 6-14-2022

after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio record me as part of my participation in this study and to use my real name as noted on the consent form.

Printed Subject Name

Signature and Date

Email Address

Liberty University
IRB-FY21-22-682
Approved on 6-14-2022

Appendix D: Background Questions

1. What was the last reunion you attended?
2. About how many reunions did you miss in the last five years?
All
Most
Some
A few
None
3. How far did you travel? Specifically, how many miles. Estimate if needed
A great deal
A lot
A moderate amount
A little
None at all
4. Was your lineage acknowledged at the reunion?
Yes
No
If yes, was it acknowledged personally or publicly?

Appendix E: Survey Questions

1. Do you get a say of where the family reunions will be held?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
2. Do you get a say in the food and decorations in case of allergies or for other reasons?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
3. Are you willing to travel far for reunions?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
4. Do you arrange your own accommodations during reunions?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
5. About how many family reunions have you attended in the last decade?
 - a) All of them
 - b) Half of them
 - c) A few
 - d) None
6. Do you invite friends and neighbors besides just family members to reunions?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
7. Are you okay with alcohol being served in front of children during reunions?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
8. What are some of the reasons why you would miss a family reunion? Select all that apply.
 - a) Work
 - b) School
 - c) Distance
 - d) Health
 - e) Any other-----
9. Is there a hierarchy or rank and order during family reunions?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
10. Do elders and closer family members get priority such as in speaking or decision-making?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

Appendix F: Interview Questions

Interview Questionnaire

1. If you were a dessert served at the reunion, what would you be and why?
2. When you think of love, hope, and resilience, what do they mean to you?