A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF 10 SCHOLARLY JOURNALS FROM 2007-2017:

WHAT HAS BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT LONG-TERM AFRICAN AMERICAN

MARRIED COUPLES

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

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BY

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my deceased Grandmother Edna Chism who dedicated her life to helping her family members succeed. Grandmother I know you could care less about titles, but you will be proud of what I will do with this one. Love and miss you!!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to first give honor and praises to God because without him nothing is possible. I am thankful to my parents and Godparent for being my biggest cheerleaders and always telling me "The Sky is the Limit". The love you guys have for me has been evident not only by the words you express but the tangible moments you display on daily basis. I am a thankful to my husband who is always teaching me and keeping me on my toes, I love you! I am thankful to my children whom inspire me to be a better person. Mommy can't put into words how much you both mean to me. I am grateful for my siblings, nieces and nephews because the joy and love that I experience in your presence is a calming peace during those "stormy" days. I humbly thank Dr. Brock because she is the epitome of strength and wisdom. Dr. Brock, I am thankful that you pushed me even when I thought the possible was impossible. Please know that your support and teaching has not only changed my life but will change the lives of many others to come. Dr. Gillum I am thankful for your patience and grace. I am thankful for the many "Aha" moments you presented to me during the summer breaks. Dr. Armstrong I thank you for your contagious caring spirit and guidance. Dr Armstrong thank you for demonstrating the notion that we must always view things in a different lens to gain a deeper understanding of others. Lastly, I am thankful to my peers, friends, family members and colleagues that prayed for me and encouraged me along the way. Please know that your prayers did not go unanswered. A special thanks to my sorority sister you will never know how much your supportive text and phone calls meant to me. There are so many

people to thank and if I missed someone please forgive me and know that you carry a special place in my heart.

ABSTRACT

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A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF 10 SCHOLARLY JOURNALS FROM 2007-2017: WHAT HAS
BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT LONG TERM AFRICAN AMERICAN MARRIED COUPLES

DECEMBER 2018

The purpose of this study was to examine what has been written about long term

African American marriages in 10 selected scholarly journals. Marriages greatly impact

multiple domains and relationships in the African American community. There is a

multitude of marital research in many social science fields. However, there is a lack of

literature as it specifically relates to African American long-term couples. Due to the lack

of literature in this field it would benefit social science professionals, especially family

therapists, to learn more about these relationships. In this study the researcher utilized a

quantitative and qualitative approach to explore the literature, identifying themes found in

the journal articles. The major themes discovered were Spirituality, Cultural issues,

Equity, and Family. The *Journal of Black Studies* had the largest number of articles on

the topic with 4 of 3,877 (0.00103%) articles being relevant to the research topic.

Recommendations for future research were suggested.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

LIST OF TABLES

Table

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Marital relationships may differ for couples of various diverse backgrounds. As the study of marriage spans across multiples areas of the world, there continues to be a lack of consensus concerning the longevity of African American marriages. Researchers characterize African American marriages as unique and grounded in tradition (Dixon, 2009). The long-term traditions of marriages in African Americans have become the pinnacle of marital relationships. According to Dixon (2009), healthy marriages are an important tradition in African American culture primarily because being married fosters multiple benefit to the family unit. These advantages include longevity of life, greater economic benefits and overall positive health benefits (Bradbury, 2005; Dixon, 2009; White & Gallagher, 2000). To understand African American marriage, one must look at cultural traditions from the very beginning.

The tradition or a series of customs of Black marriages originated because of the tight-knit kinships of family bonds, spiritual rituals, and cultural strengths that were carried over from African traditions and cultures (Billingsley, 1974). African American marriage traditions were a crucial part of Black traditions during slavery. During slavery, African Americans maintained strong bonds in their marriages, despite economic hardships after the civil war (Pinderhughes, 2002). The family and marital relationships are considered as one of the essential factors in African American culture even during times of oppression when African Americans felt as if others attempted to strip the

culture away (McAdoo, 1988). As Blacks experienced adversity and barriers, it became evident that family and marital relationships remained a primary constant in their lives.

The family and marriage units have been instrumental in developing and enhancing lives of African American members (Billingsley, 1974). Family interaction healthy marital relationships, and spirituality are three dominant protective factors for resiliency among African American families (Vaterlaus, Skogrand, & Chaney, 2015). One of the prominent reasons that African Americans excel is because African Americans are known for seeing the hardships as temporary obstacles to overcome (Billingsley, 1974). These foundational traditions are at the heart of the reasons that long-term African American couples remain married throughout time. The variations of traditional marriages were embedded in the Black culture, but since then many changes in Black marriages have occurred.

For African Americans, both men and women, the desire to be married has remained constant over time although the structure of marriage for African Americans has changed over the years (Holland, 2009; McAdoo et al., 1988). For example, many individuals are choosing to wait later in life, to cohabit, to divorce earlier, or not get married at all (Bramlett & Mosher, 2001, Oberlander, Agostini, Houston & Black, 2010). With more emphasis placed on how marriages change, this study will examine the scholarly literature on long-term African American couples' relationships as found in 10 scholarly journals from 2007-2017. The researcher utilized an historical perspective

when documenting the information in the first steps of the research, as to ensure accuracy and credibility.

Statement of the Problem

The stability and quality of African American marriages have been among the least studied relationships in research (McAdoo, 2007 Stanik, & Bryant, 2012). Examining this literature has become a higher priority based on a decrease in long-term marriages and rate of increase in single or cohabiting couples, compiled by researchers such as Neblett, Hammond, Seaton, & Townsend, (2010).   African Americans are known to have one of the fastest rates of decline in marriages, more so than any other ethnic group. According to Neblett, Hammond, Seaton, & Townsend, (2010), 68% of African American couples' divorce, whereas only 47% of White couples' marriages end in divorce. There are multiple reasons that couples divorce and identifying these challenges may assist in learning more how about African American long-term couples remain together.

There have been numerous studies on divorce; however, there are few empirical studies that focus on the differences or similarities that minority couples face in their marriages (Allen & Olson, 2001). Married adults are more likely to have their marriages end in divorce if their parents were divorced (Bengston, 2001, Benson, Larson, Wilson, & Demo, 1993). One barrier that was taken into consideration in African American couples was the stressors that being married brings. These stressors are pinpointed as an important factor in explaining reasons that marriages end in divorce quickly if these

adults develop ineffective communication patterns and unrealistic views about emotional intimacy and how to resolve conflict (Ottaway, 2010). Understanding marital satisfaction and conflict resolution is a root for documenting why African Americans remain in long-term marriages.

Marital satisfaction and the level of cohesiveness or discourse in which couples interact with each other began to gain traction in the field of study in the late 1990s (Gottman, 1999; Fowers, B. J., & Olson, D. H.1993). Additional theorists began to describe long-term marriages with a primary focus on marital conflict (Sharlin, Kaslow & Hammerischmidt, 2000). A disproportionate amount of research is focused on distraught couples rather than couples who exhibit high marital satisfaction (Gottman & Notarius, 2002; Sharlin, Kaslow & Hammerschmidt, 2000). Studies on marital happiness and how it relates to demographics are crucial because most researchers have not differentiated marriage quality between race and ethnicity of the couples studied.

Cherlin (2004) completed a study that used standard topics of marital qualities in minorities. Since the mid-1990s and into the 20th century there has been a surplus of data on why and when couples divorce, but there is limited data on why couples remain in long-term relationships (Amato, & Booth, 1995; Goodwin, 2004). Understanding the issues that African American couples struggle with speaks to how important ongoing data collection is for researchers. Several of those factors identified as obstacles include egalitarian roles, prejudice, and socioeconomic status of African American couples (Amato & Booth, 1995; Lawrence-Webb, Littlefield, & Okundaye, 2004; Stanik &

Bryant, 2012). In the 21st century, African American divorce rates increased, due to factors including an increase in imprisonment, lower education, unemployment and poverty rates (Baker, 2015; Barr & Simons, 2012). High rates of imprisonment for men create an imbalanced sex ratio among African Americans potential mate selection (Elliott et al., 2012, Hummer & Hamilton, 2010). Additionally, low paying jobs, inaccessible healthcare, and educational systems are documented as a few barriers to being in a long-term African American marriage (Corra & Borch, 2014). Without many of these fundamental necessities, a scheme of mental burdens develops and places a strain on the relationship (Broman, 1991). There continues to be a lack of research as it relates to long-term African American marriages due to various social and developmental issues.

Several of the research studies conducted to date concentrated on young couples, possibly in their first decade of marriage (Tucker & Taylor, 1989). Additional studies are composed of participants who are in their mid-life stages of development (Fincham, Ajayi & (2011). As the structure of long-term marriage changes, the level of companionship between couples differs as well. One common change is that older couples are choosing alternatives to marriage such as cohabitation or divorce, according to the National Center for Family and Marriage and Research at Bowling Green State (2014). The literature on why couples choose to cohabit may further explain the decreasing numbers of long-term marriages.

Few studies explored long-term marriages with an even larger gap in the literature as it relates to African American couples' literature. The lack of research is vital as to why it is important for researchers to study this topic area.

Purpose of the Study

The goal of this content analysis study was to examine articles written 2007-2017, in 10 scholarly journals about what is written about long-term African American couples married 20 years or more. The academic journals selected were:

- *Family Relations*

- *Journal of Black Psychology*

- *Journal of Black Studies*

- *Journal of Couple and Relationship Therapy*

- *Journal of Family Issues*

- *Journal of Family Therapy*

- *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*

- *Journal of Marriage and Family*

- *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*

- *Women, Gender, and Families of Color* formerly *Black Women, Gender, and Families*

The researcher in this study conducted a content analysis of articles about African American couples in long-term marriages to determine what literature is accessible in scholarly journals. The researcher used a qualitative and quantitative coding to research what was written concerning African American long-term couples. Content analysis is a plausible methodology to research and review data available regarding long-term African American marriages as documented in 10 selected scholarly journals.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used for this study:

1. What has been written about long-term African American marriages in 10 selected scholarly journals from 2007-2017?

2. What are the common themes documented about African American long-term marriages?

Theoretical Framework

This study provided researchers, clinicians, and academia the understanding of what is documented concerning experiences of long-term African American marriages. To understand the experiences of African American couples, the researcher used family life course theory as a foundational model for research. Family life course theory indicates that people make life changes from one transition to the next (Elder, 1983). Examples of changes across the life cycle using a relationship lens, are moving from single to dating, to being married, and to getting a divorce (Elder, 1983). Holland (1999) reports that a person's life is not only a sequence of events, but also a series of decisions

made about careers and family life matters. Through the family life cycle lens, the researcher will gain an understanding of the available literature concerning African American long-term marriage.

Definition of Terms

For this study the researcher used the following terms as outlined below:

1. African American/Black-- Terms used simultaneously throughout the study.

2. African American- is of African descent or sometimes related to African heritage (Elliott, Krivickas, Brault, & Kreider, 2012) .

3. Black-refers to a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

4. Long-term marriage-- lasting, staying or extending over an extended period of marriage. The exact number of years of long-term marriages differs from person to person and as age's life expectancy increases some researchers classify marriages 20 years or more long term.   (Bachand & Caron, 2001).

5. Marriage-- "Any of the diverse forms of interpersonal union established in various parts of the world to form a familial bond that is recognized legally, religiously, or socially, granting the participating partner's mutual conjugal rights and responsibilities" (Cherlin, 2004)

6. Divorce-Marriage dissolved or terminated between legally married couples in which their bond is terminated (Kovacs, L. (1993).

7. Kinship: genealogical considerations of some kind, involves a family relationship to another person. (Schneider, 1984)

8. Extended family: "a kinship group consisting of a family nucleus and various relatives, as grandparents, usually living in one household and functioning as a larger unit" (Bell-Tolliver & Wilkerson, 2011).

Assumptions

The assumptions were as follows:

1. Long term marriages are essential to the family unit (Dixon, 2009).

2. There is minimal research focusing on long-term African American marriages.

3. Family therapists need more information concerning African American marriages.

Delimitations

The delimitations are as follows:

1. Only the 10 selected academic journals were used.

2. Only articles in the journals published from 2007-2017 were used.

3. Only specific key terms were used to search for articles.

Summary

As the study of marriage spans across multiples areas of the world, there continues to be a lack of consensus concerning the longevity of African American marriages. The researcher examined the literature found in 10 scholarly journals published between 2007 and 2017 on long-term African American marriages. Only

articles found by using specific key search terms in databases were used. It is hoped this quantitative and qualitative analysis of content in the articles will be of use to social scientists working with these couples, especially family therapists.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will review some of the literature available on African American married couples to provide a context for this content analysis research. In particular such areas as, marital success and relationship barriers.

Researchers have completed multiple studies on marital satisfaction, stability and long-term commitment, but most of the studies have minimal African American participants in the studies (Bachand, & Caron, 2001, Dixon, 2009,). Understanding that marital satisfaction looks different in phases across the marriage cycle helps in understanding the longevity of marital relationships. Kelly and Conley (1987) described marital satisfaction as a "J" curve. The J curve refers to a steep rise from the starting point of the data researched. Authors such as Fowers and Olson (1993) reported that marital satisfaction resembles more of a U-shape curve. The U-shape curve is representative of marital satisfaction reaching its peak during the earlier and later stages of marriage. Data reveals that members in long-term marriages experience decreased satisfaction during the middle stages of their lives. In most studies, marital satisfaction shows a significant decline when children enter the marriage and a higher increase when children leave home. In this study, the U-shaped curve represents marital satisfaction

being higher in the earlier and later stages of long-term marriages. Marital satisfaction is believed to be one of the most prominent factors that help couples reshape their marriage throughout time. According to (Gottman, 1991) long-term couples continuously reinvent their marriages to strengthen their relationship. Gottman (1991) posits that "Successful conflict resolution isn't what makes marriages succeed" (p. 11). Rather, "happy marriages are based on a deep friendship. . . a mutual respect for and enjoyment of each other's company." (Gottman, 1991, p. 19.)

Martial Success

Over the years there have been many researchers who reported the first two to three years of marriage on a constant decline (Huston, McHale, & Croute, 1986; Markman, Stanley, & Blumberg, 1994; Kurdek, 1998a). Kovacs (1983) reported that the first few years of marriage as disenchantment. Disenchantment is known as the time that couples have fantasies of what their marriage is supposed to be versus how it truly is. As the disenchantment becomes transparent, a decrease in marital satisfaction may occur in relationships. Clements, Cordova, Markman, and Laurenceau (1997) report marital satisfaction decreases over time. The results of their longitudinal study reported conflict resolution led to a decline in marital satisfaction throughout time. The results were proven valid even after three follow-up assessments further discussing several of the methods (Clements et al.,1997). Kaslow & Robinson (1996) reported that marital stability is shaped in the first years of marriage. The start of the marriage is known as a honeymoon period when couples are becoming adaptive to one another's behaviors.

12

According to the National Center for Health Statistics (1991), the first few years of

marriage are some of the most critical years of marriage.   Bradbury (1998) conducted

115 longitudinal studies concerning marriage and discovered that many do not focus on

the earlier years of marriage. According to Kurdek (1998), the limited research on the

previous years of marriage restricts perceptions of what maintains marital satisfaction. In

the earlier years of African American marriages, there are expectations, perceptions, or

duties that are sometimes not fulfilled in a previous time (Stanik & Bryant, (2012).

Many authors have indicated that premarital stability has a significant bearing on

marriage stability (Fowers & Olson, 1988;Larson & Olson, 1989). Kurdek (1988)

conducted a longitudinal study spanning six years on newlyweds. The researchers

indicated that marital satisfaction decreased around the third year. Kurdek reported that

low marital satisfaction was correlated with couples who were unable to see their

spouse's differences related to independence, expressiveness, and affectivity. Malone-

Colon (2007) completed research on couples who stayed married over a length of time

reported marital dissatisfaction. She identified this as a significant problem that

contributes to what she called the current state of crisis for Black marriage (Malone-

Colon, 2007) and even began to advocate for shifts of African American family structure.

Staton, Salem, and Zimmerman (1995) conducted a study on the psychosocial

benefits of various structures such as, married parents, extended family, and stepfamilies.

The researcher discovered that African American adolescent males benefit from their

fathers being involved in their lives due to the emotional support (Zimmerman, Salem, &

Staton, 1995). The stucture of the family unit is important because it could be the source of marital quality and stability.

Relationship Barriers

The information in this study explored what is documented concerning processes through which long-term African American couples are involved in long term marriages even in the face of martial changes and societal barriers (Pinderhughes, 2002). Researching the following barriers is essential because it assists individuals with having appropriate historic information concerning long-term marriages. Several of the obstacles that African Americans face include institutional racism, stereotypes, skin color debates, religious affiliates, and fictive kin in relationships (Barnes, 2009). The intimacy of relationships among African American couples was embedded in the slavery era (Taylor, 1990). Even during times of slavery some of those same barriers and obstacles were prominent. These barriers include mate availability and selection, institutionalized racism, economic status, and gender-role beliefs (Taylor, 1990). Theorists argue that slavery has provided a level of generational trauma for African Americans. Scientists report trauma is institutionalized, generalized and internalized. This level of trauma has been demonstrated as another strain on African American long-term marriage stability (Gibbs, Fergusson, & Horwood, 2011).

Beginning prior to the 1800s, turmoil, trauma, and prejudice occurred against African Americans (Amato & Booth, 1995). The display of these injustices took away human rights, civil laws, and personal self-worth. This stance of racism had a profound

impact on the Black family marital structure (Amato & Booth, 1995). Understanding and studying statistics and barriers regarding African American marriage will be beneficial to helping professionals such as family therapists in understanding the cultural and emotional dynamics of successful African American couples.

This study will contribute to the dialogue and research of African American experiences related to successful long-term marriages. The data found by the researcher will, in turn, help formulate concepts that will assist others in directing future research for long-term African American unions.

Summary

In this chapter the researcher focused on the documenting the research from a historical perspective. The review of literature showed limited research on long-term African American marriage. In the literature a few studies focus on, barriers, and successes of long-term African American marriage. Understanding what marital success looks like for different people will highlight the experiences of minority long-term marriages and how much more work needs to be done to support marriage. Family therapist need this information and may benefit from a content analysis of what has been written across the most recent 10 years in 10 selected scholarly journals to better serve the families they serve.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this study is content analysis. Content analysis was chosen because, according to Krippendorff (1980) "content analysis can best be described as a procedure that identifies desired information from materials by orderly and objectively labeling exact traits of the data." Krippendorff (1980) reports conducting content analysis extracts replicable and valid data from its text to the actual context of its use or purpose." This research used quantitative analysis to report the number of articles published in each of the selected journals from 2017 to 2017 and qualitative analysis to determine what themes emerged in these articles.

Sample

The sample consisted of 10 scholarly journals:

- *Family Relations*

- *Journal of Black Psychology*

- *Journal of Black Studies*

- *Journal of Family Issues*

- *Journal of Family Therapy*

- *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*

- *Journal of Marriage and Family*

- *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*

- *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy*

- *Women, Gender and Families of Color* formerly *Black Women, Gender and Families*

Family Relations is published five times a year (February, April, July, October, and December) and averages 120 pages. *Family Relations* is a publication of the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR). Since 1951, the journal has published fundamental and applied articles. The journal has a circulation of approximately 5,000. Journal articles focus on a wide range of topics of interest to both scholars and practitioners, including: aging, child & parent relationships; cross-cultural/international issues, families across the life cycle, family diversity, family health; family interventions, family life education, family policy, family therapy, gender & family relationships, marital enrichment; marital strengths, minority families, religion & the family, sex education; sexual & emotional abuse, stress & relationships, women's issues, and much more. The journal is indexed in Adolescent Studies, Academic search complete, ERIC, SocINDEX

Journal of Black Psychology (*JBP*) presents one of the most innovative peer-reviewed, empirical, theoretical, and methodological research on the behavior and experiences of Black and other populations from Black or Afrocentric perspectives. The journal offers coverage of the latest advances through original articles and special features such as research briefs, essays, commentary, and media Reviews. The journal is indexed in Academic search complete, ERIC, and SocINDEX

Journal of Black Studies is peer-reviewed and published bi-monthly and for the last third of a century has been a leading source for dynamic, innovative, and creative

research on the Black experience. The journal is indexed in Academic Search Complete, ERIC, SocINDEX, etc.

Journal of Family Issues (JFI) is published 16 times per year, provides up-to-date research, theory, and analyses on marriage and family life. JFI focuses on professional issues, research developments, and practical applications from an interdisciplinary perspective, encompassing such areas as: family Studies, family violence, gender studies, psychology, social work, and sociology. It is indexed in Family Studies abstracts, Medline, PyschINFO, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences.

Journal of Family Therapy is published on behalf of the UK Association for Family Therapy and Systemic Practice, it was formerly known as International Journal of Family Counseling and Journal of Family Counseling. It advances the understanding and treatment of human relationships constituted in systems such as couples, families, professional networks, and wider group, by publishing articles on theory, research, clinical practice, and training. Articles can be found in EBSCOhost, CSA, Elsevier, E-psyche, ProQuest and Gale.

Journal of Marital and Family Therapy (JMFT) is the flagship journal of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy and the largest circulation family therapy journal in the world. *JMFT* is a peer-reviewed journal that advances the professional understanding of marital and family functioning and the most effective psychotherapeutic treatment of couple and family distress. Toward that end, *JMFT*

publishes articles on research, theory, clinical practice, and training in marital and family therapy.

Journal of Marriage and Family (JMF) is published by the National Council on Family Relations and has been a research journal in the family field for more than 70 years. JMF is published in February, April, June, August, and October of each year. Each issue averages 284 pages in length. Its worldwide circulation is more than 6,200 copies. JMF publishes original empirical research that makes substantial contributions to theoretical understandings of all aspects of families, including marriage and other forms of close relationships. Contributors to JMF come from diverse fields, including anthropology, demography, economics, history, psychology, and sociology, as well as interdisciplinary fields such as human development and family science. It is indexed in Family Studies Abstracts, PsycINFO, and Sociological Abstracts.

Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development (*JMCD*) is the official journal of the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD), a division of the American Counseling Association. *JMCD* is concerned with research, theory, and program applications pertinent to multicultural and ethnic minority interests in all areas of counseling and human development.

Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy is formerly known as *Journal of Couples Therapy*. Experts address key treatment issues for all types of adult relationships. Articles focus on couple therapy from the perspectives of theory, research, and practice, as well as

issues related to the supervision and personal growth of clinicians. The journal is indexed

in Adolescent Studies, Academic search complete, ERIC, SocINDEX

Women, Gender and Families of Color was formerly known as *Black Women, Gender*

and Families. Women, Gender and Families of Color is a multidisciplinary journal that

centers on the study of Black, Latina, Indigenous, and Asian American women, gender,

and families. Within this framework, the journal encourages theoretical and empirical

research from history, the social and behavioral sciences, and humanities including

comparative and translation research, and analyses of domestic social, political,

economic, and cultural policies and practices within the United States. *Women, Gender,*

and Families of Color is published in partnership with the Department of American

Studies at the University of Kansas. Online access is provided via the JSTOR Current

Scholarship Program. WCFC is Issued biannually in the spring and fall.

Population

The population consists of the articles in 10 scholarly journals identified in this

study. The time span in which the data was reviewed, referencing long-term African

American marriages is from 2007-2017. The researcher used the following keywords to

gather and study the data: long-term African American marriage, long-term African

American couples, long-term Black marriage, long-term Black couples, seasoned African

American couples, and experienced Black couples.

Research Questions

This project focused on these questions:

1). What has been written about long-term African American marriages in scholarly journals from 2007-2017?

2)What are the common themes documented in African American long-term marriages?

Data Collection

The researcher read articles in several online, on and off campus locations. The researcher located the journals collected in cross interlibraries such as the ones located at Texas Woman's University, Texas Christian University and Tarleton University. The internet search engine included Google Scholar, PychInfo, ERIC, Family and Society studies Worldwide, EBSCOhost, and JSTOR data bases. Articles that were non-peer reviewed or in a foreign language were not included in this study. Book reviews, magazine articles, editorials, reviews, and commentaries were not included in this study.

Treatment of the Data

The themes of the project were identified by using coding also known as labeling. Labeling is the technique done by taking each part of the article, naming and analyzing all information into smaller parts (Miles & Huberman, 1994). An additional method utilized to ensure validity and reliability was for the researcher to enlist the help of an additional coder. The additional coder was a doctoral family therapy major who has taken multiple courses in various research methods courses including quantitive and qualitative studies. The coder is a licensed professional counselor and a professor at Houston Community College. The coder was given a sample of the articles the researcher located and confirmed were appropriate for the study. The coder and researcher each read the

identified articles. The researcher instructed client to utilize the pre-coding form to take notes of the articles found. The coder was given directives to document any themes that began to formulate after reading the articles. The researcher and coder discussed the multiple themes that were discovered after reviewing the articles. Both parties reviewed the pre-coding form together and agreed on common themes that were discovered. The researcher and coder went back to the literature and used the actual coding form with some of the major themes agreed upon and began looking re read those articles to ensure those themes fit. Once the articles were viewed and discussed a second time the researcher and coder decided on the four themes listed on the coding form. Reading the articles and discussing the themes helped to establish validity in the research.

Summary

The methodology of the research focused on how to collect, analyze and code information concerning identifying research on long-term African American marriages. For the sake of this research, a time span of ten years of research in selected journals was used. This researcher utilized empirical and scholarly journals only. Book reviews, magazine articles, editorials, reviews, commentaries, and responses were not included in this study. The researcher and coder read and coded articles for the qualitative portion on the study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The goal of this content analysis study was to examine articles written 2007-2017 in 10 scholarly journals about what is written about long-term African American couples married 20 years or more. The content of the articles was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively.

Quantitative Analysis

This researcher utilized the search engine through various websites to collect the total number of journal articles through 2007-2017. The total number of articles published during that time in the 10 selected journals, was 16,167. Of these 16,167 articles, only 15 (9.2781%) of the articles were applicable to the topic of long-term African American marriages. The journal with the most applicable information was *Journal of Black Studies* with 4 articles out of 3,877 (0.00103 %). *Family Relations* produced (0.00794%) 3 articles out of a total of 3,776. *Journal of Black Psychology* published none (0.00000%). *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development* published none (0.00000%) articles. *Journal of Family Issues* published 2 articles out of 1,372 (0.00145%).

 Journal of Family Therapy published none (0.00000%). *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* had 2 (0.00306%) out of 653. *Journal of Marriage and Family* produced (0.00192%), 2 articles out of a total of 1,039. *Women, Gender, and Families of Color*

published none (0.00000%). *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy* had 2 out of 1,297 articles (0.01542%).

The researcher searched several search engines stemming from the category of African American marriages and key terms related to the topic. As the researcher read multiple articles, many reported on marriages, yet very few focused on long-term African American marriages. As the researcher narrowed down the articles, a total of 15 relevant journal articles were located. Table 1 is the finalized list of search terms used and articles located. The researcher calculated the number of relevant articles located and divided that number by the total number of articles published between 2007-2017 in the assigned journal articles.

Table 1

Data from Coding Worksheet

Quantitative Content Analysis

Journal Title	Articles from 2007-2017	Articles from marriage search terms	Articles with specific identifiers & marriage content	%
Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development	**1,381**	**7**	**0**	**0.00000%**
Family Relations	**3,776**	**15**	**3**	**0.00079%**
Journal of Black Studies	**3,877**	**15**	**4**	**0.00103%**
Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy	**1,297**	**37**	**2**	**0.01542%**
Journal of Black Psychology	**1,634**	**4**	**0**	**0.00000%**
Journal of Marital and	**653**	**17**	**2**	**0.00306%**

FamilyTherapy				
Women, Gender, and Families of Color	103	22	0	0.00000%
Journal of Family Therapy	511	5	0	0.00000%
Journal of Family Issues	1,372	29	2	0.00145%
Journal of Marriage and Family	1,039	38	2	0.00192%

Qualitative Content Analysis

The methodology of content analysis was generated by utilizing the research questions: What does the literature state about long-term African American marriages? and What are the common themes among long term African American marriages? After, the research was completed, the researcher concluded the articles included all three qualifiers, of the participants being African American, engaged in a long-term marriage as identified 20 years or more, and heterosexual married couples. These qualifiers were in place to establish the articles were legitimate articles for the research. Both the independent researcher and the coder determined there were 4 themes that arose from the literature. Those themes were family, cultural issues, equity and spirituality. The following is a brief synopsis of how the themes are categorized for each article.

Family

Family is an important theme found when researching articles on long-term African American couples. Family traditions, Family of origin, and non-traditional family members are a few of the categories discussed in the literature. The family traditions are the customs that are passed down from generation to generation. Family of origin or beliefs and behaviors that we carry over from our ancestors. The non traditional family member may be a neighbor, a sorority/fraternity sister/brother, or a family close friend that is treated as a biological family member.

Marks, L., Hopkins, K., Chaney, C., Monroe, P., Nesteruk, O., & Sasser, D. (2008). "*Together, we are Strong": A Qualitative Study of Happy Enduring African American*

Marriages. Marks et al. (2008) established themes that couples utilize to create enduring marriages. The themes were as follows: Challenges, Overcoming Challenges, Conflict and Unity. These themes are usually carried out in the context of working together as family to overcome challenges. This research falls under the Equity theme also, due to the couples' distinct vocalization of unity--words such as "Equally Yoked" are used throughout the article.

 Perry, A. (2013). *African American men's attitude toward marriage*. Perry (2013) spoke about how the ideas and thoughts men have towards marriages were influenced primarily by the male's family of origin and this influence was the primary deciding factor in determining if marriage was advantageous. The researcher explained that the more their family of origin participated in marriage and in religiosity the more important marriage was to them.

Hurt, T. R. (2013). *Toward a deeper understanding of the meaning of marriage among Black men.* This article highlights research that clearly reveals evidence that Black men benefit from being involved in healthy, satisfying marriages. These benefits include social, economic, occupation and psychologically. Despite this evidence, marriage among Black men is on the decline as reported in this article. Family scientists implicate a number of macro-level and micro-level barriers that contribute to this decline. This research notes that men may be influenced by subcultures whose values and attitudes undermine marital formation and maintenance such as economic factors (employment – lower rates contribute to couples living together vs. marriage), children out of wedlock

(less likely to marry than men without children), education (prolongs marital

commitment), as well Black men are more likely to marry a mate of another race. In

sum, an imbalance in the sex ration is consequential for marital formation and

maintenance. The harsh conditioning of slavery is reported to contribute to strained

gender relations between Black men and women along with a lack or deficit in

interpersonal communication skills that may influence attitudes and interactions of Black

men and women. Two themes emerged from the data on influences of the construction of

meaning which were faith and dynamics of give and take of family relationship.

Barton, A., Beach, S., Hurt, T., Fincham, F., Stanley, S., Kogan, S., & Brody, G. (2016).

Determinants and Long-Term Effects of Attendance Levels in a Marital Enrichment

Program for African American Couples. Barton (2016) in this article studied long term

outcomes of African American couples attending preventive marital enrichment classes.

The results were that communication for men over time improved at a faster rate than for

women. The researchers wanted to emphasize the attendance rate or the number of

attendance rates among these groups were low, which in turn may have some great

impacts in the differences of communication and those communication patterns impacted

the family unit.

Whitton, S., Stanley, S., Markman, H., & Johnson, C. (2013). *Attitudes toward Divorce,*

Commitment, and Divorce Proneness in First Marriages and Remarriages. Whitton et

al., in this study found that couples that are remarried are just more likely to divorce than

first marriages. Couples seem to report that their happiness level was similar to the

previous relationship even if with additional responsibilities such as bringing children unto the situation.

Secemsky, V., & Ahlman, C., (2006). *A Study of Married Couples with Longstanding Relationships Originating in Childhood and Adolescence: Clinical Implications*. This article falls into the family category primarily because the article reflects on the relationships of couples in this study being so strong that friendship is the basis of the connectedness in the relationship. Another common theme that was brought up was that the couples seemed to be bonded as a child by a common bond such as both parties losing a loved one.

<div align="center">**Cultural Issues**</div>

The second theme is cultural issues. Cultural Issues were defined as an additional theme due to many of the articles citing race, ethnicity, or cultural issues they have encountered overtime. The primary cultural issues that couples may face are discrimination, racism, generational trauma, and institutional racism. These cultural issues can sometimes seem covert at times. The following articles displayed this theme:

Bryant, C., Taylor, R., Lincoln, K., Chatters, L., & Jackson, J. (2008). *Marital Satisfaction among African Americans and Black Caribbeans: Findings from the National Survey of American Life.* Bryant et al (2008) were able to determine that marital satisfaction was slightly higher in Black Caribbeans at 68% to African Americans' 63%. Researchers looked at several areas such as economics, expectations of marriage, and perceptions of race relationships. Black Caribbeans seem to have more economic success,

both parties have experienced discrimination and segregation and have similar religious traditions. Martial satisfaction was looked at from different perspectives to understand the outcomes.

Johnson, K., & Loscocco, K. (2015). *Black Marriage through the Prism of Gender, Race, and Class.* Johnson & Loscocco (2015) reported on the declining state of Black marriages as it is viewed in European culture. The authors talk about how heterosexual couples struggle in their marriage, in part because of gender, race and class discrimination.

Phillips, T., Wilmoth, J., & Loren, D. (2012). *Challenges and Conflicts…Strengths and Supports: A Study of Enduring African American Marriages.* Phillip et al (2012) article is one of the few articles specifically geared towards discussing African American marriages. The researchers worked with 71 married African Americans and discussed a range of information that impacts African American marriages. The topics include marital satisfaction, spirituality, and conflict resolution. The results were that the couples overcame obstacles to remain married.

Allen, W. D., & Olson, D. H. (2001). *Five Types of African American Marriages*. Allen & Olson (2001) used data of African American couples that participated in the Enriching Relationship Issues, Communication and Happiness marital assessment inventory. The researchers established that that there were five types of marriages. The marriage categories are as follows: vitalized, harmonious, traditional, conflicted and devitalized.

One of the most important key factors discovered in this article were that these categories were similar to European American results.

Owen, J., Chapman, K., Quirk, K., Inch, L., & France, T. (2012). *Process of Change in Relationship Education for Lower Income African American Couples.* In this article currently, unmarried women receive enrichment education concerning relationships. Even though some of the women may have been married long term previously, they best described their experiences as being "Strong black women", rather than being defined by men or their marriages to men. They describe their being as resilience and being able to overcome any social or personal issues that may come as a barrier.

Addo, F. R., & Lichter, D. T. (2013). *Marriage, Marital History and Black-White Wealth Differentials among Older Women*. The researchers in this article discussed how long-term marriages seem to gain more wealth, yet the wealth of African American couples is not as significant as European Americans.

Hurt, T. R. (2013). *Toward a deeper understanding of the meaning of marriage among Black men.* This article highlights research that clearly reveals evidence that Black men benefit from being involved in healthy, satisfying marriages. These benefits include social, economic, occupation and psychologically. Despite this evidence, marriage among Black men is on the decline as reported in this article. Family scientists implicate a number of macro-level and micro-level barriers that contribute to this decline. This research notes that men may be influenced by outside factors that seem to devalue the institution of marriage. In sum, an imbalance in the sex ration is consequential for marital

formation and maintenance. The harsh conditioning of slavery is reported to contribute

to strained gender relations between black men and women along with a lack or deficit in

interpersonal communication skills that may influence attitudes and interactions of Black

men and women. Two themes emerged from the data on influences of the construction of

meaning which were faith and dynamics of give and take.

Equity

The third theme is Equity. The researchers in these articles found that the

established roles, equitable relationships, or the sense of "fairness" in the relationship

were key.

Marks, L., Hopkins, K., Chaney, C., Monroe, P., Nesteruk, O., & Sasser, D. (2008)

Together, We are Strong": A Qualitative Study of Happy Enduring African American

Marriages. The researchers in this article established themes that couples utilize to create

enduring marriages. The themes were as follows: Challenges, Overcoming Challenges,

Conflict and Unity. This research falls under the Family theme also, due to the discussion

of Couples family traditions.

Dew, J., Anderson, B., Skogrand, L., Chaney, C. (2017). *Financial Issues in Strong*

African American Marriages: A Strengths Based Qualitative Approach. There is minimal

research about finances with African American couples. Dew et al (2017) discussed not

only the conflicts of finances in marriages, but the successes as well. The article also

touches on how finances relate to family, cultural, and well-being issues with couples.

Areas focused on included equality of earnings between members of the couples, joint decision-making, and balancing the finances in the household.

Owen, J., Chapman, K., Quirk, K., Inch, L., & France, T. (2012). *Process of Change in Relationship Education for Lower Income African American Couples.* In this article currently, unmarried women receive enrichment education concerning relationships. Even though some of the women may have been married long term previously, they best described their experiences as being "Strong black women," rather than being defined by men or their marriages to men. They saw themselves as equal even when they earned lessor had less education.

Addo, F. R., & Lichter, D. T. (2013). *Marriage, Marital History and Black-White Wealth Differentials among Older Women*. Addo & Lichter (2013) discussed how long- term marriages overall seem to gain more wealth, yet the wealth of African American couples is not as significant as European Americans. Even when opportunities seemed to be the same, the lack of access to many opportunities for the African American couples meant that they were unable to attain the same level of wealth.

Spirituality

The fourth theme is Spirituality, which is defined by a spiritual wellness giving the individuals a sense of hope. Spirituality can be defined as fostering a relationship with a higher being, higher power, or God (Emblen 1992)

Chaney, C., Shirisia, L., & Skogrand, L. (2016). "*Whatever God has Yoked Together, Let No Man Put Apart" The Effect of Religion on Black Marriages*. Chaney et al. (2016)

primarily talked about how spirituality had a great impact on African American

marriages. The results were that many of the couples attributed their strong marriage to

spirituality. Lastly, the researchers discussed the importance of clinicians looking at

spirituality to effectively work with African American couples.

Allen, W. D., & Olson, D. H. (2001). *Five Types of African American Marriages*. Allen

& Olson (2001) used data of African American couples that participated in the Enriching

Relationship Issues, Communication and Happiness marital assessment inventory. The

researchers established that that there were five types of marriages. The marriage

categories are as follows: vitalized, harmonious, traditional, conflicted and devitalized.

One of the most important key factors discovered in this article were that these categories

were similar to European American results.

Brown, E., Orbuch, T., & Bauermeiste, J. (2008) *Religiosity and Marital Stability among*

Black American and White American Couples. In this study the researchers found that

couple conflict is shown to decrease when religion is involved if and when it is reported

by the wife. In addition to religiosity attendance, an additional predictor of divorce was

resources are lack of resources.

Table 2

Themes discovered in the articles

Articles Author (s)	Topic	Journal	Themes
Dew, J., Anderson, B., Skogrand, L., Chaney, C. (2017)	Financial Issues in Strong African American Marriages	Family Relations	Equity
Marks, L., Hopkins, K., Chaney, C., Monroe, P., Nesteruk, O., Sasser, D. (2008)	Happy Enduring African American Marriages	Family Relations	Equity Family
Bryant, C., Taylor, R., Lincoln, K., Chatters, L., Jackson, J. (2008)	African American and Black Caribbean's Marital Satisfaction	Family Relations	Cultural Issues
Phillips, T., Wilmoth, J., Marsk, L. (2012)	Challenges and Conflicts	Journal of Black Studies	Cultural Issues
Johnson, K., Loscocco, K., (2015)	Black Marriage through Gender, Race and Class	Journal of Black Studies	Cultural Issues
Perry, A.R. (2013)	African American Men's attitudes toward marriage	Journal of Black Studies	Family
Chaney, C. Shirisisa, L. Skogrand, L. (2016)	Religion on Black Marriages	Journal of Black Studies	Spirituality

Secemsky, V., Ahlman, C., (2006)	Longstanding relationships originating in Childhood	Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy	Family
Owen, J., Chapman, K., Quirk, K., Inch, L., & France, T. (2012)	Relationship Education for low income African American couples	Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy	Equity Cultural
Hurt, T. (2013)	Meaning of Marriage Among black Men	Journal of Family Issues	Cultural Issues Family
Brown, E., Orbuch, T., Bauermeiste, J., (2008)	Religiosity and Marital Stability	Journal of Family Issues	Spirituality
Allen, D, Olsen, D., David, H. (2001)	Types of African American Marriages	Journal of Marital and Family Therapy	Spirituality Cultural Issues
Barton, A., Beach, S., Hurt, T., Fincham, F., Stanley, S., Kogan, S., Brody, G. (2016)	Marital Enrichment For African American Couples	Journal of Marital and Family Therapy	Family
Whitton, S., Stanley, S., Markman, H., Johnson, C. (2013)	Divorce Proness in First Marriages, and Remarriages	Journal of Marriage and Family	Family
Addo, F., Lichter, R., Daniel, T. (2013)	Black and white wealth differentials	Journal of Marriage and Family	Equity Cultural Issues

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher documented the results of the content analysis. The data depicted the rate of occurrence African American, heterosexual, married couples shows up in the literature. After the frequency of the articles were recorded, the themes emerged: Family, Spirituality, Cultural issues and Equity and written in detailed to depict the Qualitative parts of the study. The above themes suggest some important factors to consider when working with African American long-term couples.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS

This chapter will provide a discussion of the results of this content analysis. In addition, limitations, conclusions, and implications are offered.

Discussion

The goal of this content analysis study was to examine articles written 2007-2017, in 10 scholarly journals to find what has been written about long-term African American couples married 20 years or more, using content analysis methodology. The researcher was specific in looking for key elements by selection of key words and searching the ten journals in the study. In the event an article did not have the words, African American, heterosexual, long term marriage as defined by 20 years or more, then the article was eliminated.

The researcher built the research from the research questions: What has been written about African American long-term marriages in scholarly journals from 2007-2017? What are the common themes documented about African American long-term marriages? The researcher determined there was very little research as it relates to long-term African American marriage.

Within the research that was located, it was concluded that life course theory was and accurate depiction of the theory that best supports this study. The life course theory helps to explain how couples move from one transition to the next and how life can be seen as a set of events and compilation of decisions made about life (Elder, 1983). This

has been proven as couples talk about their lives as they choose to stay, transition, and work through their marriages.

Upon completion of the qualitative data analysis of the pertinent articles found, four themes emerged. The themes were as follows: Family, Cultural Issues, Equity, and Spirituality. The first theme, Family, echoed in many of the articles. Family tradition, extended family members, and family of origin are important subcategories to inquire about when working with African American clients. The second theme, Cultural Issues, emerged in more of the articles than any other. The frequency level was particularly surprising because many articles focused on the family and spirituality when working with African American couples (Boyd-Franklin, 2003), while only briefly discussing cultural issues. This finding is important for family therapists as it emphasizes that the therapist must be culturally competent about the issues that couples face outside their home that inherently pour over into the marriage. The third theme, Equity, is summarized in articles as the consistent understanding of the roles that couples play in the marriage. Once those roles are blurred or misunderstood, conflict may arise in the marriage. The fourth theme, Spirituality, is primarily used as a strength, foundation, and tool that African Americans use to remain resilient in their relationships. Hill (2003) emphasized this theme as well. The conclusion can be drawn that all four themes are important in different areas, and should be explored when family therapists work with long-term African American couples. Therapeutic interventions based on these themes are likely to yield positive results.

Limitations

The number of articles found in the journals was small. Since the researcher only looked at 10 years of the 10 selected journals, pivotal years could have been left out during the study. There may have been other journals that contained articles on the research topic. Selecting more years to study might have led to locating more articles. The search used only certain key terms. There may have been other research terms that might have yielded more articles.

Implications

Implications for greater need to understand discrimination or generational trauma is implicated in several of the articles. Although these items show up in the literature there are several covert "ism's" that don't come up as often. For example, institutional racism is not typically talked about, yet its effects impact the family in its entirety. Also, implications that understanding spirituality and family as it relates to African American culture is important. Lastly, implications for academia and behavioral health centers are evident:

1. With diversity and inclusion becoming one of the important topics, understanding African American long-term marriages can change the field of behavioral health. Many companies and organizations have made it mandatory to provide these types of trainings and trainings similar to those to provide levels of cultural competency. When an organization or company choses not participate in these types of trainings it puts the company at risk for possible retraumatization.

2. Healthy marriages can promote change in larger systems. Many articles published describe the extent to how being married creates success for individuals. For example, individuals who marry, remain married, and remain in high-quality marriages tend to report better mental health, more robust physical abilities, and greater resiliency in dealing with challenging life events and stressors (Jones, 2014).

3. The family therapy field of study has a duty to understand and further expand on this body of knowledge to effectively work with individuals.

Conclusions

The researcher determined that cultural issues seemed to be a consistent theme among many of the articles, yet cultural competency was not one of the primary interventions or modes of treatment utilized when working with African American couples. Gaining a better understanding of what barriers or obstacles a client may endure due to their culture is an important understanding to have. To maximize work with African American couples concentrating on the four themes of spirituality, family, equity, and cultural issues can make a significant impact on the relationship of African American couples. This literature, or the lack of literature, places focus on the lack of cultural diversity knowledge to assist in better serving African American couples.

Recommendations

Researching long term African American marriages is vital to the future of family therapy. Future research in gaining understanding about how and why African American

couples remain in long-term African American marriages is valuable to society. Gaining

insight helps to effectively support families, society and the individual. Therefore, the

following recommendations are suggested:

1. Scholarly research on this topic is important because it adds to the credibility of

   serving diverse populations. The more this topic is studied the more literature can

   be located which in turn gives an individual rich data to complete studies.

2. Researching long-term African American marriages can result in creating

   beneficial evidence-based treatment strategies. Many evidence-based models

   curriculums were established after being able to prove the efficacy rates of

   reliable research.

3. Future research should involve more qualitative data that involves interviewing

   participants directly to further understand couples' "lived experiences". Being

   able to explain in detail what quantitative data details can bring a new or different

   perspective to what is understood about long-term African American marriages.

4. Learning about African American marriages should be incorporated as important

   learning plans in academia settings. Adding such literature to lesson plans will

   enrich the quality of interaction and relationship between the African Americans

   couples and the individuals whom may work with the population.

Summary

This chapter includes the discussion of the results and the limitations of this qualitative

and quantitative content analysis study. Limitations were explained, implications and

conclusions were addressed, and recommendations were discussed. This research has demonstrated the importance of looking at African American strengths, resiliency factors, and family traditions as an important part of contributing to working with African American families.

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among Black Americans. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 51,* 655-665.

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national survey of family growth. Retrieved from

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Perceptions of individuals in strong African American marriages. *Contemporary*

Family Therapy, 37(1), 22-32. DOI: 10.1007/s10591-014-9324-4

White & Gallagher, (2000). The case for marriage: Why married people are happier,

healthier and better off financially. New York: Doubleday.

Zimmerman, M. A., Salem, D. A., & Maton, K. I. (1995). Family structure and

psychosocial correlates among urban African American adolescent males.

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APPENDIX A

Pre-Coding Form

PRE-CODING FORM

Journal Title

_____:

Possible Categories for Coding

_____ _____

_____

Key Words and/or phrases and emergent themes of topics:

_____

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APPENDIX B

Coding Form

CODING FORM

Journal Title

_____

Article Citation

_____

Categories for Coding: Family_____ Culture Issues_____ Equity_____

Spirituality_____ Other_____

Key Words and/or phrases and emergent themes of topics:

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APPENDIX C

Articles for Qualitative Analysis

Family Relations

 Dew, J., Anderson, B., Skogrand, L., Chaney, C. (2017). *Financial Issues in Strong African American Marriages: A Strengths Based Qualitative Approach*.

Marks, L., Hopkins, K., Chaney, C., Monroe, P., Nesteruk, O., Sasser, D. (2008). *"Together, we are Strong": A Qualitative Study of Happy Enduring African American Marriages*.

Bryant, C., Taylor, R., Lincoln, K., Chatters, L., & Jackson, J. (2008). *Marital Satisfaction among African Americans and Black Caribbeans: Findings from the National Survey of American Life*.

Journal of Black Studies

Johnson, K. & Loscocco, K. (2015). *Black Marriage through the Prism of Gender, Race, and Class*.

Perry, A. (2013). *African American men's attitude toward marriage*.

Phillips, T., Wilmoth, J., & Loren, D. (2012). *Challenges and Conflicts…Strengths and Supports: A Study of Enduring African American Marriages*.

Chaney, C., Shirisia, L., & Skogrand, L. (2016). *"Whatever God has Yoked Together, Let No Man Put Apart" The Effect of Religion on Black Marriages*.

Journal of Family Issues

Hurt, T. R. (2013). *Toward a deeper understanding of the meaning of marriage among Black men.*

Brown, E., Orbuch, T., & Bauermeiste, J. (2008). *Religiosity and Marital Stability among Black American and White American Couples*

Journal of Marital and Family Therapy

Allen, W. D., & Olson, D. H. (2001). *Five Types of African American Marriages*.

Barton, A., Beach, S., Hurt, T., Fincham, F., Stanley, S., Kogan, S., & Brody, G. (2016). *Determinants and Long-Term Effects of Attendance Levels in a Marital Enrichment Program for African American Couples.*

Journal of Marriage and Family

Addo, F. R., & Lichter, D. T. (2013). *Marriage, Marital History and Black-White Wealth Differentials among Older Women*.

Whitton, S., Stanley, S., Markman, H., & Johnson, C. (2013). *Attitudes Toward Divorce, Commitment, and Divorce Proneness in First Marriages and Remarriages.*

Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy

Owen, J., Chapman, K., Quirk, K., Inch, L., & France, T. (2012). *Process of Change in Relationship Education for Lower Income African American Couples.*

Secemsky, V., & Ahlman, C., (2006). *A Study of Married Couples with Longstanding Relationships Originating in Childhood and Adolescence: Clinical Implications*.

EDNA K. CHISM-NICHOLAS, LCDC, LCSW-S, CPC
8628 Paper Birch Lane

Fort Worth, Texas 76123
Voicemail: 817-292-6430
Cellular: (214) 886-4872
Email: ekchism@yahoo.com

OBJECTIVE: To utilize my educational and social services experience to obtain an exciting and challenging position with the opportunity for continued professional development in the Human Service field.

EDUCATION: ***Bachelor of Science in Social Work – May 2001***
Southern University and A&M College
College of Science
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70813
MAJOR: Social Work

Master of Social Work – May 2003
Southern University at New Orleans
School of Social Work
New Orleans, Louisiana   70126
MAJOR: Social Work
CONCENTRATION: Health/Mental Health
INTERVENTION: Administration, Planning, and Organization

PHD Family Therapy Program- Enrolled presently
Texas Woman's University
College of Professional Development
Denton, Texas
MAJOR: Family Therapy

INTERNSHIPS:

January 2003   ***Great Expectations Foundation, Incorporated***
To   ***2020 Jackson Avenue***
May 2003   ***New Orleans, Louisiana   70113***

CASE MANAGER

Family Circle Program:

Provide case management services to individuals with HIV/AIDS.

- Complete Client Intake/assessment forms and clients entering the Family Circle program.
- Provide comprehensive services based on the client's treatment plan and needs,
- Increase clients accessibility to health services,
- Participate in ongoing professional staff development and training,
- Increased knowledge of treatment and therapy, for people living with HIV/AIDS,
- Coordinated and participated in community health fairs.

January 2003
To
May 2003

Southern University at New Orleans
School of Social Work
New Orleans, Louisiana   70126

PEER EDUCATOR

.

Student Led AIDS Awareness Project (S.L.A.P):

- Provide on campus HIV/AIDS prevention educational classes.
- Assist with research, planning and implementation of International Resource Group Grant
- Facilitated staff and community planning meetings and presentations,
- Assisted in the creation of flyers, handout materials, brochures and other information materials for distribution,
- Designed first annual SUNO World AIDS Day balloon launch,
- Oversee daily activities of program as president,
- Selected for New Orleans World AIDS Day Committee,
- Participated in community and social action efforts important to the mission of the organization,
- Successfully recruited future volunteer peer educators.

Southern University and A&M College
College of Science
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70813

COORDINATOR

Girls Serving With a Purpose (GSWAP):

Supervised a leadership program for 27 high school females, to focus on levels of achievement.

- Provided direct and indirect supervision for all project staff,

- Oversee the leadership program and its volunteer component,
- Provided supervision for two LSU undergraduate students,
- Planned and organized leadership, volunteer, and social events,
- Created GSWAP's Bylaws and constitution,
- Originated YWCA's First Annual Christmas Fundraiser,
- Coordinated and participated in meetings of the advisory board and potential partners.

Jetson Correctional Center for Youth Intern:
- Assist counselor as co-leader in group sessions,
- Engage clients in developing problem solving skills,
- Assisted adolescents with development of improved behavior control and coping skills,
- Counsels and assists clients in understanding causes and contributing factors to their problems,
- Utilize community resources in case planning.

WORK EXPERIENCE:

January 2017
To

Present **TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**

2800 S. University
Fort Worth, Texas 76129

Adjunct Instructor
- Teach instructional activities, lecture, and facilitate class discussion
- Develop individualized lesson plans based on TCU merit procedures
- Maintain student retention
- Provide appropriate evaluation and feedback to students
- Advise students on academic curriculum

March 2013
To

Present **AUTHENTIC COUNSELING and COACHING CENTER, LLC**

601 University Suite 112
Fort Worth, Texas 76107

Owner/Therapist

- provides individual, marital, couple, family, and group therapy
- perform therapeutic services with clients with various diagnosis and/or traumatic history
- refer clients to appropriate resources as necessary
- provide life, spiritual, financial and business coaching
- provide therapy to children, adolescents, adults, and elderly
- provider Christian counseling
- complete psychosocial evaluations
- utilize, trauma, play therapy, solution focused therapy, and EMDR therapy
- Outreach and community base evaluation and consultations
- Participate in community health fairs
- Present various professional development and social service topics to diverse populations
- Monitor and implement various and state and federal contracts
- Telehealth, online and virtual therapy

MENTAL HEALTH & MENTAL RETARDATION of TARRANT COUNTY

1527 Hemphill Street

Fort Worth, Texas 76107

May 2004
To

April 2018

Assistant Director Behavioral Health Services

- Oversee Children's Trauma Care Project
- Oversee daily activities of Children and Family services clinic
- Oversee Child and Adolescent interns
- Asst. Director over inpatient/outpatient substance use youth facility
- Asst. Director over 85+ medical, administrative, and direct care staff
- Liaison between addictions and mental health trauma services
- Monitor and implement state and federal mandated outcomes
- Research and evaluate best practices for trauma informed services
- Initiate and collaborate with key community stakeholders

- Develop and implement preventative methods of best practices for the department
- Provide and research professional development opportunities for staff
- Committee member for CRCG, the local community mental health liaison board

Team Leader II/ Program Manager II

- Oversee programming for a special needs diversionary juvenile offender program
- Train and oversee undergraduate and graduate interns
- Supervise intensive level trained therapist
- Establish and build community connections
- Develop Preventive client centered strategies
- Develop and provide community outreach training
- Maintain client spreadsheets and reports
- Complete COC assessments with juveniles released from Tarrant Juvenile Justice Department
- Complete diagnostic, financial eligibility, and treatment planning for clients
- Assist with operations of child and adolescent clinic

Program Manager II

- Managed and supervised 22 child and adolescent Family Intervention staff,
- Managed allocation of programmatic resources,
- Serves as a Unit Liaison with inter and intra-agency programs as assigned,
- Develops and submits special reports/or assignments,
- Oversees and develop professional development training for staff,
- Review and carryout program evaluation objectives
- Present on special topic areas in relation to children services
- Create and design program policies
- Participate in program evaluations

Family Interventionist

- Provided mental health case management to children and families with emotional or substance use concerns

- Conducted patient family education and crisis interventionist services to families
- Taught parenting skills to parents following Bloomquist and Barkley curriculum
- Completed treatment plan and fee assessment based on clients needs
- Research best practices to increase maximum quality client services
- Participate in family advocacy interventionists
- Coordinate housing, medical and psychiatric services for families
- Complete service coordination and case management services to special populations such as military families and culturally diverse individuals

Team Leader II

- Adapted and implemented Crisis Counseling Program and DSHS program guidelines, procedures, policies, rules, and regulations,
- Oversee daily activities of programmatic tasks,
- Develops team schedules, priorities, and created standards for achieving program goals, coordinated and evaluated program activities,
- Maintain 1,000,000+ team budget, performs complex administrative work.
- Assigns and supervises the work of others, initiates and coordinates staff training
- Completed quarterly reports and maintained local database
- Develop and collaborate relationships with local/regional volunteer, pastoral, social service and governmental organizations.
- Completed grant for continuity of care crisis services.
- Monitor CCP Team budget to ensure compliance with state and federal guidelines. Tracks and reports expenditures. Procures and ensures accountability for equipment, supplies, and office space for workers.

CRISIS, SCREENING& RISK MANAGEMENT INTERVENTIONIST

- Provided emergency intervention, crisis resolution, information& referral, &support & reassurance
- Coordinate emergency services with the local entities, including law enforcement. Provide approximate follow through& follow up.

- Maintain "at risk" system information and act accordingly as required
- Provide periodic reports and information to agencies and businesses with which Crisis Services has contracts.
- Interview collaterals to file mental health warrants for temporary detention and evaluation of clients
- Attend mandatory QMHP meetings.

February 2012
To

September 2015

OPPORTUNITIES COUNSELING CENTER
601 University Ste. 105
Fort Worth, Texas 76107

- provides individual, marital, couple, family, and group therapy
- perform therapeutic services with clients with various diagnosis and/or traumatic history
- refer clients to appropriate resources as necessary
- facilitate battered intervention prevention groups
- facilitate anger management groups
- facilitate parenting groups
- complete intake, exit, and individual group sessions

August 2010
To

August 2011

WESTWOOD COLLEGE
4232 N. Freeway
Fort Worth, Texas 76137

Adjunct Instructor

- Teach instructional activities, lecture, and facilitate class discussion
- Administer classroom routines and rules
- Develop lesson plans based on Westwood policies and students needs
- Track accurate student records such as attendance and grading records
- Provide appropriate evaluation and feedback to students as necessary

- Monitor progress of student academic activities
- Incorporate teaching techniques that foster student retention

Oct 2009
To

December 2012   **TEXAS HEALTY MARRIAGE & RELATIONSHIP INITIATIVE**
P.O. Box 764274
Dallas, Texas 75376

Director of Development/Educator

- Volunteered all administrative services
- Teach healthy marriage, healthy relationship, healthy families curriculum
- Assist in writing and monitoring grant funds
- Training community members and professionals
- Responsible for creating and implementing lesson plans and curriculum

QUALITY INDEPENDENT SERVICES COORDINATORS OF LOUISIANA

3925 North I-10 Service Road Suite #117

June 2003   *New Orleans, Louisiana 70002*
To

March 2004   **CASE MANAGER**

- Facilitates client access to community resources and relevant mental health services,
- Maintains and reports applicable statistics regarding programs and client services, including detailed tracking of client activities in relation to the plan of care
- Assesses clients social history, evaluates effectiveness of care plan and progress made by the client,
- Assists clients in developing goals and areas of need, and provides emergency crisis services as needed,
- Assists client to develop natural resources and make contact with social support networks,
- Documents all client encounters and contracts made on behalf the client,
- Complete and submit billing documentation as appropriate, which include following state billing guidelines of Medicaid.

October 2000
To
June 2002

YOUNG WOMEN CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
3955 Government Street
Baton Rouge, Louisiana   70806

LEAD EDUCATOR & COORDINATOR

- Taught abstinence based programs around the state of Louisiana to over 5,000 adolescents,
- Researched grant materials for proposals,
- Co-authored curriculum information,
- Assisted with Youth Entrepreneurship Program, and
- Trained and assisted all incoming educators,
- Conduct group sessions with middle school students following a managing pressures curriculum,
- Implemented curriculum sessions in a creative, timely, organized and interesting fashion, true to the intent and goals of the program,
- Assisted project director and supervisor with sequence and selection of lessons and life skill material,
- Assisted supervisor in coordinating special events, PTO meetings, open houses, parent's sessions, etc as needed, and to staff these events.

June 1999
To

April 2001

ISLE OF CAPRI CASINO & HOTEL
321 Isle of Capri Blvd.
Bossier City, Louisiana 71171

HUMAN RESOURCE CLERK

- Responsible for filing and updating confidential and personal folders,
- Maintained and protected confidentiality of information relating to the company, and company participants, volunteers and employees,
- Performed data entry relative to the company,
- Engaged in customer service relations,
- Marketing and public relations for fundraiser events,
- Developed good working relations with employees, supervisors and customers.

Summer 1995
And

Summer 1996

NEW LIFE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
3244 Meriwether Street
Shreveport, Louisiana 71109

69

TEACHER ASSISTANT

- Assisted 2 and 3 yr olds with lesson plans and social activities,
- Planned lessons and activities contained in a selected curriculum for maximum facilitation of behavioral learning,
- Assisted in developing curriculum for toddlers,
- Completed enrichment activities with other staff to maximize and reinforce curriculum messages and potential

PROFESSIONAL AFFLIATIONS:

- American Red Cross Volunteer
- Young Women Christian Association
- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.
- Military Child Coalition
- Mental Health Connection Cultural Competency Subcommittee
- Community Resource Coordination group (CRCG) Member

VOLUNTEER:

- David Raines Community Center- Social Work Aide
- Shreveport Recycling Center-Responsible for inspecting proper items into proper
  Bins,
- Fund-raisers- Raising money for Sickle Cell Anemia, Jerry Lewis Telethon
  United Way drives, preparing Thanksgiving baskets, Headed clothes and
- Food drives, visiting with nursing homes, and assisting with rebeautification of
  Downtown Baton Rouge area.
- Children's church Ministry
- Christian Counseling Ministry

PRESENTATIONS:

- National Mental Health Conference Poster Presenter (2016)
- National Trauma Conference, Preconference presenter (2016)
- Sundance CEU Presenter (2016)
- Trauma Informed Training (2015-2016)

- Mental Health First Aid (2014-2016)

SPECIAL SKILLS:

- Licensed Clinical Social Worker-Supervisor
- Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor
- Qualified Mental Health Professional
- Certified Texas Notary Public
- Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR)
- Trauma Training with IDD clients
- Computer Literate in Access, Microsoft Word, Power Point, Excel, and Publisher
- Knowledge of SPSS system for statistical data analysis software
- Skilled in HIV/AIDS Prevention and Education
- Critical Incident Stress Management Training
- Understanding, Assessing and Treating Disaster Survivors training
- National Incident Management System Training
- Conflict Resolution/Family mediation
- Multicultural Training
- Trauma Focused CBT Training
- Military Counseling Training
- Certified in Marriage enrichment facilitation:
- Certified in Family Wellness
- Certified Event Planner
- Certified in ASSIST
- Certified Mental Health First Aid facilitator