

African American Parents' Likelihood to Seek Help in Wellness Dimensions & Scholars' Perception of Wellness

Makayla Bentley, Counselor Education, Florida A&M University

Introduction

Abstract

Students spend at least six-hours a day at school where academics are the major focus. This study highlights a need to consider the impact of holistic educational settings rather than traditional settings that focus primarily on academics. As part of the Freedom School 6-week reading summer camp, scholars were introduced to holistic wellness through Mind Bright (MB) Wellness Afternoon Activity. This mixed methods study explores the perception of wellness in educational settings for scholars and parent's wellness help-seeking.

Aims of the Research

The purpose behind this study is to explore the perception of wellness in educational setting for African American children in the Florida A&M University Development Research School (FAMU DRS) Freedom Schools and the likelihood of their parents seeking help in the different area of wellness. By exploring the perceptions of the scholars, future researchers may be able to determine factors to improve health education and application of wellness curriculum in the African-American community. Additionally, school counselor and adolescent mental health counselors have basis to advocate for the implementation of wellness initiatives.

Research Questions

Research Question #1: What is African American students' perception of Wellness?

Research Question #2- What is the likelihood of parents seeking help from a professional?

Method

Research Design

This study is mixed method cross-sectional design. Additionally, the parental surveys were chosen to observe the phenomena of healthy living and help seeking opinions that may influence scholars' perspectives.

Participants

The participant group is a stratified sample of consented African-American Freedom Schools Scholars and parents that were selected off the scholars identifying as African American, participating in the Wellness Afternoon Activity, and enrolled as Level 3 Scholars. Parent participants had to have a scholar attending Freedom Schools.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected over the six-week camp period and included multiple data sources. The last week the scholars completed the focus group and the parents completed their survey.

The parent surveys investigate the likelihood of help-seeking in each dimension of wellness, Mental-Emotional, Physical, Spiritual, Financial, Intellectual, and Social.

If my child had a mental health concern, seeking help from a mental health professional would be..

	3	2	1	0	1	2	3	
Useless								Useful
Important								Unimportant
Unhealthy								Healthy
Ineffective								Effective
Good								Bad
Healing								Hurting
Disempowering								Empowering
Satisfying								Unsatisfying
Desirable								Undesirable

The focus group interviews explored the child's lived experience with the MB wellness intervention and their view of wellness before and after. In combination with parent's data, I am coding the scholars focus group responses for positive or negative experiences or expressions like, "They gave really great messages about how to deal with stress and stuff like that, and it gave us an opportunity to learn new things."

Results

Findings

The analysis of parent surveys showed overall positive responses which suggests an overall positive response to wellness help seeking, but some more than others. Scholar's Focus Group is in preliminary analysis.



Name	Most Positive	Value	Most Negative	Value
Use	Social Health	0.13	Mental Health	0.29
Importance	Physical Health, Social Health	0.17	Spiritual Health	0.38
Health	Social Health	0.17	Physical Health	0.38
Effectiveness	Social Health	0.25	Mental & Physical Health	0.46
Good	Career-Financial, Social	0.17	Physical Health	0.29
Healing	Spiritual & Social	0.21	Physical Health	0.50
Satisfying	Career-Financial	0.17	Mental & Social Health	0.38
Desirable	Social Health	0.17	Spiritual	0.38

Discussion

The parent survey is self-reported and there is no way of knowing based on these responses how likely they are to seek help. Semantically positive responses are aggregate as more likely and these trends juxtaposed to scholar's perception of the different areas of wellness.

Every scholar who participated in the focus group expressed their lived experience while participated in the Wellness Activity. During analysis, the concern of information delivery rather than the actual context surfaced, but the scholars mentioned the desire to learn more about wellness in various ways.

Key References

Brooks, J.E. & Moore, D.D. (2016) The impact of childhood experiences on perceptions of health and wellness in African America young adults. *Journal of African American Studies*, 20, 183-201.
 Roach, L. F., & Young, M. E. (2007). Do counselor education programs promote Wellness in their students? *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 47(1), 29-45.0

The research reported here was supported by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, through Grant R305B170017 to Florida State University. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of the Institute or the U.S. Department of Education.

