

APPENDIX A

Research Support

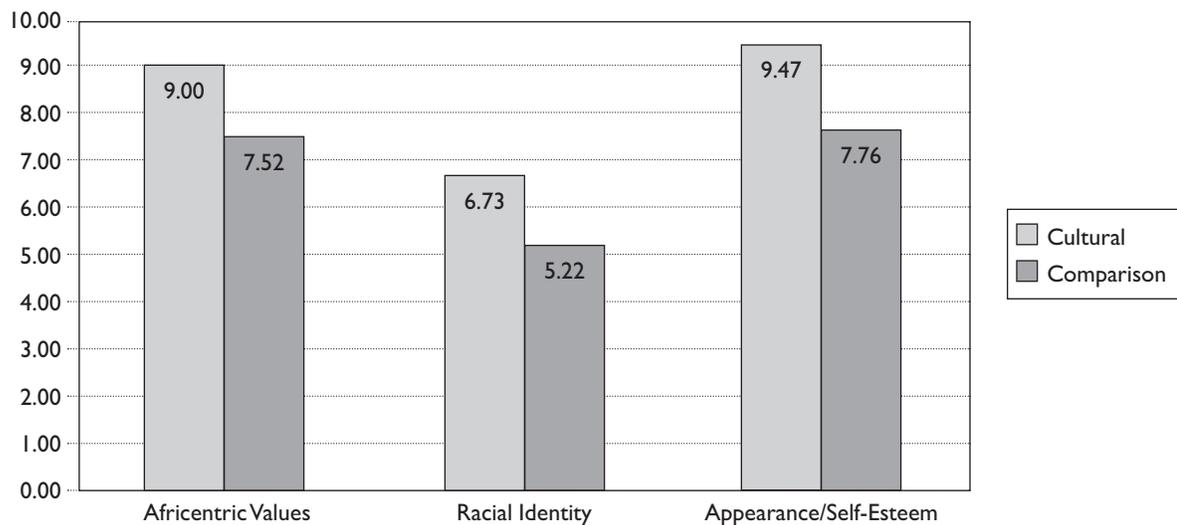
What is the evidence that the *Sisters of Nia* curriculum will result in the objectives outlined previously? More than 300 girls 10 to 14 years of age have participated in the *Sisters of Nia* curriculum or a similar cultural program in Washington, D.C., and Richmond, Virginia. More than 200 others have participated in comparison group activities that have allowed us to determine whether or not participating in the cultural program produces the desired changes. Two outcome studies show that participants in the cultural curriculum have improved in targeted outcomes.

One study evaluated the effectiveness of the cultural curriculum for strengthening resiliency among African American preadolescent girls (Belgrave, Chase-Vaughn, Gray, Addison, & Cherry, 2000). Participants were African American girls ages 10 to 12 who resided in an urban community in Washington, D.C. Fifty-five girls participated in the cultural curriculum, and 92 girls were in a comparison group. Girls in the comparison group were exposed to guest speakers and recreational activities but did not receive the cultural curriculum.

Girls in the cultural curriculum met once a week for two hours over a period of four months. They were engaged in exercises and activities designed to increase feelings of self-worth, Africentric values, and ethnic identity. Analyses involved comparing participants in the cultural group with participants in the comparison group on posttest measures while holding pretest scores constant. Findings showed that participants in the cultural curriculum group scored significantly higher on measures of ethnic identity, Africentric values, and self-concept than participants in the comparison group at posttest (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Posttest Scores for Cultural Variables for Cultural and Comparison Groups



A second study evaluated the effectiveness of the *Sisters of Nia* curriculum for increasing cultural values and beliefs, including ethnic identity and gender roles, and for decreasing relational aggression among a sample of girls in Richmond, Virginia (Belgrave, 2002). Fifty-nine girls ages 11 to 12 years of age participated in 15 two-hour cultural curriculum sessions or in tutoring sessions (comparison group). Measures of ethnic identity, gender roles, and relational aggression were administered to both groups at the beginning and the end of the intervention.

The findings showed significant differences in ethnic identity and marginally significant increases in androgynous gender role beliefs for girls in the cultural curriculum group but not the comparison group at posttest (see Figures 2 and 3). Androgynous

Figure 2

Posttest Scores for Participants in *Sisters in Nia* and Comparison Groups

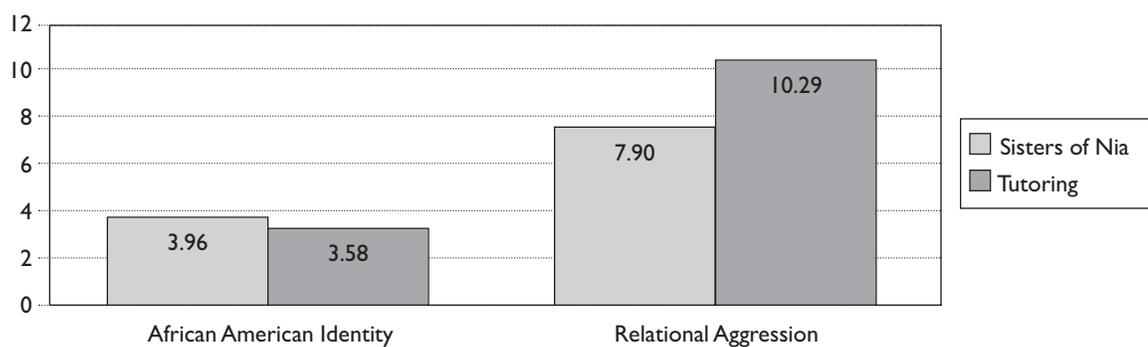
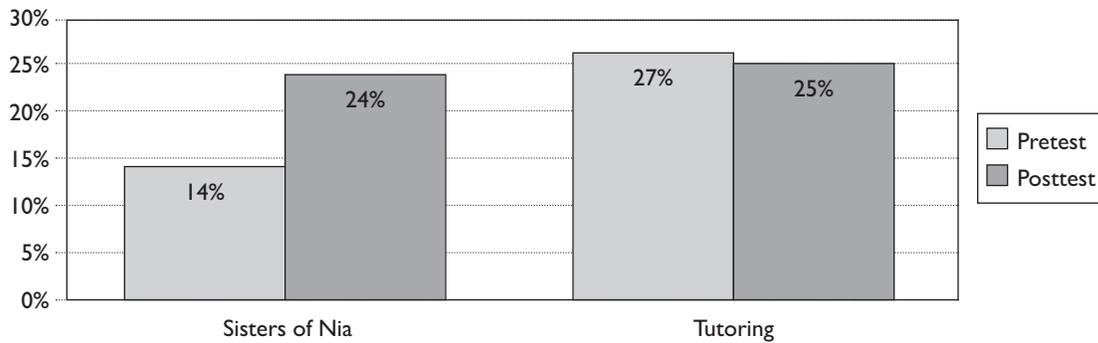


Figure 3

Percentage of Participants with Androgynous Gender Role Beliefs at Pretest and Posttest for *Sisters of Nia* and Tutoring Participants



gender role beliefs endorse both feminine and masculine gender roles. These beliefs are linked to several favorable outcomes for female adolescents, among them higher school achievement, higher life-course expectations, and less-risky sexual behaviors. Also, participants in the *Sisters of Nia* group decreased in relational aggression (verbal insults, gossiping, putting others down, and so forth), but that was not the case for the comparison group.

REFERENCES

- Belgrave, F. Z., Chase-Vaughn, G., Gray, F., Addison, J. D., & Cherry, V. R. (2000). The effectiveness of a culture- and gender-specific intervention for increasing resiliency among African American preadolescent females. *Journal of Black Psychology, 26*, 133–147.
- Belgrave, F. Z. (2002). Relational theory and cultural enhancement interventions for African American adolescent girls. *Public Health Reports, 117*, S76–S81.