2021

Marginalized Voices: Stories of Resilience Among At-Risk Youth in Southern China

Lynne Ruth Picker
Bethel University

Marginalized Voices: Stories of Resilience Among At-Risk Youth in Southern China

by

Lynne R. Picker

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of Bethel University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

Saint Paul, MN

2021

Advisor: Dr. Mary Lindell

Reader: Dr. Marta Shaw

Reader: Dr. Nativity Petallar

Abstract

The stories of at-risk minority youth living in rural southern China, are stories waiting to be told. These are the stories of trauma and courage as they discover their pathway from risk to resilience. This study points to the need for continued study on the cultural dimensions of risk and resilience in the lives of rural minority youth in developing countries. A phenomenological approach was deployed in the qualitative study to explore the lived experiences of rural minority youth who grew up in the Family Village Care Center. The participants were Yao and Zhuang nationality who all experienced trauma in their biological family. While in primary school, the youth and their siblings moved to Family Village, a care center located in the same district as the youth. The researcher conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews in Chinese via the Zoom web-conferencing tool. Data collection also included document analysis of public journals produced by the center. Through the lens of the resilience theory the study explored the themes of resilience that emerged from the lived experiences of the youth in their social and cultural context. It also explored the culturally sensitive supports they received at the Family Village Care Center. The supports provided were: Family Village staff support, family unit support, educational support, physical support, and emotional support. The study discovered five themes of resilience that emerged from the lived experiences of the participants. They are: I experience the love of a family, I value education and try my best to succeed, I know where to go to get help, I want to share with others, I experience self-confidence through artistic expression. Additional research is recommended to examine the effectiveness of using the Family Village Support Model with at-risk youth in other rural communities of the Greater Mekong Subregion.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my dad. You left me too early in your young life. You loved learning, and you cheered me on as I moved to Asia to study language and learn culture. You came to visit me in Hong Kong and somehow managed to have conversations with my non-English speaking Chinese friends. You had a gift for making people feel important and loved, and your kindness transcended culture and language. This study is in your honor. I love you dad.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter I: Introduction

Introduction to the Problem

Etzion and Romi (2015) defined at-risk youth as "those who are in spiritual, mental, or physical danger…young people who have difficulties functioning within the social and educational settings for their age group, and eventually drop out of the normative route" (p. 184). In other words, the term "at-risk" indicates problems of behaviors, attitudes, or deficiencies, which can lead to potential future problems if adequate interventions are not implemented (Cohen, Silber, Sangiorgio, & Iadeluca, 2018; McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter, & McWhirter, 2016).

The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) is home to a rising number of at-risk youth who face complex challenges within their environments. The countries of the GMS include Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, and China's Yunnan and Guangxi province. (See Figure 1).

Over the past two decades, this area of the world has undergone rapid development, which has greatly impacted rural communities and family units (Chen & Stone, 2013; Pan & Ye, 2017). As a result of this rapid urban development, the rural youth of the GMS face a myriad of risks including: poverty (Graham & Jordan, 2011; Zimmer & Van Natta, 2018), sex-trafficking (Schrader & Wendland, 2012), poor education, illiteracy, academic failure (Pan & Ye, 2017), lack of intimate parental attachment due to parental migration (Dai & Chu, 2018; Graham & Jordan, 2011; Zhao, Wang, Zhou, Jiang, & Hesketh, 2018), homelessness, abandonment, drug use, mental health issues, and marginalization (Graham & Jordan, 2011).

The countries of the GMS are challenged to implement effective interventions for their at-risk youth.

Figure 1. Greater Mekong Subregion. The researcher is the copyright holder of the map.

According to Pan and Ye (2017), China's economic development, which is characterized by modernization, industrialization, and urbanization, has had a great impact on China's rural communities and families. Increased migration, changes in urban-rural education policy, a decline in rural society and an overall deterioration of rural education, have all had a dramatic effect on rural, at-risk youth. Man and Wang (2016) cited the dramatic effect modernization has had on the family unit. China is challenged to deliver adequate social welfare services to support

the growing number of vulnerable children. This is especially true in the rural community (Chui & Jordan, 2017).

Parental migration of the rural parent to the city has resulted in a group of rural at-risk youth known as left-behind children and floating children. Left-behind children are children left in the countryside to be cared for by grandparents, relatives, or left to care for themselves. Floating children are those who accompany their parents to the city, however, due to China's strict household registration system, they are not entitled to the same education benefits as urban students. Also, their parents work long hours and are not able to adequately care for their child's needs (Mu, 2018). According to a report by the All-Women's Foundation (2013), China's population of left-behind and floating children has climbed to 100 million. These children do not receive the traditional family support, which is a characteristic of Chinese culture.

Another category of rural at-risk youth are orphaned children. The Chinese term for orphan is *Gu er*, which means a child who is isolated and alone (DeFrancis, 1996). The definition of orphan varies according to location. On a national level, orphans qualify for government support only if both parents die and they have no other extended family to support them. However, on a provincial level, the definition varies. Shang and Fisher (2014) noted that Local Civil Affairs officials define the criteria based on culturally defined norms rather than based on the central policy. There is a discrepancy in the exact population of orphans in China. According to Chui and Jordan (2017), this is due to varying definitions of the term and unstandardized data collection methods. In 2005, the Ministry of Civil Affairs conducted the first survey on orphans and discovered 573,000 orphans in China and 86.3% lived in the rural community (Chui & Jordan, 2017). In 2011, the population increased to 720,000 (Man, Barth,

Li, & Wang, 2017; Shang, 2011). However, UNICEF (2008) conducted an independent study and discovered a population of 21 million orphans in China.

The majority of China's orphans live in the rural countryside. The most common reason rural children become orphans is that their father dies, and their mothers abandon them due to poverty (Shang & Fisher, 2014). In the rural community, once a woman marries, she becomes a member of her husband's family. If her husband dies, the extended paternal family is obligated to care for the children but not obligated to care for the widow (Yan, 2003). Because the widow cannot support herself, she leaves the countryside to search for employment or she remarries. Culturally, she is not permitted to take her children with her, and therefore she has no choice but to abandon her children (Shang & Fisher, 2014).

According to Chinese culture, the role of developing healthy children lies solely within the responsibility of the extended family (K. Wong & Lee, 2005). However, due to rural poverty and migration, the traditional family unit has disintegrated, which has created a vulnerable situation for at-risk youth. Deeply embedded in Chinese culture is the Confucius teaching of filial piety, honoring and sacrificing for one's extended family. The "family" refers to the extended family rather than the immediate nucleus family. In the Chinese family, parents take care of children when they are young, and the children care for their parents when they are old. Honoring parents and grandparents extends beyond this life. Ancestors that have died still watch over their families and the living family members must prepare offerings at the family altar so that the deceased is not deprived or neglected. Migration and poverty have impacted the rural family and disrupted the traditional family support system, which has produced vulnerable conditions for rural at-risk youth.

China's rural community is in a steady rate of decline, which magnifies the plight of at-risk children (Pan & Ye, 2017). Rural communities lack structured interventions that can provide support for the marginalized (Biao, 2007; H. Zhou, 2012). The majority of China's population resides in the rural community, and the rural school has historically been far inferior to urban schools (H. Zhou, 2012). Rural schools frequently suffer from poverty and often are unable to provide their teachers with the most basic salary (Xin, 2002; Zhao, Zhou, Wang, Jiang, & Hesketh, 2017; J. Zhou, 2017). Large classes, multiple duties, and heavy workloads all contribute to the lack of qualified teachers in the rural community (Biao, 2007; Dello-Iacovo, 2009; Qingyang, 2013; Z. Sun & Leung, 2014). Rural children are 3.7 times less likely than urban children to enroll in school (H. Zhou, 2012).

As China's rapid economic growth continues, the wide array of social problems increase for marginalized children, especially in the rural community where the state welfare provision is weaker than the urban areas (Shang, Saldov, & Fisher, 2011) To address these complex issues, the Chinese government has implemented a series of welfare policies to help care for and protect the most vulnerable children. In 2001, the Standards of Children's Welfare Institution produced a national scheme "to safeguard children's rights and interests, to help children to integrate in the community and to promote the development of children" (Shang & Fisher, 2014, p. 55).

Background of the Study

According to Man et al. (2017), China is home to the second largest population of children in the entire world. Rapid economic development and changes in social structures, such as parental migration, have had a critical impact on the structure of the family. As a result,

China's number of vulnerable children is the highest it has ever been (Man et al., 2017; Man & Wang, 2016).

Man et al. (2017) detailed the tragic events that brought the circumstances of China's vulnerable children to the forefront. In 2012, five Chinese street children burned to death while keeping warm next to a fire in a garbage can, and in the following year two young children starved to death in their home. These tragedies caught the attention of citizens across China, and as a result, the government was forced to rethink their current child welfare system. In 2013, China's Ministry of Civil Affairs implemented a nationwide child protection program to care for the country's vulnerable children who were suffering in the wake of the fast-growing economy. Most research studies focus on the problems these children, families, and communities face. Only a few studies examine possible solutions. Without sufficient research, social workers and policymakers lack a comprehensive overview of the child protection issues within mainland China (Man et al., 2017).

Statement of the Problem

As a result of China's economic development over the last two decades, millions of migrants have moved from villages to the cities, in the largest migration in human history (Zhang, 2000). This rural-to-urban massive population movement has had a significant impact on the rural family and community (Beh, 2015; Dai & Chu, 2018; Pan & Ye, 2017; Zhao et al., 2017; Zimmer & Van Natta, 2018). Due to economic challenges, poor living conditions in the city, and the strict *hukou* household registration system, parents who migrate to the city in search of work often leave their children at home in the care of family members. China's population of left-behind children has climbed to over 61 million (All-China Women's Federation, 2013), and

by 2027, it is projected to increase to 300 million (Dai & Chu, 2018). According to the All-China Women's Federation (2013), approximately 53% of the left-behind youth in China live with one parent, 33% live with grandparents, 11% live with non-family members, and 3% live alone.

Left-behind children face multiple challenges. Within Chinese culture, the extended family is the sole provider for all needs of the child. Migration disrupts children's attachment to their parents and weakens the ability of the extended family to support the children's healthy development. Grandparents are often not equipped to provide the financial, emotional, and educational support their grandchildren need (Dai & Chu, 2018; Graham & Jordan, 2011; Zhao et al., 2017). As a consequence of these disruptions in parental relationships, left-behind children frequently develop emotional and developmental problems including loneliness, anxiety, depression, behavioral issues, nutritional deficiency, and cognitive developmental delays (Beh, 2014; Dai & Chu, 2018; Liu, Li, & Ge, 2009; Sun et al., 2015). Left-behind children are more likely to suffer abuse, exploitation, and neglect (Bakker, Elings-Pels, & Reis, 2009; Givaudan & Pick, 2013). In Huazhou, Guangdong province, 94% of the sexual assault cases involved left-behind girls (Beh, 2014). Left-behind children often have higher rates of suicide (Sun et al., 2015).

As highlighted in a UNICEF (2009) report on left-behind children, policies and programs need to be developed across the world to help ensure that at-risk youth who have experienced abuse or abandonment, receive the support they need to mitigate the psychosocial effects of trauma. Studies have proven the critical role that supportive community networks can have on the wellbeing of at-risk youth (Givaudan & Pick, 2013; Graham & Jordan, 2011).

According to Man et al. (2017), international Non-Government Organizations provide 34.1% of the support for China's at-risk youth. This study focused on one international NGO, the Family Village Care Center, which is located in one of the poorest communities of Yunnan province. Over the past 10 years, the center has cared for 115 orphaned youth. Presently there are 82 youth, ages 3-17 years old, living at the center. Sixteen youth have already graduated from high school and are all attending university. In 2006, during a tourist visit to the community, Timothy and Linda Li discovered many children abandoned, neglected, and abused. In response to the needs of these children, they established Family Village Care Center in December 2009. The Li's researched the foster family model in the U.S., but discovered the local Chinese foster parent was not equipped to deal with the emotional issues of the children. They also researched the local Chinese institutional model, but believed it lacked the family support these youth desperately needed. As a result, they created the family living model; a family-like atmosphere within a structured community life. The center provides a safe environment where children can receive nutritious meals, educational support, and social cohesion in a family environment. It is the goal of the center to provide a safe environment where these children can mature into well rounded adults (C. Li, personal communication, August 10, 2020).

The voices of at-risk children in non-western settings remain somewhat absent in resilient literature (Mu, 2018; Ungar, 2008). This study provided English speakers the rare opportunity to hear the stories of at-risk Chinese youth who have experienced childhood trauma and their experiences at the Family Village Care Center. The stories of these children can help inform educational, political, and community leaders about culturally embedded pathways of resilience

within the culture of southern China. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to better understand the lived experiences of at-risk children living within a care center in this region, so that effective intervention programs can be initiated to support and empower the most vulnerable, to help give volume to the voices of marginalized youth.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of at-risk youth located in southern China. The participants in this study live at the Family Village Care Center, which incorporates a culturally informed family living model. Through the lens of resilience theory, the study's findings will help broaden our understanding of resilience factors that emerge within this cultural context. This information will help leaders develop practices to support resiliency in children and youth in non-western cultures, specifically China.

Research Questions

RQ1 Who are the students of the Family Village Care Center?

a. What do their lives look like?

b. What supports do they receive to mitigate the effects of trauma?

RQ2 How are they coping with traumatic events in their lives?

a. What themes of resilience emerge from their lived experiences?

Significance of the Study

Researchers agree, more needs to be done to give voice to the at-risk youth located in rural Asia and treatment models need to be developed which are effective in non-western communities (Bohr & Tse, 2009; Graham & Jordan, 2011; Schrader & Wendland, 2012; X. Sun

et al., 2015). The significance of the current study was to better understand the lived experiences of at-risk youth at Family Village Care Center in southern China, add to the understanding of resilience in the culture of mainland China, and better equip those who care for at-risk youth in China and surrounding Southeast Asian countries. By exploring the lived experiences of at-risk youth in southern China and broadening the understanding of resilience factors that emerge, the current study will serve as a springboard for further advocacy and development of interventions on behalf of at-risk youth in other Southeast Asian countries (Beh, 2015). Without further action, the next generation of at-risk youth will be unable to change the at-risk cycle, which will, in turn, hinder the social fabric and economic growth of these countries (Beh, 2015; Mu, 2018).

Rationale

Mu and Hu (2016) noted that the at-risk youth of China have been overlooked in regards to resilience research. This study will help broaden the understanding of resilience within the cultural context of China as it is discovered how these youth have negotiated their way through their own vulnerabilities and opportunities. It is the hope of this researcher that it will serve to multiply their individual voices into a united and powerful group of marginalized voices.

Definitions:

Chinese language: In this dissertation, Chinese language refers to Mandarin Chinese, the official language of China. Although the spoken form varies from region to region across China, the written form is the same – Simplified Chinese.

At-risk youth is defined as "those who are in spiritual, mental, or physical danger…young people who have difficulties functioning within the social and educational settings for their age group, and eventually drop out of the normative route" (Etzion & Romi, 2015, p. 184).

Confucius and Confucianism: Confucius was a Chinese teacher and philosopher of the Spring and Autumn period in Chinese history. Confucianism is a social and ethical philosophy of Confucius which emphasizes morality, continuous learning, harmony in social relationships, and personal reflection to become a person of noble character (Fei, Hamilton, & Wang, 1992; Lee, Shek, & Kwong, 2007).

Epoche is defined as an attitude of putting aside one's personal assumptions, prejudices, and viewpoints in order to understand the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Filial piety is the Confucius teaching which emphasizes devotion and reverence for the family, especially the elders (K. Wong & Lee, 2005).

Floating children is a term used to describe the children who accompany their migrant parents from the rural countryside to the urban community for the purpose of work. Due to China's strict household registration system, these children are not entitled to the same benefits as urban students (Mu, 2018).

Gao Kao is a Chinese term meaning university or college entrance examination (DeFrancis, 1996).

Greater Mekong Subregion: The countries of the Greater Mekong Subregions include Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, and China's Yunnan and Guangxi province.

Gu er is a Chinese term meaning an orphaned child. The literally meaning is a child who is isolated and alone (DeFrancis, 1996).

Household Registration System is a system in China that officially registers, recognizes, and records residents in a particular area. It is a complete account of the individual's personal

information and limits the individual from seeking education, work, or social benefits outside of their registered community (Beh, 2015; Ma, 2010; Mu, 2018).

Informal Kinship Carers is the term used to describe the relatives, who are the primary caregivers for the orphaned child when the parents are deceased or have abandoned the child (Shang, Saldov, et al., 2011).

Left-behind children is defined as children who remain behind in their rural village under the care of a single parent, grandparent, extended family, or on their own, while one or both parents migrate to the city in search of work (Beh, 2015; Biao, 2007; Mu, 2018).

Resilience theory refers to "the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances" (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990, p. 426).

Triangulation is a powerful research tool which is the coordination of data from different sources to help increase the credibility of the research findings (Bogdan & Biklen, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Xiao Qu: A Chinese term meaning a district within a city or town (DeFrancis, 1996).

List of Abbreviations:

COVID-19: CoronaVirus Disease 2019

CYRM: Child and Youth Resilience Measure

EPMC: Empathy-Promoting Musical Components

IRB: Institutional Review Board

IRP: International Resilience Project

GMS: Greater Mekong Subregion

MGI: Musical Group Interaction

NGO: Non-Government Organization

LBC: Left-Behind Children

Assumptions and Limitations

This study focused on the lived experiences of youth who live at Family Village Care Center in southern China. The research sample was three youth who are 18 to 23 years old. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the three youth, the director, and the founder off the Family Village Care Center. The interviews were the primary tool that generated qualitative data to help inform understanding of the experiences of at-risk youth living in a non-Western setting. This research used purposeful sampling. The study is delimited to youth who are 18 to 23 years old.

Positionality of the Researcher

Since 1990 the researcher lived and worked in Hong Kong, Guangxi, and Yunnan, China. From 1990 – 1996 she studied Cantonese at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, followed by Mandarin and Iu-Mien languages at the Institute for Nationalities in Nanning, Guangxi. This Chinese language study gave her an invaluable opportunity to understand China, Chinese people, and Chinese culture. In 2007, the researcher founded a community arts center in China that focuses on teaching Western music to Chinese children. These 30 years of experience provided a unique perspective on conducting research among at-risk youth in southern China.

Nature of the Study

This chapter describes the at-risk youth living at Family Village Care Center in southern China. This qualitative study explored their lived experiences to help broaden understanding of

resilience factors in a non-western context. The researcher used qualitative semi-structured interviews to discover themes of resilience among this at-risk group.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

A review of the literature is presented in Chapter Two. Chapter Three includes a description of the theoretical framework, research design, methods, limitations, and ethical considerations. The results of the findings are found in Chapter Four. Chapter Five presents general conclusions and implications of the study as well as recommendations for future research.

Chapter II: Literature Review

China

The Communist Party of China (CPC) governs China. The political system is a centralized system with little democratic process. In 1978, China began its economic reform policies which essentially opened its doors to the outside world and introduced a market-based economy (Pan & Ye, 2017). Since that time, China has become the fastest growing economy in the world. China has 23 provinces, five autonomous regions, four municipalities, and two autonomous special administrative regions (Shang & Fisher, 2014). The following table shows the five levels of government.

Table 1

China's Five Levels of Government (Shang & Fisher, 2014)

Level	Name	Types	Number
One	Province	Province, Autonomous region, Municipality, Special administrative region	34
Two	Prefecture	Prefecture, Autonomous prefecture, Prefecture-level city, League	333
Three	County	County, Autonomous county, County-level city, District, Banner, Autonomous banner, Forestry area, Special district	2856
Four	Township	Township, Ethnic township, Town, Subdistrict, District public office, Sumu, Ethnic sumu	40,906
Five	Village (informal)	Neighborhood committee, Neighborhoods or community, Village committee or group, Administrative village, Natural village	704,386

China's rapid economic growth since the 1980s, has been accompanied by a wide array of social problems including challenges to deliver adequate support for at-risk children. These

marginalized groups include left-behind children, abandoned children, street children, children in poverty, orphans, and abandoned children (Chui & Jordan, 2017; Shang, Fisher, & Xie, 2011). These challenges are magnified in the rural sector, where state welfare support is weaker than in the urban community (Chui & Jordan, 2017; Leung, 2006; Shang & Fisher, 2014).

Rural Communities

Migrant children.

The new development of the transnational family due to migration is now affecting millions of children around the world. Growing numbers of parents are joining this global movement of workers and moving from the rural village to the urban area in search of steady employment and higher wages (Graham & Jordan, 2011; Zimmer & Van Natta, 2018). Rather than sit idle in the countryside, these migrants are leaving their families for wealthier countries and regions. The result of this phenomenon is the creation of the transnational family. A study conducted among transnational families in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam revealed a significant association between migration and the psychological wellbeing of the left-behind children (Graham & Jordan, 2011).

As a result of China's exponential urban growth over the last two decades, millions of migrants have moved from villages to the cities. The driving forces behind this massive migration includes the increasing rural-urban income gap (Beh, 2015; Mu, 2018; X. Sun et al., 2015), lack of jobs in the agriculture sector, and the modernized market economy (Beh, 2015; H. Wang, 2009). In 2016, the population of migrant workers reached 281.71 million, and experts expect it will exceed 290 million by 2020 (Mu, 2018). Further complicating the impact of migration is China's out-migration policy as controlled by the strict *Hukou* Household

Registration System (Beh, 2015; Mu, 2018; J. Zhou, 2017). In Western countries, migrants can claim their rights to equal education and receive social welfare benefits from local governments. However, this is not the case in China (Ye, Murray, & Wang, 2011) where local governments have no responsibility towards the non-registered residents in their jurisdiction. The rural migrant is targeted as a cheap labor force and considered a second-class citizen (Mu & Hu, 2016). Established in the 1950s, the Household Registration System was created to prevent the rural resident from moving into the urban communities, resulting in two distinct categories of social status: the rural resident classified as "peasant," and the urban dweller termed "resident" (Beh, 2015; Xiang, 2007). The Household Registration System contains a complete account of the individual's personal information, including the city, town, or village in which they registered. This system limits the individual from seeking education, work, or social benefits outside of their registered community (Beh, 2015; Ma, 2010). In 2006, the Chinese central government amended the Household Registration System, allowing rural peasants the freedom to transfer their registration to the city. However, the reform required the migrant to live at least five years in a fixed location within the city limits, provide proof of a stable income, and pay into the social security program for at least five years. These stipulations effectively ruled out the average migrant worker due to their transitory lifestyle and low wages (Mu, 2018). As a result, migrant workers who could not comply with these additional regulations did not qualify for social benefits, health care, or education for their children.

Parental migration created two categories of at-risk children, floating children, and left-behind children. Their population is 100 million and accounts for one third of China's child population (All-China Women's Federation, 2013). Mu (2018) cited floating children as those

who accompany their migrant parents to the city. This term described their experience because they do not have equal access to quality education and social welfare because of their unregistered status. The author discovered that four out of every ten children in Beijing are considered floating children. The second category of at-risk youth as a result of migration is the left-behind child. Rather than bringing their children with them to the city, the majority of migrant workers chose to leave their children behind in the rural community to be cared for by family members, friends, or to live alone (Beh, 2015; Biao, 2007; Ling, Fu, & Zhang, 2015; Mu, 2018; Ye et al., 2011). Researchers further refined the definition to include a length of time: six months (Beh, 2015; J. Liu, Liu, Yan, Lee, & Mayes, 2016) and twelve months (Fan, Su, Gill, & Birmaher, 2010). Still, others have added a required age during separation. Mu (2018) cited the State Council's (2016) definition of left-behind as "those below the age of 16 who have both parents working in the city or one parent working in city while the other parent has no caregiving/guardianship competence" (p. 2). The All Women's Foundation (2013) further described left-behind children as 17 years and below.

China's population of left-behind children has climbed to over 61 million (All-China Women's Federation, 2013), and by 2027, it is projected to increase to 300 million (Dai & Chu, 2018). Approximately 53% of the children live with one parent, 33% live with grandparents, 11% live with non-family members, and 3% live alone (All-China Women's Federation, 2013). Left-behind children face many challenges as they grow up in rural communities without the support of one or both parents. Caregivers are often ill-equipped to meet the emotional and educational needs of the left-behind child (Dai & Chu, 2018; Mu & Hu, 2016; Zhao et al., 2017), often due to their low education levels and physical weakness (Biao, 2007). Physical

inaccessibility and lack of communication with parents can disrupt children's attachment to their parents (Dai & Chu, 2018; Graham & Jordan, 2011; Ling et al., 2015; Zhengkui Liu, Li, & Ge, 2009). As a consequence of these disruptions in parental relationships, left-behind children frequently develop emotional and developmental problems including loneliness, anxiety, depression, behavioral issues, nutritional deficiency, and cognitive developmental delays (Beh, 2015; Dai & Chu, 2018; Zhengkui Liu et al., 2009; X. Sun et al., 2015). Several studies researched the effect of age at separation on the left-behind child (Ling et al., 2015; Zhang, Bécares, & Chandola, 2015). Further studies found that the negative impact on the left-behind children was more significant in the context of the mother leaving compared to the father's absence (Asis, 2006; Ling et al., 2015; Z. Liu, Li, & Ge, 2009; Y. Lu, 2012). Left-behind children are more likely to suffer abuse, exploitation, and neglect (Givaudan & Pick, 2013; Pan & Ye, 2017) and often have higher rates of suicide (Ling et al., 2015; X. Sun et al., 2015). In the city of Huazhou, Guangdong province, 94% of the sexual assault cases involved left-behind girls (Beh, 2014).

After the accidental drowning of a left-behind girl in Zhejiang province, children's clubs were organized to help provide psychosocial support for left-behind children. The program was the first of its kind in China and included after school educational support and age-appropriate activities. A local community support network funded the project. The clubs increased in number across the province, however, enthusiasm declined and by 2013, only three clubs remained (Zhao et al., 2017).

Beh (2015) conducted a study in Chongqing province, where 49.9% of their children are left behind. The author researched the various types of initiatives and programs implemented to

help meet the needs of at-risk children. In 2010, the local government of Wuxi county launched a project aimed at caring for 1.3 million left-behind children. The project included building 400 boarding schools, providing surrogate caregivers, and developing left-behind children care centers. The care included support in education, financial assistance, school construction, food, training, family links, and psychological support (Beh, 2014).

Orphaned children.

UNICEF (2018) defined orphan as a "child under 18 years of age who has lost one or both parents to any cause of death" (p. 1). In 2015, there were 140 million orphans globally, and 61 million orphans in Asia. In most industrialized countries, the term "orphan" is used only for those children who have lost both parents. The definition of orphan in China varies according to the location. On a national level, orphans qualify for formal support if both parents die and they have no other family to care for them. However, on a provincial level, the definition may vary. Shang and Fisher (2014) noted, "Local Civil Affairs officials tend to define orphan according to culturally defined criteria with their province, rather than on the basis of central policy (p. 10). In some parts of rural China, a child whose father dies is considered an orphan because they are the main source of income and the mother often abandons the children due to poverty. Shang and colleagues (2011), in their research among orphans in rural China, defined orphans as children who meet one of the following three criteria: both parents have died, one parent died and the other parent is absent for more than two years, or both parents relinquished or abandoned the child. The authors noted the most common reason rural children become orphans is because their father dies, and their mother abandons them. In the rural community, once a woman marries, she becomes a member of her husband's family. If her husband dies, the paternal

extended family is obligated to care for the children (Yan, 2003). Most commonly, rural mothers abandon their children when their husbands die because they cannot support themselves; the extended paternal family is not obliged to support the mother. Also, the mother is not allowed to take her children away from the home village because they belong to the paternal extended family (Shang & Fisher, 2014; Shang, Saldov, et al., 2011).

The Chinese term for orphan is *Gu er* which is literally translated, a child who is isolated and alone (DeFrancis, 1996). High (2020) translated *Gu er*, as "lonely child" (p. 11). Estimates of the actual number of orphans in China varies greatly according to different sources. The Ministry of Civil Affairs conducted the first national survey on orphans in 2005 and found there were 573,000 orphans and 86.3% of them (495,000) lived in rural areas (Chui & Jordan, 2017). In 2011, the population of orphans increased to 720,000 (Man et al., 2017; Shang, 2011). However, UNICEF (2008) conducted an independent study in 2008 and estimated there were about 21 million orphans in China. Chui and Jordan (2017) attributed the wide discrepancy in the numbers to different definitions of orphans as well as unstandardized data collection methods.

Support for At-Risk Children

Over the past few decades, the Chinese government has implemented a series of welfare policies to help care for and protect the most vulnerable children. In March 2001, the Standards of Children's Welfare Institution published a national scheme for child development and welfare with the goal "to safeguard children's rights and interests, to help children to integrate in the community and to promote the development of children" (Shang & Fisher, 2014, p. 55). In 2003, the Ministry of Civil Affairs standardized foster care for orphans and revised the Adoption

Law of the People's Republic of China. In 2009, the Ministry of Civil Affairs implemented a minimum standard of subsidy for orphans. In the next year, the central government launched the policy "Opinions on Strengthening the Protection of Orphans," which detailed social welfare provisions including education, health care, housing, and living (Chui & Jordan, 2017, p. 1156). According to Man et al. (2017), in May 2013, China's Ministry of Civil Affairs began a pilot child protection program with the intent of establishing a public child protection program nationwide. The Ministry of Civil Affairs implemented the new system in 20 pilot cities (counties) and 78 cities (counties) the following year. The new protection system targeted the most vulnerable children, including left-behind children, migrant or floating children, abused children, orphans and street children. In March 2016, the Minor Protection Office was established to focus on child protection (Man et al., 2017). Although these policies were applied on the national level, the state's responses varied according to the location. Chui and Jordan (2017) noted the orphans living in the urban areas received more benefits than the orphans in the rural community.

According to Shang and Fisher (2014), China provides five forms of alternative care for orphans: "informal kinship care, foster care, adoption, family group care, and residential care" (p. 23). Alternative care is a term used to describe the formal and informal care for children whose parents can no longer care for their needs (United Nations, 2009). The first type of alternative care is the informal kinship care model and is the dominant alternative care for orphans in developing countries (Shang & Fisher, 2014). The majority of the orphans in China are cared for by informal kinship care (Shang, Saldov, et al., 2011). Shang and Fisher (2014) defined informal kinship care as "when grandparents or relatives other than parents, who have a

blood connection with the orphan, take primary responsibility for the child after the parents die or leave" (p. 104). Informal kinship care is considered the most beneficial care because the children are raised in a family environment similar to their own values and identity. In addition, they can build healthy parental attachments with family members with whom they already have a relationship (Farmer & Moyers, 2008). However, the rural households who care for their orphaned family members are challenged to survive because they receive little support from the government. In urban areas, extended family care givers are more likely to receive financial help. However, in most rural communities, the families caring for the orphans receive little or no support (Shang & Fisher, 2014; Shang, Saldov, et al., 2011).

The ongoing economic and social changes in China are resulting in higher costs for caring for children (Saunders, Shang, & Li, 2007). These rising costs magnify the plight of the rural family. Orphans who are in the care of aging grandparents are likely to live in extreme poverty, especially if their grandparents do not work and there is no government support (Shang & Fisher, 2014; Shang, Saldov, et al., 2011). Shang (2014) conducted a large-scale study in 56 villages, in 19 counties and cities across 13 provinces in China to explore the situation of orphans within kinship care arrangements. They discovered that 86.3% of the orphans they studied lived in rural communities. Most of the kinship care households faced economic difficulties. Almost one third of the families indicated they were the poorest in their village, and two thirds were among the poorest 10%.

The second form of alternative care is foster care. This form of care is not common in developing countries because the social service supports which are required to regulate and support the foster care system are limited (Colton & Williams, 1997). Formal foster care is

usually provided for two groups of children. One group is orphaned or abandoned children without disabilities, usually babies, who are then adopted after a period. The second group is orphaned children with disabilities. In this case, adoption is not as likely, and the child lives temporarily with a foster family until they are adopted or reach adulthood. In either case, the state child welfare institution remains their legal guardian (Shang & Fisher, 2014).

Adoption, family group, and residential care are the final three forms of alternative care for orphans in China. The family group care provides residential care for orphans. These children are under the guardianship of the state, but the government and non-government organizations (NGO) run the residential facilities and care for all the needs of the child. The government run facilities are in a hospital-like setting and are known as orphanages or institutions. Before the early 1990s, the government strictly controlled the welfare system and welfare institutions were not allowed to accept outside funding. It was illegal for an NGO to run a children's welfare institution. During this time, "dying rooms" and the high mortality rate of children within the welfare system were widely reported. In response, after 1993, the government changed their policies and donations were allowed and quickly became a large part of the institution's income (Shang & Fisher, 2014).

Shang and Fisher (2014) noted one of the most important social outcomes of the economic reforms is the growth of the non-government organization. The number of national and international NGOs significantly increased since the 1990's when they began providing care for orphaned and abandoned children. Churches, individuals, NGOs and private enterprises began to mobilize their resources to care for the vulnerable Chinese children on a large scale (Shang, 2008).

Rural Education

Further complicating the plight of the rural at-risk children is the condition of China's rural schools. Since 1985, school funding was decentralized, which resulted in local governments being responsible for funding schools in their communities, intensifying educational inequality (Biao, 2007; Dello-Iacovo, 2009). Many rural schools suffer from a lack of trained teachers, low socio-economic conditions, poverty, and high drop-out rates (Dello-Iacovo, 2009) Some rural schools reported an inability to pay their teacher's salaries (Biao, 2007; Xin, 2002). Large classes, low wages, multiple duties, and heavy workloads all contribute to the lack of qualified teachers in rural schools (Biao, 2007; Qingyang, 2013; Z. Sun & Leung, 2014).

Over the last two decades, China implemented an education reform that is a shift from the outdated examination-oriented system *yingshi jiaoyu*, to a quality education system *suzhi jiaoyu,* which focuses on the entire child. This new reform is a holistic form of education that encompasses the entire child, encourages individual expression, critical thinking, and ultimately develops well-rounded citizens (Chen-Hafteck & Xu, 2008; Dello-Iacovo, 2009). It is in direct contrast to China's historical system of education, which emphasized examinations, rote memorization, student passivity, and teacher-centered learning (Chen-Hafteck & Xu, 2008; Dello-Iacovo, 2009; Riley, 2013; J. Wang & Zhao, 2011). These quality education curriculum reforms included new subjects: language arts, social studies, mathematics, sciences, physical education, art, and music (Lou & Ross, 2008). The study of music is considered an integral component of this new focus on aesthetic education (Yu & Leung, 2019).

However, rural schools are challenged to incorporate the curriculum reforms due to a lack of qualified teachers and a lack of funding needed to incorporate the new curriculum (J. Zhou, 2017; Y. Zhou & Xiong, 2017). For example, the new music curriculum standards were issued by the Chinese government in 2011. These standards included four content areas: music appreciation, performance, composition and improvisation, and music and culture. Yu and Leung (2019) studied 2,206 music teachers from 15 regions/provinces and found that most of the participants did not understand how to implement the new music curriculum. Fifty-one percent of the schools represented could not offer music classes due to a lack of teachers and 27.5% had no music class because of a conflict in scheduling. A lack of teaching equipment accounted for 16.6% and 7.8% indicated a lack of school support. They also found that rural schools experienced the greatest challenges implementing the new music curriculum. The researchers noted that more needs to be done to provide rural teachers professional development support in order to successfully incorporate the new curriculum reforms.

The Chinese government has instituted reforms in the last decades to better support rural youth. However, as the numbers of rural, at-risk youth, continues to rise, China is challenged to keep up with adequate social welfare services to support the growing number of vulnerable children (Chui & Jordan, 2017).

Risk to Resiliency

Researchers agree that resilience occurs in the presence of adversity, however, there are varying opinions concerning its definition (Ungar, 2008). Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker (2000) defined resilience as:

> The dynamic process that leads to positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity. Implicit in this notion are two critical conditions: 1. Exposure to significant threat or severe adversity; and 2) the achievement of positive adaptation despite major insults on the developmental process. (p. 543)

Over the last six decades, the emerging literature on resilience focused on individuals in the Western world with an emphasis on main-stream populations and their given definition of resilience. Furthermore, the literature lacked sensitivity to non-western communities and cultural factors and how different populations manifest resiliency in everyday practices (Boyden & Mann, 2005a; Ungar, 2004, 2005). Ungar (2008) defined resilience:

> In the context of exposure to significant adversity, whether psychological, environmental, or both, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to health-sustaining resources, including opportunities to experience feelings of well-being, and a condition of the individual's family, community and culture to provide these health resources and experiences in culturally meaningful ways. (p. 225)

Ungar's definition accounted for the diverse cultural and contextual differences found within communities, families, and individuals (Mu & Hu, 2016). He believed that to understand and nurture resiliency, one must understand the context in which the resources are found. Ungar's views represented an important shift in resilience research. Firstly, it is a move from the deficit model to a strengths-based model. In other words, possessing the right resources can foster positive responses to the present adversity. Secondly, there is a consensus among researchers that resiliency is a process of interaction and negotiation between the individual and their environment (Luthar et al., 2000; Mu, 2018; Seccombe, 2002; Ungar, 2008). Thirdly,

Ungar's definition created a sense of urgency to better understand resiliency in non-western cultures (Mu & Hu, 2016). Previously thought to be a condition of the individual, their disposition, innate disposition, family traits, or community phenomenon, Gilligan (2001) countered that resiliency is "derived from a process of repeated interactions between the person and the favorable features of the surrounding context" (p. 94).

Within the process of resilience, researchers cited the importance of protective factors (Benard, 2002; Cook & Du Toit, 2005; Y. Liu, Li, Chen, & Qu, 2015). Cook and Du Toit (2005) posited,

> A protective factor is a process that interacts with a risk factor in reducing the probability of a negative outcome. The protective factors work by moderating the effect of exposure to risk and by modifying the response to risk factors. (p. 250)

These factors are divided into four categories: individual, relationships, community, and culture (Barton, 2005; Ungar & Liebenberg, 2005). Although the potential protective factors are endless, the following is a brief review of possible constructs that can contribute to resilience. At the individual level, protective factors may include easy going temperament, high intelligence, high self-esteem, self-efficacy and competence, problem-solving ability, self-awareness, perceived social support, positive outlook, empathy, possessing goals and aspirations, sense of humor, self-control, and a sense of duty (Barton, 2005; Boyden & Mann, 2005b; Kirby & Fraser, 1997; Luthar et al., 2000; Ungar & Liebenberg, 2005). Protective factors at the relationship level may include quality of parental relationships, social competence, positive role models, perceived social support, and peer group acceptance (Barton, 2012; Boyden & Mann, 2005b; Luthar et al., 2000; Masten et al., 1990; Ungar & Liebenberg, 2005). Community level protective factors may

include access to education, perceived social equity, a sense of safety and security, a community that supports at-risk youth, a local government which supports, exposure to violence is avoided, and opportunities for work (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2005). Barton (2005) and Kirby and Fraser (1997) added opportunities for achievement and growth. Protective factors in the culture category include connection to a religious organization, family tolerance of various ideologies, careful handling of change and cultural dislocation, possession of a life philosophy, self-betterment, cultural/spiritual identification and cultural identity expressed through daily activities (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2005).

Ungar et al. (2007) examined the diversity of protective factors in an international mixed-methods study conducted in 11 countries and 14 sites. The 89 youth participants had all experienced some type of trauma including death of parents, poverty, economic migration, mental illness of parent, war, or physical disability and yet were considered resilient according to a local advisory committee. The qualitative findings drawn from the interviews discovered the emergence of seven protective factors, which the participants said accounted for their ability to successfully cope despite the challenging circumstances they had experienced. The seven protective factors that emerged from the study were relationships, sense of identity, personal control and self-efficacy, social justice, access to resources, social cohesion, and connection to one's culture (Ungar, 2006, 2015; Ungar & Liebenberg, 2005).

Research demonstrated that there is a gap in resilience literature among marginalized groups living in non-western contexts (Boyden & Mann, 2005b; Ungar, 2008). As a result, Ungar (2008) launched the International Resilience Project (IRP). The IRP was a mixed-methods study that sought to better understand all aspects of resilience on a global, cultural, and

contextual scale. The study was conducted among 1,500 youth in 14 communities on five continents and included the development and validation of the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM). The study used the CYRM across the IRP's 14 research sites, including data from 1451 children, a collection of 89 interviews, observations of five focus groups, and 12 interviews of adults in various communities (Ungar, 2008). The results revealed a wide-scale variation across cultures regarding youth's ability to cope with adversity (Ungar, 2008; Ungar & Liebenberg, 2005). As a result of the study, Ungar (2008) presented four important propositions regarding resiliency across cultures: resilience in the lives of young people varies according to culture and context, the amount of influence on a child's resilience varies according to culture and context, aspects of resilience may demonstrate itself in patterns that reflect the child's culture and context, and the tensions realized between the child and their cultures and contexts are resolved in highly specific relationships.

Mu and Hu (2016) also indicated a lack of resilience research in Chinese settings, particularly among Chinese mainland youth. Mainland Chinese children make-up approximately 13% of the world's children (1-15 years) (United Nations, 2015) and yet little resilience research has been conducted in English among the at-risk youth of China. Mu and Hu (2016) conducted a study in mainland China, which focused on the validation of the simplified Chinese translation of the 12-Item CYRM (Liebenberg, Ungar, & LeBlanc, 2013). Through a thorough process of translation, cross-check translations, and back translation, a panel of four bi-lingual professionals agreed upon the simplified version of the 12-Item CYRM. The study first surveyed 437 floating and left-behind children who were nine to 16 years old and lived within two provinces. The second sample included 2632 children from the general population, who were nine to 17 years

old, from seven different geographical regions of China. The study validated the simplified Chinese version of the CYRM-12 and also provided a springboard for future uses of the CYRM in non-English speaking settings (Mu & Hu, 2016).

Resilience in Chinese Context

There is an old Chinese folk tale that described a dying father as he gathered his sons around him, drew an arrow from its sheath and broke it in two. He told his sons, "If you stand alone you are easily broken and vulnerable." The father then took all the arrows from the sheath and handed them to his eldest son. "Son number one, please break the arrows" he said. The eldest son could not break the arrows and so the father asked each of his sons to try. None of the brothers could break the arrow. Finally, the father said, "My sons, if you stand united, you will be protected and strong" (G. Wong, 2004, p. 25). This proverb illustrated the concept of resilience within Chinese culture.

Wong (2004) conducted a study among Asian immigrant families in the United States. The author explored the role that culture plays in the resilience of Asian youth who had immigrated from China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and surrounding countries and discovered a strong relationship between Confucius teaching and the process of resilience within Chinese culture. Although Confucius lived 26 centuries ago, his teachings permeate Chinese culture. According to Wong (2004), Confucius taught rules of social behavior, individuals' duties towards themselves and others, as well as duties between children and parents. He defined the practical do's and don'ts of daily living. He taught the importance of order within society and the family, which occurs when individuals exercise self-control in their words, actions, and minds. Confucius emphasized the importance of treating others in ways that benefit them. As

one becomes self-disciplined, he can benefit society. In Confucius teaching, the individual must have *ren* (仁), which means kindness, benevolence, goodness, humanity, care for others. Confucius also emphasized *ren* (忍) (different tone) which taught the importance of enduring through difficulties and pain, delaying gratification which results in self-regulation. Confucius loved education and taught that all individuals should strive for *wisdom*. Over the centuries, Chinese culture developed the belief that education was the only means out of poverty. As a result, Chinese culture highly values education (J. Zhou, 2017). The teachings of Confucius are found deep within the fabric of Chinese culture and fosters resilience in the following ways: self and cognitive regulation, self-discipline, social harmony, self-efficacy, effectiveness over one's environment, family defined rules and roles, and valuing education.

Creative Interventions for At-Risk Youth

A growing body of research has indicated that creative arts interventions positively impact at-risk children and youth. Educating through the arts provides at-risk children an opportunity to experience the innate transforming power of the arts (Bilgehan & Gülnihal, 2017). Creative art therapies include art, dance/movement, drama, music, and poetry therapy and are known as action therapies. They can be effective interventions used for individuals who experience emotional, behavioral, social, and physical disorders (Malchiodi, 2015; Malchiodi & Crenshaw, 2015; Warren, 2008). Participatory in nature, the arts empower students to "energize, redirect attention and focus, and influence emotions" (Malchiodi & Crenshaw, 2015, p. 4). In addition, they are process focused (Koopman, 2007; Malchiodi & Crenshaw, 2015). Rather than concentrating on a final product, art therapies can provide a powerful experience that transforms

participants. As Koopman (2007) stated, “musical performance is an intense process in which living and acting here and now, embodiment, wholeness, alertness, self-expression, insight in musical processes and character development come together” (p. 154).

Participation in the creative arts can help mitigate the effects of traumatic experiences for at-risk children, as it provides a transforming opportunity for expression (Aigen, 2004; Amir, 2004; Cohen et al., 2018; Gonsalves, 2010; Heath & Soep, 1998; Malchiodi, 2015; Palidofsky, 2010; Pavlicevic, 1994; Rickard et al., 2013; Schrader & Wendland, 2012; Smyth, 2002). Children who have experienced traumatic experiences often struggle with expressing themselves. The arts provide a non-verbal pathway that transcends the many traps of language and facilitates the expression of difficult emotions. It helps break the silence of isolation, and empower individuals to experience healing through the path of expressiveness (Smyth, 2002). There are several examples of creative arts interventions positively impacting children and youth in countries around the world.

Pavlicevic (1994) conducted a study in South Africa among children who were experiencing ongoing trauma as a result of war. The author reported that the children’s symptoms were loss of self-esteem and personal power, a continuing sense that their environment was out of control, and emotional insensitivity. Through the creative outlet of music, children learned to express themselves in a safe environment. This project offered them a chance to "develop inner resources of spontaneity, flexibility, expressiveness and fluidity which, it is hoped, enhance their experience of being alive” (Pavlicevic, 1994, p. 8)(p.8).

Madsen and Thiele (2003) researched The Artful Dodgers Studio, a multidisciplinary program, designed to help meet the unique needs of vulnerable and marginalized youth in

Australia, The studio used art programs to provide vulnerable youth the opportunity to express themselves freely. Adam, a participant, stated, "I don't see it as therapy as we are not always doing one-on-one and talking about our feelings. The artists give us our own space to do our own art" (p. 53). Another participant commented, "The arts are not therapy. They are a mirror to society and a hammer with which to forge it" (p. 86).

Osborne (2016) researched the academic and psychosocial impact of a music program conducted among two low socio-economic schools in Australia, which revealed an improvement in communication and math skills, and an overall improved sense of well-being among the participants. Other studies conducted among at-risk youth who participated in music education programs revealed an increased engagement in school, improved social and communication skills, improved cognitive development, and a deepened sense of belonging (Bilgehan & Gülnihal, 2017; Crawford, 2017; Rickard et al., 2013). Rauscher and Hinton (2011) discovered improved reading acquisition and increased reasoning skills among disadvantaged youth who participated in music lessons. A study conducted among a population of young refugee students who participated in music classes revealed an increased sense of self-confidence and improved self-esteem as students were provided a quality music education experience that enabled them to succeed (Crawford, 2017).

Making music in community, also known as musicing, has proven to have a positive effect on at-risk youth (Cohen et al., 2018; Koopman, 2007). Bowman (2003) defined musicing as the active practical experience in productive musical engagements (p.143). Community music has the potential to reach out to marginalized individuals who for social, cultural, or financial reasons, are not able to develop their musical talents. Although there is no consensual definition

of community music, researchers do agree that the term includes three main characteristics: a practice of collective music-making, community development, and personal growth (Koopman, 2007). Zharinova-Sanderson (2004), in her work with political refugees in Berlin, asserted that the act of communal musicing can become a force for change. Gonsalves (2010), discovered that the powerful act of making music together created a social solidarity, and helped young girls in Sierra Leone resist the oppressive forces of trauma in their lives. Making music together helped the young girls restore connection and engagement with others. Musicing helped people share experiences and better understand each other (Koopman, 2007).

Music in the community can be a powerful medium for social interaction. Musical Group Interaction (MGI), where two or more individuals play music together, has proven to have a positive effect on students' empathy (Rabinowitch, Cross, & Burnard, 2013). By performing music together, individuals experience a solid connectedness, which increases the student's empathy. This is known as empathy-promoting musical components (EPMC) (Cross, Laurence, & Rabinowitch, 2012; Hietolahti-Ansten & Kalliopuska, 1991; Huron, 2001; Rabinowitch et al., 2013). A year-long study conducted among 52 eight-to-eleven-year-old students discovered a substantial increase in empathy scores for students who participated in music ensembles (Rabinowitch et al., 2013). Creative arts performance and exhibition can be an opportunity for students to develop a stronger sense of self-confidence and self-identity as they take pride in the fruits of their hard work. This type of artistic display serves to empower self and others (Pavlicevic & Ansdell, 2004; Rickard et al., 2013).

Bowman (2002) believed that education through the arts is distinctively ethical in character as it ultimately develops the student's identity and character. He wrote: "The ethical

encounter is grounded in commitment, caring, and responsibility in order to nurture the character and dispositions people need to thrive in unpredictable or unforeseeable circumstances" (Bowman, 2001, p. 77).

Creative Intervention for At-Risk Youth in Asia

In the literature there are examples of creative interventions that positively impact at-risk children and youth in Asian contexts. Schrader and Wendland (2012) researched an aftercare center for young girls who were victims of trafficking and sexual violence in Cambodia. The purpose of the study was to explore how educational professionals can help support existing care centers who work with the survivors of childhood trauma. The study discovered the physical and psychological effects experienced by children who survive sexual abuse. They often experienced excessive shame and guilt for decisions they failed to make and situations they could not control. In addition, they suffered from anxiety, dissociation, body pain and vomiting, rapid mood changes, difficulty in expressing emotions, and some attempt suicide. The center rescued them from brothels and situations of sexual abuse and provides medical assistance, counseling support, and educational programs. One of these educational programs was a six-month music therapy project. The non-verbal nature of music empowered the girls to express emotions they could not express with words. Through dance, singing, and instrument performance, the girls expressed traumatic events through the creative arts. The results of the music therapy project revealed the girls learned to project their singing voices freely as they sang together. They also learned to write their own songs, which helped them express themselves and strengthen their self-efficacy. Participation in group instrumental ensemble performances improved their socialization skills. The study also revealed that the caregivers experienced vicarious trauma as they empathetically

listen to the traumatic events the child has suffered. Regardless of their personal experience, the caregivers frequently experienced nightmares, fear for their personal safety, and had difficulty trusting males. The music therapists provided support for the caregivers such as personal coaching sessions that focused on self-care strategies such as fostering healthy work balance and implementing peer group support networks. The caregivers also participated in music therapy sessions.

Mu (2018) conducted a study of Evergreen Community Centers, a Non-Government Organization that was founded in 2012 to serve the floating children in Beijing. Through community-based resilience building projects, the centers purpose was to promote community building and foster wellbeing in the lives of at-risk youth. The programs were free of charge and the children had opportunities to play with friends. The author viewed these centers as an oasis in the harsh reality of life in the city. Migrant parents frequently work long hours, and public schools close by midafternoon. As a result, floating children either walk the streets or return home alone for long hours. The Evergreen community centers provided at-risk youth a place to belong within the city where they were viewed as unregistered and undeserving. Using Social Network Analysis combined with an online survey, the author discovered that the resources and social support of the Evergreen Community Centers facilitated the process of resilience in the lives of the floating children through social capital and resourceful networking. Mu (2018) also cited the important role that artist expression provides to promote protective factors and foster resilience in at-risk youth.

Yeh (2011) described her work with floating children in Beijing. Her study provided a clear illustration of building resilience through experiencing art in community. The Dandelion

School Blossoms project provided at-risk students the opportunity to transform their school's environment into an artistic space that was completely their own. Her mission was to teach her students how to use their own art to express themselves and their community. Research has demonstrated that at-risk youth participating in community arts empowers them to transcend their own environment, and collectively and individually articulate their identity (Bowman, 2003; Marsden & Thiele, 2003; Yeh, 2011).

Summary of Existing Literature

This review of at-risk youth and the culturally driven process of resiliency helped set the stage for this phenomenological study that will seek to understand the lived experiences of at-risk youth living at the Family Village Care Center in southern China. Many of the struggles summarized above are evident in the student's lives as they negotiate their way through the process of resiliency in a manner unique to their culture. Reviewing relevant literature on resiliency in a non-western context, provides a framework to explore the lived experiences of youth in southern China. Creative interventions positively impacted at-risk youth in other cultures, and therefore, culturally appropriate creative interventions can also support the at-risk youth in this study.

Chapter III: Methodology

Philosophy and Justification

The researcher's first introduction to rural life in southern China occurred in 1992 while conducting a three-week piano program for minority students in a remote community of Guangdong province. The poor economic conditions of this small village, its dilapidated schools, classrooms with windows protected by bars, and void of any decoration or warmth, caused one to wonder how anyone could learn in this environment. Yet, the students were eager to learn, and the teachers expressed genuine care for their students but lacked the most basic teacher training experience. The researcher has lived and worked in Asia since 1990, first in Hong Kong and later in Guangxi and Yunnan provinces. Cantonese, Mandarin, and Iu-Mien language study consumed the first eight years. However, speaking the local languages provided a deeper cultural understanding of life in southern China. In 1998, the researcher returned to the U.S. to pursue an M.A. degree in music with the final thesis on the effects of migration upon the musical practices of the Iu-Mien minority people who were originally from southern China. In 2004, the researcher returned to Yunnan province and founded a community arts center for local Chinese students. After spending almost 30 years in Asia, the researcher hopes to use the current study to help give voice to the at-risk youth living in rural southern China.

This phenomenological study used a qualitative research design to more fully understand the lived experiences of at-risk children in southern China. Semi-structured interviews were conducted among three 18- to 23-year-old youth, the center director, and the founder of the Family Village Care Center. The questions were open-ended, with an opportunity for the participants to elaborate on items they felt were important.

Research Method and Design

This phenomenological study aimed to understand the lived experiences of at-risk youth living at the Family Village Care Center in southern China. A qualitative research design with an inductive approach that is flexible and exploratory in nature, provided the researcher an in-depth look into the lived experiences of a small number of participants within their natural environment (Patton, 2017). According to Schram (2003), phenomenology explores the experience of an individual's world, their "everyday life and social action" (p. 71). As Merriam and Tisdell (2015) noted, these life experiences contain intense human experiences such as betrayal, love, anger, etc. Choosing a qualitative study method provided the researcher the opportunity to notice the "particulars" of these experiences and made them "visible and conspicuous" (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 138). The researcher employed the phenomenological approach to better understand the mutual experience of early life as a rural youth in southern China, experiencing traumatic family events, their arrival to Family Village Care Center, and their life growing up in the center.

The phenomenological approach directed the researcher's entire research design to understand the underlying meaning and structure of the experience. Semi-structured interviews were the primary method of data collection. Before the interview, the researcher put aside personal prejudices, assumptions, and viewpoints, also known as *epoche*. According to Moustakas (1994), "In the Epoche, the everyday understandings, judgements and knowings are set aside, the phenomena are revisited" (p. 33). The researcher put aside any preconceived beliefs about the youth participants' lived experiences to minimize any interference with the discovery of the structure of the phenomenon. This was accomplished through careful listening,

attentive responses to answers, and careful analysis of the interview transcriptions. Besides interviewing the three youth participants, the researcher also interviewed the director and the founder of the Family Village Care Center. The researcher also employed additional data sources including newsletter publications, the Family Village Theme Song, video clips, and artwork, to enhance the overall understanding of the youth's lived experiences. Researchers cited the importance of drawing on many data sources to gain a fuller understanding of the phenomena. This coordination of data is referred to as triangulation and is a powerful research tool as it increases the credibility of the study's findings (Bogdan & Biklen, 2016; Mason, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

The goal of all phenomenological research is to return to the essence of the experience to derive meaning in and of itself. The researcher employed the process of phenomenological reduction, which is continually returning to the essence of the experience itself in order to discover meaning (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Once the data were collected, it was treated equally, and themes began to emerge. According to Moustakas (1994), this essential step, known as horizontalization, helps the researcher recognize and describe emerging themes. The goal was to carefully collect all details of the lived experiences of the youth participants to discover emerging themes in an unbiased manner. The final product of a phenomenological study, is to "come away from the phenomenology with the feeling, I understand better what it is like for someone to experience that" (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 46).

To effectively understand the phenomenon, the researcher composed the interview questions through the lens of the resilience theory to more fully understand the lived experiences of the youth in their social and cultural context. Researchers agree, resilience is not a static event

but rather a highly complex process (Masten et al., 1990; Ungar & Liebenberg, 2005; K. Wong & Lee, 2005). According to Masten, Best, and Garmezy (1990), "*Resilience* refers to the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances" (p. 426). Ungar (2008) cited the importance of looking at the individuals environment, family, community, and culture.

> In the context of exposure to significant adversity, whether psychological, environmental, or both, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to health-sustaining resources, including opportunities to experience feelings of well-being, and a condition of the individual's family, community and culture to provide these health resources and experiences in culturally meaningful ways. (p. 225)

Ungar (2008) posited there are many pathways to resiliency as children around the world grow up under adversity. These pathways to resiliency are embedded in local culture and thus require a contextual and culturally specific approach when studying resiliency among at-risk populations.

Research Questions

To understand the lived experiences of the at-risk youth of the Family Village Care Center, the following research questions guided the investigation:

1. Who are the youth of the Family Village Care Center?
    a. What do their lives look like?
    b. What supports do they receive to mitigate the effects of trauma?
2. How are they coping with traumatic events in their lives?
    a. What themes of resilience emerge from their lived experiences?

Setting

The Family Village Care Center, located in Lian Hua Shan, Yunnan, China, is an international Non-Government Organization (NGO) founded in 2010. Lian Hua Shan has a population of approximately 300,000 and is located within a minority region. Presently 82 children, ages 3–17, live at the care center, and 16 youth have graduated and are studying at university. The local government informs the care center staff when there are children in the rural community at risk due to poverty, death of family members, left-behind children, young children cared for by elderly grandparents, and those who experienced physical trauma with no medical treatment options. The guardians must provide verbal consent before the children move to the care center. In some cases, when family circumstances have improved, children returned to live with their parents. Since 2010, 115 children have lived at the care center. The center is located within a one building complex, similar to a residential complex in China. There is a main office area and seven family units. Each family unit has three bedrooms and one living room. Each family has an auntie caregiver who lives onsite with her husband and children. There are currently 20 local staff. All preschool and elementary children attend school in the community during the day. Junior high and high school students live at their school dormitory and return to the care center on the weekends. For the weekend returning students, there are two dormitory bedrooms. The director of the center oversees all aspects of the center's operations. She does not live on the center's campus. The founder lives in the capital city of the province. He maintains close contact with the director and regularly connects with the students who are studying at university. He also visits the center regularly.

To enhance the reader's understanding, the following photographs provide a visual representation of the study's location. All photographs were taken in the same county as the study. According to Patton (2017) and Scarles (2010), photography can be an effective tool to enhance the reader's understanding of a specific demographic location. The photos depict the conditions of the rural village schools and home villages of the youth in our study. They also show the Family Village Care Center facility and the New Year celebration activities.

Figure 2. Photograph of village school. Copyright permission granted by photographer Joel Chute.

Figure 3. Photograph of a village school classroom. Copyright permission granted by photographer Joel Chute.

Figure 4. Photograph of rural village surrounded by karst mountains. Copyright permission granted by photographer Joel Chute.

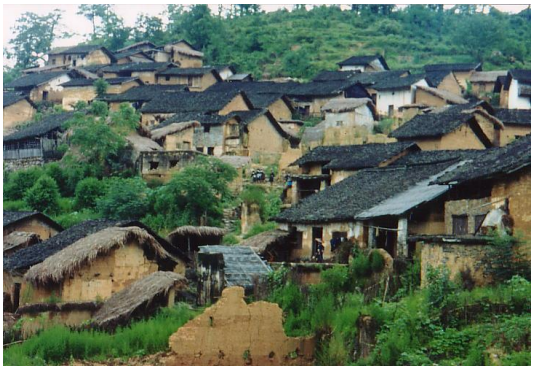


Figure 5. Photograph of rural village. The researcher is the copyright holder of the photograph.

Figure 6. Photograph of the New Year celebration food. This is one of eight tables. Copyright permission granted by photographer Director Chen.

Figure 7. Eating together in the courtyard. Photograph of New Year's celebration dinner.

Sampling Design

According to Patton (2017), a purposive sampling method is most effective when the researcher desires to achieve an in-depth understanding of specific cases. Because this is a phenomenological study, purposeful sampling method was employed to collect data to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of these specific youth in the Family Village Care Center. Rather than using a representative sample which would apply to a general population, the purposeful sampling method afforded the researcher the opportunity to explore the complex experiences of these youth. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) cited the importance of using a criterion-based selection method when choosing participants. The general criterion for this study was Family Village Care Center youth who were 18-23 years old. This group included youth in high school and youth who had already graduated and were studying at university. Chinese youth in high school have an excessive amount of homework each night. Because of this limitation, the researcher chose three youth from the group of 16 university students whose time was more flexible. In addition, this group of 16 students represent the first group of Family Village Care Center youth who grew up at the center and are now on their own in university. By learning about this specific group of youth, one can explore themes of resilience as demonstrated in their independent lives. The researcher was already acquainted with two of the selected youth. This previous acquaintance afforded a level of trust in this cross-cultural environment. Besides the three youth, the researcher interviewed the founder and the director of the care center, who has worked there since the center began.

Instrumentation/Protocols

This study used semi-structured interviews to collect data. The interview questions were informed by the current English literature available and designed to answer the research questions presented in the study and to discover emergent factors of resilience based on the resiliency literature findings. These seven factors include relationships, sense of identity, personal control and self-efficacy, social justice, access to resources, social cohesion, and connection to one's culture (Ungar, 2006, 2015; Ungar & Liebenberg, 2005). The researcher carefully composed the research questions in a culturally appropriate manner according to the location and age of the youth participants. The questions were translated into Chinese by a qualified Chinese translator living in China.

The interviews were conducted using the Zoom web-conferencing tool, on a one-on-one exchange. The interviews occurred in two locations, the researcher's office in Hong Kong and the participants home or office in China. The researcher conduced the youth and director interviews in Chinese, and the founder interview in English. After each interview, the translator transcribed the Chinese interviews into Chinese and then into English. This dual transcription allowed the researcher to double-check the translation when questions arose during the data collection stage. The translator returned to translation within 48 hours so that the researcher could use the content to inform the next interview.

Table 2
Semi-Structured Interview Questions Family Village Youth (#1)

Research Question	Interview Question
RQ1 Who are the students of the Family Village Care Center? What do their lives look like?	Where are you from? Can you tell me more about your home village? What specialty product does your home village produce? What people groups live in your community? What are their special customs? What type of special clothing do they wear? When do you return to your home village? Could you tell me about that? What is your favorite part of returning?
RQ1 Who are the students of the Family Village Care Center? What do their lives look like? What supports do they receive to mitigate the effects of trauma? RQ2 How are they coping with traumatic events in their lives? What themes of resilience emerge from their lived experiences?	When you were at Family Village, where do you attend school? Tell me more about your school. Do you like to study? What is your favorite subject? Why? How about your least favorite? Do you have good friends at school? Please describe the personality and character traits that you admire? Who was your favorite teacher? Why? Do you think getting an education is important for your future? Why? Now you are at university, how did you decide to apply for university? Who influenced you? How are you adjusting to you new life there? How is your life different than it was at the Family Village?
RQ1 Who are the students of the Family Village Care Center? What do their lives look like? What supports do they receive to mitigate the effects of trauma? RQ2 How are they coping with traumatic events in their lives? What themes of resilience emerge from their lived experiences?	How long did you live at Family Village? Can you describe your life there? How did your life change after arriving to Family Village? Can you tell me what happened in your family? Could you describe your family unit? Could you tell me about your caregivers? What was your relationship like with them? What was your favorite activity at the Family Village? Can you tell me your life story? What life lessons did you learn at Family Village? I hear there are regular volunteer opportunities for the students at Family Village. Could you describe that experience?

Table 3
Semi-Structured Interview Questions Family Village Youth (#2)

Research Question	Interview Question
RQ1 Who are the students of the Family Village Care Center? What do their lives look like? What supports do they receive to mitigate the effects of trauma? RQ2 How are they coping with traumatic events in their lives? What themes of resilience emerge from their lived experiences?	Let's talk more about your studies. Do you sometimes need help at school? When do you go to get the support your need? Can you describe a time in the past when you needed support and how you found it? Do you have a best friend? What qualities do you admire in him/her? During difficult times, do your friends stand by you? Can you describe why you came to Family Village? What happened in your family? If you have a personal problem, to whom will you go for help? Can you share with me a story about how you were able to overcome challenges? Out of everything in your life, what do you enjoy the most? What is the most fulfilling part of your life? Picture yourself in 1, 5, and 10 years. What will you be doing at that time? What would be your dream job? Why? What would it take for you to have your dream job?

Table 4
Participant Interview Questions for Family Village Care Center Director

Research Questions:	Interview Questions
RQ1 Who are the students of the Family Village Care Center? What do their lives look like? What supports do they receive to mitigate the effects of trauma?	How long have you been working at Family Village? What made you decide to work here? Can you describe the children you care for? What types of challenges do they face? What types of support do you provide? Have you seen changes in the students after they arrived at Family Village? Can you explain those changes? Does the Family Village offer educational support? Can you describe this? How do you help the children overcome the trauma they have experienced? How does the "Family" structure help these children overcome trauma?

Table 5
Participant Interview Questions for Family Village Care Center Founder

Research Questions:	Interview Questions
RQ1 Who are the students of the Family Village Care Center? What do their lives look like? What supports do they receive to mitigate the effects of trauma?	Could you describe the town where Family Village is located? Schools, business, population (people groups) Please describe to me when Family Village was founded. What model did you follow? Please describe the holistic development approach. How many caregivers are at Family Village? What qualifies them to become a caregiver? What type of special training do they receive? Are there ongoing professional development opportunities? How many children live at family village? Please describe their daily routine. What types of Adverse Childhood Experiences have the children experienced: abuse, family/household challenges, neglect, etc. What type of support does Family Village provide? In what ways have you seen the youth benefit from living at Family Village?

Data Collection

After permission to research was granted by the founder of the Family Village Care Center (Appendix C), the next of the data collection process was to seek approval of Bethel University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) committee. Participation in the study was voluntary and the researcher adhered to strict confidentiality guidelines to ensure the safety of all participants. All names were changed to provide complete confidentiality for all involved in this study. This includes individuals, Family Village Care Center, schools, and all geographic locations. The founder signed the written consent to participate (Appendix D). Due to cultural sensitivity the researcher received approval from Bethel's IRB committee to use a verbal consent

from the youth participants (Appendix E) and the care center director (Appendix F). At the beginning of these interviews the researcher read the information sheet to the individuals and received their verbal consent before the interview started. All interviews were video recorded. Patten and Bruce (2017) detailed the importance of a recorded interviews as it allows the researcher to thoroughly review data at a later date.

In the phenomenological interview, the researcher fully engaged in absorbing the information in the interview. The researcher discovered that using the video chat function of the Zoom online platform, helped the communication between the participant and the researcher. Because the researcher conducted the interviews in her second language, the physical body cues helped aid her in understanding their meaning. When the researcher sensed the question was not understood or unclear, she rephrased the question in a culturally specific manner to help aid comprehension. On one occasion, the participant did not want to discuss the content of the question. When this occurred, the researcher continued to the next question. Complete awareness of body language was important throughout all of the interviews. The researcher welcomed unprompted questions and allowed the participant to continue their thought process to the end (Van Manen, 2016). The three youth interviews looked different in their final analysis and were specific to the uniqueness of each individual story.

Documents and artifacts are also valuable sources of information in qualitative research. This type of source can be rich in data and collecting the data does not alter the research setting as can be the case when the researcher is present (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Public records and personal documents are the most common types of documents. Bogdan and Biklen (2016) noted a third type of document called “popular culture documents” which include film, video, and

photography (p.137). The researcher conducted several online searches for newsletters published by the Family Village Care Center since its beginning in 2010 and retrieved 18 newsletters, the care center's theme song, and two video clips. The researcher analyzed these popular culture documents looking for patterns, relationships, or themes in relation to the interview responses and/or research questions.

Field Test

As Creswell (2014) posited, the field test helps to validate the instruments used in the study. It will help clarify data collection plans and develop relevant interview questions to validate the research questions. Two Chinese individuals were selected to participate in the field test. Yin (2018) indicated that these tests are best selected according to access, geographic proximity, and convenience. These two individuals were selected because of their experience with Chinese at-risk youth, they knew some of the children from the Family Village Care Center, and their local proximity to the center. After reviewing the Chinese interview questions, they reordered the questions into a culturally appropriate manner, and edited some of the translation to reflect local language specificity. The English version of the interview questions show these edits.

Data Analysis

The recorded semi-structured interviews were transcribed verbatim into Chinese and then translated into English by a translator living in southern China, who committed to the confidentiality of all participants. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) cited the importance of reviewing interview transcripts immediately following the interview so that the researcher can discover emerging themes which can inform the next interview. The translator sent both the Chinese

transcription and English translation to the researcher within 48 hours of each interview in order for the researcher to use the information to inform the next interview. For example, during the first interview the researcher discovered the ethnicity of each youth. Therefore, the second interview included follow-up questions regarding their biological family's ethnic traditions. Also, if there was a question from the first interview that was not answered in a clear manner, the researcher sought advice from the translator and rephrased it for the second interview.

Upon completion of the interviews, the researcher thoroughly read through the interview transcripts and reviewed the Chinese transcription to gain a more complete understanding of the data and to discover emerging themes. Open coding was employed to develop clusters of meaning from significant statements and then assigned a code name (Creswell, 2014; Orcher, 2017). Next, the researcher reexamined interview transcripts and documents to discover any relationships between the categories and the themes discovered during open coding. Finally, overarching categories were discovered by organizing the codes into common groups. The researcher used MAXQDA software program to organize and manage the data which enabled easy access during the analysis and findings stages.

Limitations of Methodology

This study employed the qualitative research design to gain a deeper understanding of at-risk youth living at a care center in southern China. This study occurred within one care center and its findings may or may not be applicable to other similar care centers.

One area of limitation in this study was that only three youth were interviewed. Therefore, the views of other youth at the Family Village Care Center were not addressed in this

study. This is not generalizable to the other students in this center, because they have different backgrounds and experiences that may influence the study differently.

A second area of limitation includes the possibility that participants may attempt to answer the questions according to a social desirability bias based on what they project the researcher wants to hear (Muijs, 2011). The researcher attempted to minimize this limitation by asking the questions in different ways to compare the answers. Also, the pilot test participants helped rephrase the questions in ways that would reduce the potential for this limitation.

Thirdly, because of the travel restrictions in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews were conducted via video conferencing rather than in person interviews. This created challenges due to internet speeds, outside interference, and sound delays. To minimize this limitation, the researcher chose a location with high internet speed, used a high-quality external microphone, and interviewed the participants at their university which had faster, more stable internet connects. The researcher also demonstrated patience and flexibility during the interview. If the sound was not clear, the questions and answers were repeated.

Fourthly, it is not within the scope of this study to determine the degree of resiliency discovered among the youth participants. The study is limited to discover themes of resilience that emerge from their stories. The data is limited to one point in time and may capture a "good" or "bad" day. Future longitudinal studies may be able to better capture resiliency among at-risk youth in southern China.

Finally, it is beyond the scope of this study to assess the reason for the high population of at-risk youth in southern China.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations for this research are extremely important to consider as this research was conducted among a population of at-risk youth. The Belmont Report (1979) included three important principals of research ethics that guided the ethical considerations for this study: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. These guidelines are especially relevant to this study as the participants are a vulnerable population living within a non-western setting. Ungar and Liebenberg (2005), detailed the unique circumstance that the researcher faces in a non-western setting. Confidentiality and safety for each participant is imperative in locations where there is a potential danger for the subjects if their identity is disclosed. The researcher changed the name of each participant as well as the location of the research site. All audio and video recordings were stored on an external hard drive, in a separate location from any hard copies of evidence. After the researcher presents the findings, all of the personal data will be destroyed. Because the researcher has lived in China since 1994, she understands that extreme care needs to be given to the protection of students as well as protection of herself. The wellbeing of each participant was carefully considered. As Merriam and Tisdell (2015) cited, the researcher is not a therapist and needs to take great care during the data collection phase. The purpose is to collect data, not provide therapy or judgement. Patton (2015) recommended the researcher be prepared to refer the subject to resources available in the event the subject displays any form of distress in response to questions. The researcher discussed this with the pilot test participants and further recommendations were made to skip over any questions that appeared to cause the participants any type of emotional discomfort. For this study, all questions were asked in a culturally sensitive manner and within the social norms of the community.

Bogdan and Biklen (2016) emphasized the importance of voluntary participation and freedom for participants to voluntarily enter the research, understand the nature of the study, and know the obligations involved. In addition, participants should be given the freedom to leave the study at any point in time and not feel forced to participate (Bogdan & Biklen, 2016). The researcher provided a thorough explanation before the interviews commenced. (See Appendix D for written consent of care center founder.) Ungar and Liebenberg (2005) stressed the importance of including an option for requiring only verbal consent. In many non-Western countries, lengthy consent forms and disclosures by researchers creates fear of the extreme formality. Because of this cultural dynamic, the Bethel IRB approved a verbal consent for the youth participants and care center director (Appendix E and F). The researcher conducted the consent procedures in a culturally appropriate manner and refrained from any coercion tactics. Prior to the research, the researcher attended the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative modules (CITI) and received certification of successful completion of the coursework.

Chapter IV: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to tell the stories of three at-risk youth who grew up in a care center located in rural southern China. The study examined the supports they received to mitigate the effects of trauma, and documented themes of resilience that emerged from their lived experiences. The participants represented the three youth, the care center's founder, and the care center's director. The interviews used the Zoom web-conferencing tool, in a one-on-one exchange. The researcher also reviewed 18 Family Village journals published between 2015 and 2020. She also checked the Family Village website for information. This chapter describes the results of the interviews through a narrative description of their life stories, the support they received, and the themes of resilience that emerged. In addition, it also includes stories of other Family Village children, caregivers, and one biological aunt found within the 18 published journals. No names are given for the sake of anonymity. These stories are woven throughout this chapter. The research questions provide the framework for this chapter. Finally, a summary of findings is presented.

Discussion of the Sample

The participants in this study were three youth living in rural southern China who were orphaned at a young age and taken into the care of the Family Village Care Center. They were part of the first group of youth who graduated from high school and left the care center to study at university. Due to the need to protect the identity of the participants and the care center, demographic information is omitted. A summary of the participants is provided in Table 6. Each youth participated in two 60-minute, semi-structured interviews. The researcher conducted

the interviews in Chinese and the interviews were transcribed and translated using a local Chinese translator living in southern China. The researcher also employed additional data sources including newsletter publications, the Family Village Theme Song, video clips, and artwork to enhance the overall understanding of the youth, the care center, and the emergent themes of resilience.

Table 6

Youth Participants Overview

Name	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Years at Family Village	Present Circumstance
David	22	M	Yao	7.5 years	Graduated technical college, in practicum training
Cheri	20	F	Yao	10 years	1st year at university
Lily	20	F	Zhuang	9 years	1st year at university

Research Questions

To understand the lived experiences of these at-risk youth, the supports they received at Family Village Care Center, and the themes of resiliency that emerged, the following research questions directed the study:

1. Who are the youth of the Family Village Care Center?
    a. What do their lives look like?
    b. What supports do they receive to mitigate the effects of trauma?
2. How are they coping with traumatic events in their lives?

a. What themes of resilience emerge from their lived experiences?

Background of Family Village Care Center

Mr. and Mrs. Li, the founders of Family Village Care Center, are Chinese Americans originally from Hong Kong. In the early 2000's they traveled to southern China and visited the rural communities of Yunnan province. On one of these trips, they saw many abandoned children. They decided they wanted to make a difference in the lives of these youth. Mr. Li told his children:

> Do you know that there are many orphans in China who want people to love them? We really want to go to China to find the children who need to be loved. Your mom and I have loved you since you were little. Why don't we go live with these kids and love them like we love you?

In 2005, the Li family moved from the United States to Kunming, the capital city of Yunnan, China. Over the next five years, they worked in China providing job opportunities for disabled youth. They also worked in a local orphanage. In 2009, they officially established the Family Village Care Center Foundation and registered it with the local Lian Hua Shan County Civil Affairs Bureau.

Mr. and Mrs. Li researched other care systems to find the most culturally appropriate model to use at Family Village Care Center. Because of their experience working in an institutional orphanage, they were familiar with that type of care system. They discovered that a structured, disciplined life fosters self-discipline, develops strong survival skills, and can help bring stability to at-risk youth. However, they also considered the disadvantages. The children grew up without a healthy attachment to adults, which can hurt their emotional development.

They found that these children lack self-confidence and struggled to love and trust other people. Mr. & Mrs. Li also researched the foster care system in the U.S. They discovered the advantages of providing a home environment for these youth. However, they did not think the foster care model would work well in China. From these two models, they created a care system that included the routine, disciplined life of the institutional orphanage, and the foster care system's family environment. They believed a combination of the two care systems was the best model for Chinese children in this cultural setting. They called their care system the Family Village Model.

Family Village Youth Participants

Who are the youth of the Family Village Care Center? What do their lives look like?

Youth Participant #1: David's Story

The darkest day of my life was when my parents and grandparents passed away. They died when I was nine years old, my sister was twelve, and my brother was six. We really did not know what to do and who would take care of us. I was born in a rural mountainous area in 1999. My family consisted of my mom, dad, grandpa, one sister, and one brother. Our source of income was farming. Even though we were poor, our family was always happy. I didn't have much of a concept of what being poor was when I was young. I thought that was just how life was for everyone.

Following his parents' and grandparents' deaths, David and his siblings went to live with his father's eldest brother. Although David was only nine at the time, he knew that his uncle's family was poor, and they struggled to care for three additional children. "I felt like an extra

person that should not be there." Life continued like this for two years until the day David fell down the mountain.

> One day when my brother, cousin, and I went to get some logs from the mountains, we were pushing them down to the road below when my clothes were caught up by some of the logs. I slipped and rolled down the hill along with the logs. My head went down first. It all happened so fast. When I came to, I could not move my arm. I used my last breath of energy and yelled to my brother and cousin for help. My cousin ran to call his father, and they carried me home. I know now that I dislocated my shoulder, but they didn't know how to help me. They told me it was going to be ok. We went to the village elder and he wrapped my arm in Chinese herbs. We had no money to get help at the hospital. Every night I would toss and turn until 3 or 4 am. I was very uncomfortable. I was really scared and depressed. After about one week, the aunties and uncles from Family Village came to our home.

During that time, the local government officials informed the Family Village Care Center of orphaned children in David's village. After visiting other families, the care center's staff stopped at his house. When they arrived, David was sitting on a stool in the corner. He felt afraid of the strange faces and wondered if they were from the Family Planning Department to check up on one-child policy violations. He wondered if they were going to arrest them. "I just sat there, and they offered me some food. I ate it. Then they gave me some new clothes, but I couldn't put them on because of my arm."

When the staff discovered David's injured arm, they immediately took him to the doctor in their local village. After examining his arm, the doctor told them to go to the county seat

hospital for surgery. At that time, there were no roads to the hospital. So, David, his auntie, and her younger brother, escorted by the Family Village staff, traveled by foot over the mountain to a road on the other side. There they took a vehicle to town. That night they arrived at Lian Hua Shan County Hospital. David had never traveled outside of his home village, and everything seemed strange and scary.

> After we arrived, we went to dinner. I had never seen the big city before, and I felt very strange while eating at the restaurant in the big city. The tables were very large. I dared not to move. I only ate a little, even though I was very hungry. There were so many people around me. After dinner they took us to a hotel. They told us they would pick us up at 8 a.m. the next morning and take me to the hospital for surgery.

The next morning the Family Village staff arrived at the hotel at 8 a.m. to pick up David and his family. To their surprise, they were gone. The hotel staff told them that they left at 7:30 a.m. to return to their hometown. The Family Village staff rushed to the bus station and asked at the ticket counter if they had seen a man, a woman, and a little boy, buy a bus ticket. Yes, they had and told them the bus number.

> The bus was ready to leave in ten minutes, to take us to our home village when one auntie, and two uncles from Family Village ran into our bus and pulled us off. It was very timely. You see, earlier that morning we woke at 6 a.m. because people in the village wake very early. At 6:30 a.m. we went down to the front desk and found the front desk attendant asleep. When we woke her up, she asked us "why are you up so early?" She opened the outside door for us, and we waited outside for the Family Village staff to pick us up. We waited a long, long time. It was me, my auntie and her brother. Her

brother came with us because he graduated from primary school and understands a little about the world. My auntie never went to school, so she didn't know much. That is why my auntie brought her brother with us. We waited there until 7 a.m. and then we began to worry. My auntie's brother said there were many cheaters in the city, and maybe they were cheaters that pulled us to the city, then disappeared the next day. At about 7:30 a.m. we left for the bus station. I thought maybe we should wait a little longer. I was worried. I didn't want to leave because I felt that it would be great if someone could help my arm. In the end, I had to obey the adults because I was little at the time. Children are supposed to obey the adults; they are the boss. But I was afraid that if my arm did not heal, the people in the village would talk about me as the disabled boy who could never find a wife.

Later that morning, they all went to the hospital, and at 4:00 pm David had surgery on his arm. While he recuperated in the hospital, a big sister brought him soup every day. It was pork chop soup, the best kind for recovery. After one month of recovering at home, the Family Village auntie returned and asked David if he would like to move to Family Village. "I wanted to say yes, but I needed to let my adults decide. I was too young and ignorant." David's uncle agreed, and soon after, David and his little brother joined the other 32 children at the Family Village Care Center.

"In 2011, my little brother and I came to Family Village Care Center, a very welcoming big family. During the early stage of my time there, I had a rebellious period." His caregiver, Auntie Huang, recalled those early years. "David was filled with rage and anger. He frequently hit the younger children and shouted phrases like: 'The adults are always right, and I am always

wrong, that's not fair!'" David also remembered his struggles, "Insecurity caused me to run away from the Center, but they never gave up on me. They continuously embraced me, encouraged me in school, helped me find a new direction in life, and helped me gain self-confidence." The year David arrived at the Family Village, he entered fifth grade in a local school nearby. When David compared his new school with his previous school, he went into detail to explain the differences. Previously he attended grades one to three, in the local Yao Village school.

David and all of the children in the school belonged to the Yao minority group. The teacher would conduct classes using the Yao language, but the students learned to read in Mandarin. After grade three David attended school across the mountain where the children were Yao, Zhuang, and Han people. There the teachers taught in Mandarin Chinese. While describing his previous education and ethnicity, the researcher noticed David became animated as he explained the customs of his Yao clan in detail. David proudly described their special clothing.

> The Yao people, especially the elders, like to wear traditional clothing. The buttons are made of cloth, like Chinese dress buttons. Their pants are very big and wide, and so long they drag on the ground. The belts are not like a usual belt; they are handmade and very beautiful. They also wear jewelry and a headdress. The elderly people wear a towel on their head like a hat. When I visit my hometown, I can watch the wedding banquets where everyone wears traditional Yao clothing. It is very beautiful. Even the towel headdress is beautiful.

David described in detail his family traditions as a young boy.

> During special holiday celebrations, many people would gather in the evening time, at 6:00 p.m. and play the drum, one small one and one bigger one. We hung the drum outside our house with a rope at a certain place, and many people would gather and strike the drum with a special stick. They struck it while jumping up and down. The drum was very loud and it had a good sound. There were many ways to strike it on both sides. Especially the old men and women loved to strike the drum. They were very happy. I didn't dare strike the drum; I was too little. Mostly women sing in our family. My grandma sings. Her singing is very gentle with her own singing style. It sounds really beautiful.

David's new life was much different than his previous life. After he studied fifth and sixth grade at Number 4 Primary School of Lian Hua Shan, he entered middle school at Lian Hua Shan Number 3 Middle School. David struggled during his middle school years, and he often went to his aunties at Family Village to talk with them. As David detailed his struggles, he named all the aunties at Family Village and fondly described them as supportive and caring. At school he didn't have many friends, and he felt that everyone was very immature, including himself. After middle school, he was accepted into the Number Two Hua Shan High School. David's classes focused on the arts: music, painting, broadcasting, and calligraphy. During this time, David had a chance to study voice, theory, listening, and auditioning. He felt high school was different and his classmates were more mature. He and his friends frequently played music together. "I had partners to play music with, and I made a lot of effort to learn music."

Frustrations surfaced in David's voice as he believed he possessed musical talent, but he struggled with the educational system and academic test required to enter a four-year arts

university. Others often praised him for his beautiful voice and strong listening skills. "I had different music teachers who told me I was very talented. They said that my audition is very good." However, when David took the college entrance examination, his scores were not high enough to enter a four-year arts university. As a result, David tested into a three-year technical college. "I have a little regret that I didn't go to an arts college."

David enrolled at Yunnan Technical College and chose electronic commerce as his major. Music continued to play an important role in David's college life. "I think music really helped me a lot in college. I could get in touch with more people. I had events and performances." His school had two campuses. He and his friends would organize concerts and events at both campuses. There were outdoor activities, group activities, barbecues, singing together and so on. David loved this time in his life. "My life was rich. I always had something to do every day."

As the second interview drew to a close, David continued to talk about Family Village and the feeling of "family." Each time he returned to Family Village, he was sure to say "hello" to all of his aunties. "I am one of the oldest children at Family Village and I'm one of the first group that is now out on our own. I am sure my aunties miss me sometimes, so whenever I go back, I make a point to say "hello" to each of them. David began to talk about Papa Li, the founder of Family Village. "You call him papa?" Yes, this is more intimate. Papa Li and I often have a heart-to-heart talk. I used to call him "Uncle Li" but now I call him "Papa Li." I feel closer to him when I call him "Papa." It gives me a sense of security."

Youth Participant #2: Cheri's Story

Cheri lived in a rural village in the heart of the Yao Autonomous County of Lian Hua Shan, Yunnan province. The village is located in a mountainous area with 18 karst mountain peaks per square kilometer. On one occasion, a member of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Committee visited the community and reported, "the worst place for humans to live, apart from deserts." An extremely poor community with only gravel mountain trails leading to Cheri's village.

When Cheri was young, the local government contacted Family Village about three girls living with a grandfather, who were not being cared for well. Auntie Chen, Family Village director, remembers the day they visited Cheri's home.

> The house was made of grass and mud. It was dilapidated, drafty on every side, and ready to collapse. The floor was made of wood and there was no furniture, expect for 1 bed. The first day I saw them, their faces were black and dirty, they really looked like little beggars, like those who beg with dirty clothes. The children were poorly cared for.

The oldest girl Cheri was eight, and the sole caretaker for her aging grandfather. Her sisters were 6 and 4 years old. Cheri explained their situation, "because my dad passed away and my mom remarried and left us. We lived with our grandparents on my father's side. After my grandma passed away…" and her voice trailed off. Cheri, the oldest, was designated as her grandfather's caregiver.

In the countryside, girls often marry as young as 14 or 15 and this was the situation in Cheri's family. When Cheri's dad died, her mom remarried, and the grandfather refused to allow Cheri's mom to take the girls with her. Cheri's mom left without her three daughters. Traditionally in the village, children are considered the descendants of the male's family, and

often, grandparents will not allow the grandchildren to leave the home village. Soon after the first visit, Director Chen returned and asked Cheri's grandfather if the girls could come to live at Family Village. "You can take them with you to the city to study, but they must come back twice a year to visit me, and only the two younger girls can go." When Cheri heard this, she was very disappointed. She wanted to go to school, she wanted to live a different life, but she must obey her grandfather and stay and care for him. Later, her grandpa had a change of heart. Cheri remembered this clearly, "Grandpa told me that I was to stay home, but he heard that I wanted to go. He felt if he didn't let me go, I would grow up to hate him. So, in the end, he let me go."

In 2010, Cheri and her two younger sisters arrived at Family Village. They were among the first group of children at the care center. Cheri was in the 2nd semester of 2nd grade. Auntie Chan remembers when Cheri and her sisters came to Family Village. "Cheri and her youngest sister studied very hard, so their grades were good from primary school to high school. Cheri worked hard at her studies. I think she worked harder than average children." During primary school, Cheri' favorite subjects were music and art class. She loved to sing and work on art projects. "In music class, I can relax and enjoy myself. In art class, I can quiet myself down and focus on creating things."

Eleven other children lived with Cheri and her sisters in their family unit. She calls them brothers and sisters and considers all of them to be her good friends, her family. Auntie Yang was her caregiver. "When I felt sad and cried, Auntie Yang helped me and comforted me. She was like a mother to me. She gave me a lot of love. She always made me feel important. She made me feel loved. And she encourages me to do something I want." During her primary

school years, Cheri remembered the structure of each day at Family Village. "It helped me form a good habit after a long time. I always knew what to do at different times in the day."

Cheri's family belongs to the Yao nationality. She doesn't remember any special customs, but she can still speak the Yao language. Twice a year, during holiday breaks, Cheri and her sisters returned home to their grandfather. He no longer lives in their rural village. Because of a poverty alleviation project, the government moved him to the county seat where he lives in an apartment made of cement. Cheri always looks forward to returning home with her sisters to spend time with their grandfather. Every Chinese New Year, Cheri anticipates her return, and this year was no exception. She detailed the public transportation she will take to return home. It is an eight-hour journey and she will travel by bus, train, and a taxi. On the way, she plans to stop and buy gifts for her sisters.

> I will stay home for about 40 days. I am so excited to go home for Chinese New Year, because I can see my relatives and have a big meal with my family. Maybe this year will not be as lively as previous years because of COVID-19. They won't allow a lot of people to be together. But I still feel blessed to be with my family.

Cheri has a good relationship with her grandfather, who is now 71 years old. He wants to learn to use a smart phone to talk with his granddaughters more frequently. "But he told me it is so difficult to learn. My sister is going to teach him." Cheri is lighthearted as she talks about her grandfather and their time together.

When Cheri was 14 years old, she lived at the middle school dormitory and returned home to Family Village once a month. Director Chen detailed the living arrangements for middle school and high school students. "Because they come back only once a month, each time

for one or two nights, we arrange a dormitory for them; one for the girls, one for the boys. During that time, they will eat with their own families." Mr. Li, Family Village founder, explained further that the caregivers enjoyed it when the older children returned to their family unit because it encouraged the younger children to respect and obey the older children. In Chinese culture, older siblings teach the younger siblings, which helps foster an obedient attitude in the younger children. Cheri enjoyed returning home to her aunties and family at Family Village. "When I went back on Saturdays and Sundays, I could talk with my aunties."

Cheri loved to study, and from a very young age, believed education was important. "It's like, you must go to university, then you will have good choices." During high school, Cheri worked hard and developed excellent study habits. She purposively sat next to the "smartest" girl in class so that their behavior would "rub off" on her. "When a good learner sits next to you, she is quiet and just does what she needs to do." Cheri became a disciplined student who completed assignments early and prepared for exams well in advance. "During high school, I learned to start assignments early so that I will have time to do my best. If you prepare early, then you will have more time, you will get the best results possible." Her favorite subject was English, and she decided to pursue an English degree at university. Getting into a university in China is very difficult, and Cheri worked diligently to study for the entrance exam. When the researcher asked how she kept studying for such a long time, she responded:

> Maybe it is because I possessed a belief, a conviction that I could pass. Papa Li gave that to me. During the time we prepared for the exam, he would give us regular video calls for some twenty days. He would comfort us and encourage us. High school teachers also encouraged us, and in the end, we succeeded!

Now 20 years old, Cheri is an English major in her first year of university. She hopes someday to become a teacher. When reflecting on her ten years at Family Village, one of her favorite memories is when she and her family went out to the rural village to volunteer at a school for underprivileged children. Cheri enjoyed playing games with them. "I want to help more people because my aunties and uncles helped me so much." Cheri continues talking about Papa Li and the important role he plays in her life. "We learned a lot from him. He is patient and full of love. True love is trust, care, promise, and forgiveness."

Youth Participant #3: Lily's Story

> When I was little, my dad and mom quarreled very often, and sometimes they fought severely. One time I saw the most severe fight. They fought with a knife. That was horrible. Two months later, they divorced. My mother went away. I went to live with the wife of my father's oldest brother while my brother lived somewhere else with my father.

As Lily recounts this experience, her hands shake as she covers her face. She doesn't want to talk long about these events. "When I was ready for grade three, then my father came back with his illness. After a year, he passed away. After that, my little brother and I lived with my father's older brother and his wife." Lily remembered a boring life. All they did every day was watch TV and play hide and seek. She honestly explained her feelings for her little brother at that time, "I loved him, but I didn't like him very much."

Lily's story moves quickly ahead to her life at Family Village, and she begins to smile. Her voice lightens. The researcher purposefully placed these early day questions deep within the

second interview. Lily recounted events in scattered bits of information, rather than chronological order. Director Chen remembered Lily's home circumstance:

> At the time, the uncle's life was very difficult. The uncle himself had two children. They were very poor, and they lived in a dilapidated house when we got there. The uncle told us that it was very difficult for him to bring up these two children, so he hoped we could take them.

Lily and her brother arrived at Family Village when Lily was 11, and her brother was seven. Lily entered the local primary school near Family Village and repeated grade four.

> I used to be angry. Very angry. When I was in my hometown, I was very aggressive. After I moved to Family Village, I changed. The people there, the aunties and uncles, all treated me very well. I changed. Before in my old primary school, the people I met were not so kind. They were mean. They didn't treat me well. After I moved to Family Village, I met some better friends, they cared for me, helped me, and made my heart feel warm. And because of that, little by little, I changed. Now I'm not that angry.

In the beginning, Auntie Yang was her caregiver and later Auntie Bi. "I used to call Auntie Bi auntie, but now I call her mama. I think mama is better. It brings everyone closer." As the interview continues, it is evident that relationships are very important to Lily. The researcher mistakenly referred to Family Village as a school. Lily raised her voice and spoke loudly, "It's not a school it's a family. A very big family!" Lily called the other children in her family unit, "brother and sister." "I'm the oldest, so they call me older sister." Lily explained that all the aunties live at Family Village. In her family unit were seventeen children. Director Chen remembered that Lily was an exceptional girl who is mature, optimistic, and emotionally healthy.

She was never ashamed of living at Family Village. She wasn't ashamed of being an orphan. It was very natural for her to tell her classmates, "I live in this place, would you like to come to my home to play?"

Lily's biological family belongs to the Zhuang nationality, the largest minority in the province. Lily does not remember seeing her family wear traditional clothing, but she learned how to speak the Zhuang language when she was young. She and her brother return to their hometown twice a year to celebrate Chinese New Year, and Tomb-Sweeping Day.

> For tomb-sweeping day, we sweep the tombs of my grandma, grandpa, and other ancestors. A lot of people in our family clan will gather. It's a happy time to be together with them. For Chinese New Year, we all eat together. We eat chicken, then some common home-cooked dishes, and maybe cook some lobsters and crabs, etc. A lot of dishes. The children of my father's sisters will come and eat with us. It's very lively. We will cook many dishes that fill the table. It makes me feel warm and sweet. It makes me feel good.

Lily liked to study and believed that getting an education was very important. During primary school, no matter how hard she tried, her grades were just average. This frustrated Lily. Even the subjects she loved, like mathematics, sometimes she would receive failing grades because she didn't perform well on tests. When Lily reached middle school, she moved to the middle school dormitory. Although she and Cheri did not live in the same dorm, they were classmates. During high school Lily's favorite subject was English. She excelled at remembering the vocabulary. One of her classmates was in the top five of her class. Lily remembers when her test score was almost as high as the leading student. This encouraged Lily.

Although high school was a challenge, she decided to pursue a university degree. "I have become a better student because Family Village supported me." Together, Cheri and Lily prepared for the high school exam and the college entrance examination. They were the first Family Village students to choose English as a major in university. The exam preparation took about six months. Lily remembers studying hard and also remembers the encouragement of Papa Li. "Sometimes, I forced myself to keep studying. Sometimes I saw others studying, so I would do the same thing. Papa Li would encourage us and say, 'You can do it. You are awesome. You can learn. I think you are very smart.'"

During high school, Lily joined other high school students at Family Village and went to the countryside to volunteer with marginalized children. This experience deeply impressed Lily.

> Children in the mountain area are very poor. Some people live in a poor house. Some families have many children. Some of the children do not have winter clothes. They only have very thin clothing. In some families, the children cannot attend school because they are too poor. Some families have no mother or father. They live with their grandparents or uncles, and aunts. I think their condition is worse than mine. I met a family with 11 children. I felt sad about this. They can't go to school because they were too poor. They lived in a terrible house with a plastic cover. It was worse than my old house. I have never seen a house like this before. The father did not allow his daughters to go to school. I felt their situation was worse than mine because they cannot go to school.

This year Lily entered university as an English major. She wants to become an English translator or teacher someday. As she reflected on her life at Family Village, she expressed the life lessons she learned.

> Your heart needs to be filled with love and you need to help others. Help others like Papa Li. I don't know, I feel it is a very good feeling, when you help someone. I don't know how to describe that feeling, but every time I help someone, it makes me feel satisfied and happy.

Introduction to the Themes of Resilience

Research Question 2: How are they coping with traumatic events in their lives? What themes of resilience emerge from their lived experiences? The final analysis of data in this phenomenological study was to identify general and unique themes of resilience that emerged from the lived experiences of marginalized youth in a care center located in southern China. Because this study of resilience was located within a non-western setting, the researcher's approach mirrored Ungar's (2006) recommendation:

> Findings suggest that different communities will have very individual definitions of what makes children resilient. There is a need to ask more and tell less when it comes to understanding the contextual specificity of positive development under stress (p.57).

The entire data collecting process was an avenue to collect and interpret the data according to the cultural environment of the study. The goal was to provide the reader a holistic view of the lived experiences of three at-risk youth in southern China. The researcher employed Hycner's (1985) guideline to cluster the units of relevant meaning to determine themes that emerged from those clusters. As Krueger and Casey (2015) recommended, the themes were

analyzed based on participant's perceptions of importance, frequency, extensiveness, specificity, intensity, and internal consistency (p. 147). The researcher used MAXQDA software to code and sort the data.

Ungar and Liebenberg (2005), discovered 32 factors that were considered the most important contributions to resilience in an international context. The researcher used the findings of the IRP to guide the discovery of the general and unique themes of resiliency. Figure 10 illustrates the five themes of resilience that emerged from the study.

Figure 8. Themes of resilience in the study

Five themes of resilience emerged from exploring the lived experiences of three at-risk youth in southern China. The general themes that emerged from the stories of all three youth

were (a) I experience the love of a family (b) I value education, and I try my best to succeed (c) I know where to go to get help. In addition, two unique themes emerged from the youth interviews, (d) I want to share with others, to love as I am loved, (e) I experience self-confidence through artistic expression. The researcher chose present tense verbs to demonstrate the ongoing nature of the essential experiences.

The following table illustrates the themes and essential experiences that emerged from the data.

Table 7

Emerging General Themes of Resilience and Essential Experiences

Emerging General Theme of Resilience	Essential Experience	Youth
Theme 1. I experience the love of a family	• Use familial titles for all staff and youth at the Family Village. • Belong to the Family Village family after graduating from high school and moving out. • The love of the family transforms their lives.	David, Cheri and Lily
Theme 2. I value education and try my best to succeed	• Believe getting an education is important • Receive appropriate education support necessary for the local education system	David, Cheri and Lily
Theme 3. I know where to go to get help	• Trustworthy people surround me • Express emotions in a healthy manner	David, Cheri, and Lily

Theme 4. I want to share with others, to love as I am loved	• Empathy	Cheri and Lily
Theme 5. I experience self-confidence through artistic expression	• Through musical expression, comes meaning in life	David

Theme 1: I experience the love of a family.

The youth participants in this study are orphaned youth who were born into impoverished conditions. At a young age, these youth experienced abandonment, neglect, abuse, and trauma. David's parents and grandparents died, leaving him in the care of an uncle who could not provide David the necessary medical treatment he needed. Cheri's father died, and her mother abandoned Cheri and her sisters. At eight years old, Cheri was the sole provider for her aging grandfather. Lily's mother left, and her father died, leaving Lily and her younger brother in the care of an uncle who already had several children. Within the culture of China, the family unit is a crucial protective factor for all children. The family provides identity, education, safety, and nurture. Without a family, children in this environment have little hope for success.

Familial Titles.

"I experience the love of a family" was a theme that David, Cheri, and Lily referenced repeatedly, and in the same manner. The youth regularly used familial names when describing the staff and children at Family Village. During one interview, David used both "auntie" and "mama" in the same sentence to describe Director Chen. "During my high school time when I met some problems, I sometimes would go to Chen Mama, Chen Auntie."

Of the three youth, Lily's answers were the most straightforward.

> I used to call her auntie, but now mama. Maybe mama is better. It brings everyone closer. It makes children feel they have a mama who cares. At Family Village, I have a lot of friends. They are just like my family members. Family Village is like a big family.

Cheri explained that she considered her Auntie Yang to be like her mother:

> We have a very good relationship. I think she is like my mother. She gave me a lot of love. It makes me feel like I'm not being discriminated against. I feel very….let me think…I feel loved.

David talked about Papa Li and explained why he likes to call him Papa:

> Sometimes when I have problems in life, I will talk with Papa Li. I used to call him "Uncle Li, but now I call him Papa Li. I feel closer to him when I call him Papa. It gives me a sense of security.

I still belong.

Although these three youth have graduated from high school, they still return to the center and consider them their family. David explains,

> Every time I come back, and I will go there to say hello to them (aunties), to let them know that I am back. Now we are grown up. I am part of the first batch of children raised up by my aunties. I am the oldest. Now that we have gone out, surely my aunties will miss us sometimes. So every time I come back, I will go to say "hello" to my Family Village aunties.

During the interviews, the researcher often had to ask the youth to clarify which family they were talking about, their biological family or their Family Village family. They are all family and their use of familial titles was consistent, natural, and uninhibited.

Love changes lives.

Lily described how the love of the Family Village family changed her life.

> I used to be angry, very angry. When I was in my hometown, I was very aggressive. After I moved to Family Village, I changed. The people there, the aunties and uncles, all treated me very well. I changed. Before in my old primary school, the people I met were not so kind. They were mean. They didn't treat me well. After I moved to Family Village, I met some better friends. They cared for me, helped me, and made my heart feel warm. And because of that, little by little, I changed. Now I'm not that angry.

David's Auntie Huang described the time when David first arrived at Family Village. He was frequently angry and would often hit the younger children. The staff worked together to provide David a supportive environment and to love him unconditionally. Auntie Huang remembers,

> This big brother (David) turned into a gentleman. Even the look in his eyes was so loving towards his siblings, and now he puts extra effort to care for, love, and support them. Enduring life with feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and shedding many tears, who would have thought that Big Brother David would turn into such a true caring gentleman.

David referred to this time in his life as his "rebellious period." "They never gave up on me. They continuously embraced me and encouraged me."

When Cheri felt discouraged and lacked self-confidence to face challenges at school, she remembered how Auntie Yang encouraged her.

She encouraged me to do my best. When I prepared for my college entrance examination, I was very nervous even though I told myself not to be nervous. Still, I was afraid in my heart. Then I would often talk with my Auntie Yang. I told her I was afraid and then she would say: 'It's O.K., surely my daughter can do it.' After I was accepted into university, I told her about it, and she was very happy. She cooked me a lot of dishes that night.

This theme, I experience the love of a family, also emerged from the stories found in the journal publications. The following is the story of Jamie, a child currently living at Family Village.

Jamie's Story

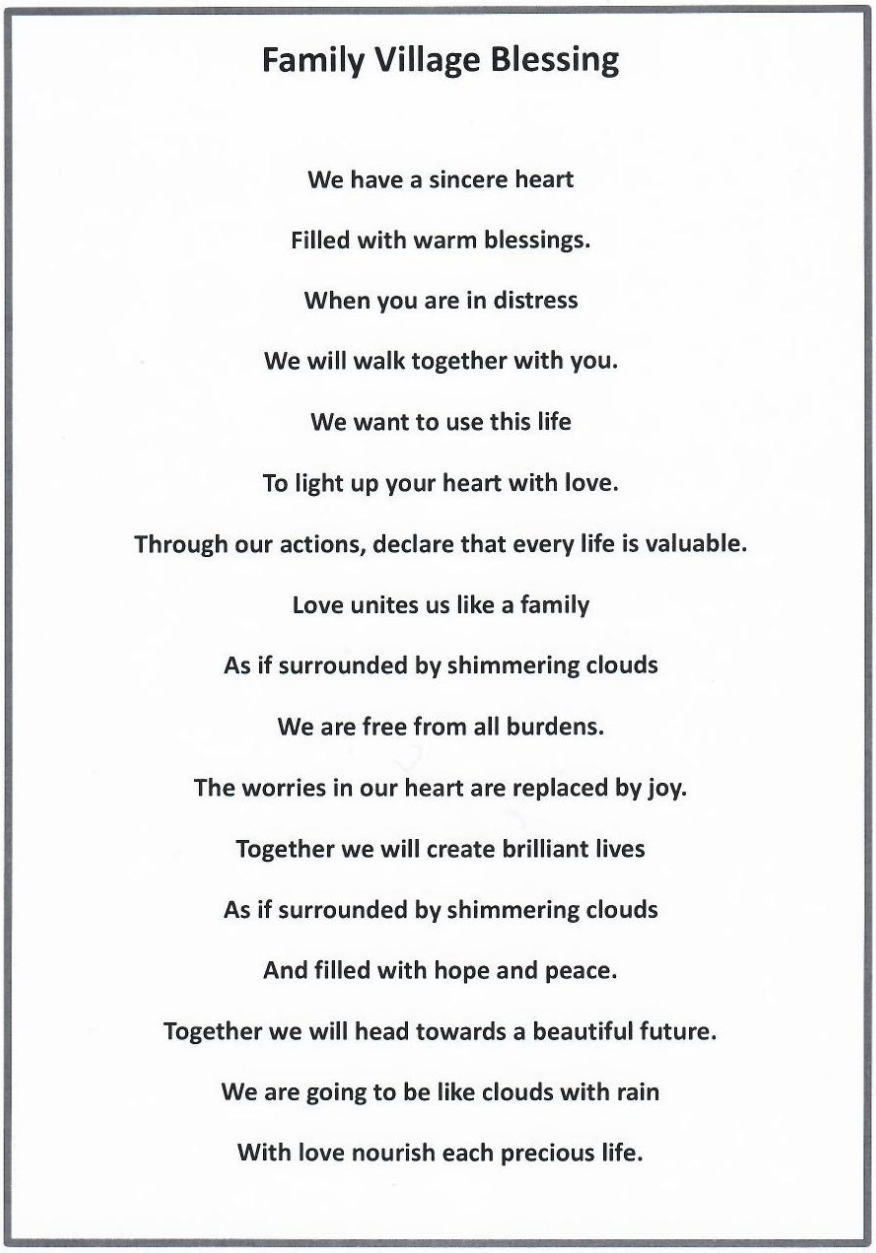
My sister and I had a tough life before. Our house was dilapidated. When I was 2 or 3 years old my parents went back to my mother's home. My father went out of town to work for a few weeks. During that time, my grandfather sold my mother. When my father came home, he couldn't find my mother. Without saying anything, he left without taking my sister and me with him. At that time, I did not understand why my grandfather would do this. My father is now mentally ill, so he cannot take care of us. I came to Family Village in 2012. I really like it here. There is an aunty who takes care of us and many others who love us. Now this is my home because it is filled with love.

My dream home is a really big house. Inside there are people who I want to protect and people who are closest to me. Like my auntie, my younger sister, my eldest sister, my little sister, and everyone in my family. I want to protect them.

Jamie's Caregiver

> I remember when Jamie and her little sister first arrived, they were scared of people. They were afraid of having contact with other people. They were also unable to trust and open up to other people. I said to them, It's going to be OK. Although your mother is not here with you. Auntie is now your mother; I will still love you both just like your mother did.

The love of a family is consistent with the goal of the Family Village, "for each child to grow up in a healthy, loving, and accepting environment, within a family setting. Creating an environment that mirrors the life of a traditional family unit in this community." The Family Village theme song clearly expresses this theme.



Family Village Blessing

We have a sincere heart

Filled with warm blessings.

When you are in distress

We will walk together with you.

We want to use this life

To light up your heart with love.

Through our actions, declare that every life is valuable.

Love unites us like a family

As if surrounded by shimmering clouds

We are free from all burdens.

The worries in our heart are replaced by joy.

Together we will create brilliant lives

As if surrounded by shimmering clouds

And filled with hope and peace.

Together we will head towards a beautiful future.

We are going to be like clouds with rain

With love nourish each precious life.

Figure 9. The Family Village theme song. This theme song is an artifact of value as it describes the Center's commitment to provide each child a healthy, loving, and accepting environment, within a family setting. The text of the song expresses the loving support each child receives. It also fosters empathy as each child is encouraged to share love with others.

Theme 2: I value education and try my best to succeed

The three youth in this study are part of the first group to graduate from high school and study at a university. David just finished a three-year degree in e-commerce from Yunnan Technical College. Cheri is a freshman at Shenzhen University and Lily is a freshman at Yunnan University. Both girls are English majors. They are the first English majors from the group of 16 Family Village youth who have graduated from high school and are studying at university.

Getting an education is important.

Ever since Cheri was little, she wanted to study at school. When she lived with her grandfather, and the Family Village aunties arrived to reach out to their family, Cheri remembers wanting to leave immediately with the aunties. Cheri wanted to study at school. When her grandfather said she could not go, Cheri was very disappointed and sad. Later, when he changed his mind, she was extremely happy that she would be able to go to school. From primary school, Cheri knew that she wanted to study at university.

> My Family Village aunties, uncles, and teachers all encouraged me to study hard so that I can enter university. I believe you must attend university in order to have good choices in life.

Director Chen noted Cheri was a diligent student, "she really works hard (at her studies). I think she works much harder than the average child." Cheri expressed she values starting projects long before they are due.

> I like to be mentally prepared. At the beginning I can't think that much. I found that when I start early on a project, I have more time to think and I discover more and more

> questions. When I begin early, my results are better. In high school, if you don't preview the test book in advance, you might not be able to keep up in class.

When the researcher asked Cheri to tell her life story, she told a detailed account of studying for her *gao kao* exam. Cheri, the most reserved and quiet of the three youth, went into great detail about her preparation for the exam, and her anxiousness when she waited for the results. Cheri detailed exact dates and where she was when the exam results were posted.

When Lily first arrived at Family Village, she struggled in school. It seemed, no matter how hard she tried, she could not get high marks like her classmates. Lily worked hard anyway because she believed from an early age, "the more you study, the more you will improve yourself. You will become better and better the more knowledge you have. This knowledge will enrich your life and help you continue to grow as a person." Lily recounted an experience she had last year while volunteering in a poor community. Lily met a family who lived in a dilapidated house. They had many children, and the father did not allow the girls to go to school. Lily described her feelings:

> I feel sad when I think about this. With 11 children, they can't go to school. Their father didn't have a lot of money. The father wouldn't let his daughters go to school. The girls told me they spent a lot of time trying to persuade him, but he refused. I think their situation was worse than mine because they cannot go to school.

David also believes that getting an education is important, however, his experience in China's test-focused education system was much different than Cheri and Lily. Throughout his entire interview, music played a central theme. When David reached middle school, he discovered his love for music. He found a local guitar teacher and began studying guitar. When he entered

high school, he tested into the school's arts division, which meant his classes were all focused on the arts. From the beginning, David wanted to learn to compose, but his teachers discouraged this pursuit because they indicated it was too difficult to learn. David worked very hard in his high school studies so that he could enter Yunnan Arts College.

> When I got into high school I fell in love with music. My teachers saw that I had great potential and I got very high scores with an "A" on my art examination. I never thought I would have a chance to go to college, but now I am preparing for my college exam. This made me work and study harder and look forward to going to college in a few years!

Receive appropriate education support necessary for the local education system.

The Chinese education system requires that all children attend nine years of compulsory education and all three youth participants continued beyond the nine years requirement to graduate high school and attend university. During the elementary school years, the youth participants lived fulltime at Family Village and their daily schedule included a regular time for homework. Teachers, caregivers, and volunteers helped the youth with their homework. Caregivers also kept in touch with teachers at school to make sure the students were doing well. When Family Village children reached middle school, they lived in a dormitory on the school's campus. During the week they did their homework in class or with their classmates in the dormitory. Lily described their schedule:

> When we were in middle school, each week we only had only a half day off. From Monday to Sunday we stayed at school. Only Sunday afternoons we had a half day off, and we returned to Family Village. We did all our homework at school, maybe in the classroom, or maybe dorm.

All three youth described the supports they received during their high school examinations which determined their university studies. Cheri detailed the support founder Li gave her and Lily during their *gao kao* exam preparation:

> During the time we prepared for our exam, he (Papa Li) would give us video calls. He gave us some English example questions. This went on for about 20 days. He would also comfort us and encourage us. Also, our high school teachers helped us.

The researcher asked Cheri how she was able to keep studying for such a long period of time to prepare for the *gao kao* exam. She replied, "maybe because I have a belief, a determination that I can do it. Papa Li gave this to me."

David also tried his best as he prepared for the national arts examination:

> I went for the music test and attended the national art examination. In China, every year in December we have this test. I got 234 points. I passed the junior college line over 40 points. That was a very good result, the teacher felt very good. But I didn't learn the academic part well, my regret is I didn't go to an art university to study music. Because I thought my music was very good. I was very confident. I would be good if I try hard. Even my teachers said I had talent. I had different vocal music teachers, music theory teacher and audition teacher, the audition teacher said I was very talented. He said that your audition is very good. If you score more than 80 points on art test, that means very good, I usually got more than 80, that time I got 84. But later I took the college entrance examination, I didn't get a good result and I wasn't able to go to a good arts university.

Although David did not enter the arts university, he continued to play music during college. He writes, "I still have many opportunities to sing. I should not give up or be

disappointed. From now on I'll cherish all the days of my college life and equip myself through learning." Now David has graduated from technical school and is finishing his practicum training. David continues to study guitar, piano, and video editing.

Theme 3: I know where to go to get help

The youth in this study all demonstrated an ability to know when they needed help and where/who to go to for help. Their answers were specific and internally consistent; they frequently went to their Family Village family for help. David remembers going to several different aunties from Family Village when he encountered problems at school. "I have a good relationship with all of the aunties at Family Village. Sometimes I would also go to mama Chen."

When Cheri experienced troubles at school, she would talk with her Family Village aunties on the weekend. "When I felt sad or when I cried, she (Auntie Yang) helped me and comforted me. When I felt nervous and afraid, I often talked with her." Sometimes Cheri would talk with her good friends about her problems."

Lily also reflected on times when she encountered problems.

> I will chat with my auntie, she will tell me her troubles, and when I have troubles, I also tell her. We will chat with each other like friends. She would tell me, that if I meet any unpleasant thing, I can tell her. Then she would tell me how to solve them and how to deal with these issues, then you will become better.

Director Chen remembered a time when Lily had problems with girls in her high school dormitory:

> There was a time in high school when six or seven girls isolated Lily. They all ignored her. She was very sad and she asked if she could take a leave from school to return to Family Village. "Auntie, I want to go back to the center and have some quietness." She returned and talked with her aunties. She told us all about what happened. The next day, she said that she wanted to return to school. She said that she could face these things now.

Lily also remembered that time. "I was very very sad. I returned to talk with two aunties and they told me something like: 'It's OK. If people do not treat you well, the relationship is not important.' Papa Li comforted me too."

In addition to general themes of resilience, unique themes of resilience emerged from the stories of the three youth. The following table illustrates the unique themes and essential experiences that emerged from the data.

Table 8

Emerging Unique Themes of Resilience and Essential Experiences

Emerging Unique Theme of Resilience	Essential Experience	Youth
Theme 4: I want to share with others, to love, as I am loved	• Empathy	Cheri & Lily
Theme 5: I experience self-confidence through artist expression	• Through musical expression, comes meaning in life	David

Theme 4: I want to share with others, to love, as I am loved

Empathy

Every year, the high school students of Family Village, go to the countryside to do volunteer work with marginalized children in poor communities. Both Cheri and Lily were deeply impressed by this experience. They spoke with emotion and intensity as they shared the details of the project. Cheri remembered one year when they visited a village in her hometown area.

> I met a lot of children. They were so welcoming and cute. They made me forget all of my problems. It was tiring, but it was worth it. I think that volunteering in the countryside helps me learn a lot of life lessons. My uncles and aunts at Family Village

helped me so much and now I want to help other people. At Family Village, I learned the importance of solidarity and helping each other.

Lily also talked about the volunteer experience in detail and intensity.

> Children in the mountain area are very poor. Some people live in a poor house. Some families have many children. Some of the children do not have winter clothes. They only have very thin clothing. In some families, the children cannot attend school because they are too poor. Some families have no mother or father. They live with their grandparents or uncles, and aunts. I think their condition is worse than mine.

As she described the poor conditions of these children, her voice was filled with emotion. She did not hesitate to express sadness as she talked about their life challenges.

> They can't go to school because they have no money. They are very poor. Some children have no mother and no father. They live with their grandmother and grandfather. Maybe, some of them live with their uncles and aunties. I enjoyed helping them very much. I played games with them, and just spent time with them. It was an indescribable feeling. I helped them and I felt happy. They were very happy, and that made me feel happy.

Lily wants to live her life to help others. "I believe your heart needs to be filled with love, and help others, just like Papa Li."

Theme 5: I experience self-confidence through artistic expression

Through musical expression comes meaning in life

David loves to tell stories. As the researcher asked him questions, he detailed his life experiences like he would retell the plot to a movie. He explained events of eleven years ago

like they were recent events. In the past, David struggled with self-confidence. In high school he wrote:

> I had a rebellious period when I first arrived at Family Village. Insecurity caused me to run away from the center, but they never gave up on me. They continuously embraced me, encouraged me in school, helped me find a new direction in life, and gain self-confidence.

During high school, David discovered that he had a natural talent for singing. His listening skills were strong, and he was surprised to discover that he was better than his classmates. "I'm sensitive to sound, and if our teacher gives us a lesson, I felt afraid at the beginning, but later I found that I'm better than many people. I do well when I'm very careful, very quiet, and when no one is making noise."

While David was at technical college studying e-commerce, he still kept playing music. Director Chen laughs as she remembers David's time at college:

> While David was at college, he would write to us. All he talked about was music in college. I said to him, "Please tell me something about your major. Are you playing music, or are you studying at college?" He loves music very much.

David reflected on the important role that music played in his life in college. He believed that music helped him to gain self-confidence and make friends:

> I think music helps me a lot in college. It's helps me to meet more people as I only have few roommates, and I will not go out to play during these three years. After being exposed to music, things are different. Our school has two campuses. We will form a

team to perform in the old campus, and carry out some outdoor activities, parties, barbecues, etc., and sing together. It's so amazing and music enriches my life every day.

After one of these performances, David told the story of his teacher's emotional reaction to his performance. The head teacher came looking for him in his dorm room.

> 'There is a boy here who can play the guitar in our class. I'd like to listen to him sing.' Then she asked me to sing for her. She was recording my singing with her phone. I sang the verse and was slowly entering the chorus and the head teacher couldn't hold back her emotions any longer. She bowed her head (and began to cry) and gave her phone to the instructor who was next to her. She couldn't help it, she felt embarrassed in front of so many students, so she lowered her head and handed the phone to the instructor. She bowed her head for a long time. I was afraid because I made the head teacher cry. Then I tried to comfort her.

After David told this story, the researcher asked him why she cried. He answered, "I felt maybe the song I sang, the style reminded her of a past memory and it touched her heart. Sometimes my music moves some people."

Family Village Care Center

What supports do they receive to mitigate the effects of trauma? In 2010, Mr. and Mrs. Li officially opened Family Village Care Center, located in Lian Hua Shan, Yunnan, China. Lian Hua Shan is considered one of the poorest regions in Yunnan province, located in the heart of a mountainous community. The Family Village's goal as stated on their website, is for each child to grow up in a healthy, loving, and accepting environment, within a family setting. Creating an environment that mirrors the life of a traditional family unit in this community.

Core Values of Family Village Care Center

- We believe love changes lives
- We value human life
- We walk with people in difficult circumstances
- We are good stewards
- We strive to be professional

Since 2010, the Family Village Care Center has cared for 115 children. Presently there are 82 children living at Family Village, ages 3 to 17. Director Chen described some of the circumstances, "For some children, their father went to jail, or the mother remarried, and the stepfather does not accept her children." Some children were left in the care of aging grandparents who could not give them adequate care. Many children were abandoned by their mother following the death of the father. Mr. Li, Family Village founder, told the story of a little boy who watched his father kill his mother. Some parents leave their children in the countryside, in search of work in the city. Some of those parents died in work-related accidents, leaving their children orphaned. In one family, while the father was working in the city, the grandfather sold the mother into prostitution. As a result, the father abandoned the two small girls and eventually became mentally ill. There are too many stories to tell in this study. Each story is unique, but there are several common themes: tragedy, abandonment, neglect, poverty, sickness, death, and trauma. The following is the story of one of the children from the Family Village Center. The story was published in their journal publication.

A Child's Story.

> The dark days really came when my dad passed away. I was only nine, and I had three younger siblings. My youngest brother was only a few months old. For us, the world was ending. My brother and I had to take care of all the farm work. We always cried due to long hours of work. When I think of this, a tear still comes down my face. Later, my mom got remarried and left the four of us behind. After she left, all the family burden fell on me. Then one day, someone came and brought me to Family Village. I no longer had to do farm work, and someone would even cook for me and teach me homework. I was very happy and touched.

The children of Family Village all came from rural communities within Lian Hua Shan County. The local government authorities regularly informed Family Village staff of children who needed outside intervention. The staff made regular trips into these communities to visit these children and learn about their conditions and unique circumstances. The children's guardians gave consent before they came come to Family Village. In some cases, the family situation improved, and the guardians requested the children return home.

The local government donated the facility rent-free for ten years. Director Chen described the compound as like a housing community (小区) within China. The facility is composed of one main building, with a surrounding courtyard, enclosed by a wall, and a guard just outside the gate. The children living at the center are divided into seven family units. Each family unit has three bedrooms, and one living room, and dining room. There are also several classrooms and a large kitchen. Founder Li also explained that the layout is conducive to closely monitoring all family units to make sure the caregivers are providing the best care possible. There are presently

20 staff members who work at the center including office staff, caregivers, social workers, teachers, and volunteer tutors.

Family Village Care Center Support System

The Family Village Care Center provides a culturally sensitive support system for these youth which helped to mitigate the effect of early childhood traumatic experiences. The supports included: family supports, educational support, staff support, physical support, and emotional support. The following figure illustrates the culturally sensitive support system.

Figure 10. Family Village Support System is a culturally sensitive support system which mirrors a traditional Chinese family. The Family Village's goal, as stated on their website, is for each child to grow up in a healthy, loving, and accepting environment, within a family setting. Creating an environment that mirrors the life of a traditional family unit in this community.

Staff Support

Office Staff

The office staff oversees the needs of the center. Director Chen leads the office staff team. She has worked as the director of the center since its beginning in 2010. She describes the main office's function as like the management office (物管) of a Chinese housing community. They oversee all of the maintenance needs of the facility. For example, if there is a water or electric problem, the office will arrange to have someone repair it. They also help support the family unit caregivers. For example, if a child is sick, the family caregivers (mothers) will contact the office to arrange for them to see the doctor.

Caregivers

The caregivers take care of the children's needs, just like their mothers. They are responsible for caring for their daily needs; they cook for them, take them to school, help them with their homework, and read them stories at night. Founder Li detailed the role the caregivers play as they help create the stable, family environment that these children lack and need. The hiring requirements for the caregivers have changed over time. At first, they required that all caregivers had a university degree to support the children's academic needs. However, they soon discovered that the university degree might not be a high-quality degree, and the caregivers did not necessarily work well with the children. Founder Li emphasized, "now the only condition is that the caregiver has a heart for children. The academic needs, we have a team to support them."

The Family Village team realized very early that the caregivers needed a strong support team. As Founder Li explained this need in the following manner:

> If you do not give them enough support, they may end up hating the children because the children may hurt them. The children have a lot of difficulties from their background experiences. The caregivers are not able to deal with all of this on their own. They really need a professional team to help support them. At the beginning, I discovered some of the caregivers had incorrect attitudes. They believed that since these children experienced misfortune in their lives, the child should be thankful and express gratitude. However, the youth did not always possess this attitude. It was as if these children are not good, so we don't need to take care of them. If they are not thankful, we can give the opportunity to other children. I asked the caregivers, 'What if this was your child? What would you do? Would you send them back? You need to love these children as if they were your own child.'

The Family Village team provides consistent professional development for the staff. When there are extremely challenging cases, the foundation has a team of professionals who provide pro bono support for the caregivers. The following is the story of a Family Village caregiver who learned to support one of the boys in her family unit. This story was featured in the center's journal publication.

A caregiver's story.

> When Tony first came to family village he rarely spoke. Sometimes when I asked him questions, he just looked at me without giving any response and I was confused. Spending a few months with him made me feel like a very long time. Family Village

provided us training to understand the psychological development of children from different backgrounds and ages. Tony was a child who had not received adequate affection. I really wanted him to know I cared about him, yet I still felt he would shut the door between us. After I learned about his original situation at home, I decided to spend more time with him, building up our relationship. From then on, I would ask him to help me wash the vegetables and prepare the meat for dinner. I used these opportunities to chat with him and share with him about my childhood. Gradually, when I got busy, he would stand by my side and look at me or try to help me out. He began to share with me about school, the good things, and the bad things. He also began to talk more with the other children. I complimented him on his communication skills and encouraged him to be a model for the other children. I hope that he will continue to grow as a person and discover the beauty in life and learn to love others.

Social workers.

The social workers help support the emotional needs of the children. They arrange daily activities, such as group activities, interest classes, entertainment, and outdoor activities. When students experience emotional problems, the social workers provide these students individual help through different types of therapy such as play therapy and role-playing activities.

Teachers and volunteers.

Within the Chinese education system, completing homework is extremely important. All students have homework every day, including all elementary grades. During the scheduled weekly homework time, the Family Village teachers help students with their homework,

especially fourth grade and above. Volunteers also help the students with homework during the weekend.

Family Support

A family's love.

The following two stories were published in the Family Village journal publication.

A child's story.

I was born in a rural village. My dad passed away when I was very little, and my family had since led a difficult life. I guess my mom was unable to accept this kind of life. I remember one day; mom took me out to shop and bought a set of new clothes for me and my brother. We went home and she held us in tears saying that she had to go to make money somewhere far away because our family was too poor. She promised to come back. She told me to take care of my brother. I remembered her words and did as she said until our new clothes had become old and torn. She never returned. I stopped speaking with other people because I thought I was unlovable because my mom abandoned me. In 2011, Family Village uncles and aunties arrived with a new schoolbag for me and my brother. They invited me to come live at Family Village. I felt so lucky! There were a lot of children here with backgrounds similar to ours and we shared lots of common language. My brother and I entered a new family with four other boys under the care of Auntie Fang. We had steaming dishes waiting for us after school; we could play together after dinner, do our homework, read and chat together….I began to see a purpose in life, and experience the warmth and love of a family.

A normal life.

A child's story.

> Uncle Li, do you know what upsets me the most? When it was raining after school and my classmates' parents come pick them up with an umbrella in their hands. I can only wait until the rain stops. I wait by myself. Do you know how much I hope someone will carry an umbrella, and come pick me up? What I want even more is to be like the other kids. I want to grow up in a normal family with parents to take care of me.

Life at Family Village revolves around life in their family unit. When new students arrive, they are placed within a family unit. Biological siblings are always kept together, and the members of each family represent all ages. The family unit continues to grow larger as new students join the family. All family units keep the same weekly schedule. Director Chen described the daily routine.

> Each day at 6:30 a.m., the alarm clock for the whole center will ring, and the children all wake up. Their mothers will get them up and then they will have breakfast together. The children tidy up their beds, and some will put their clothes in the washing machine according to the schedule. At 7:00 am, the children wash up and then queue up for school.

All primary school children attend the same school, and two mothers walk them to school. It takes about 20 minutes. In the morning, the mothers return, do some house cleaning, and then buy groceries for the day's meals. At noon, the children eat lunch at school and then return to the center for a nap from 12:30 to 13:50. After their nap, if they washed their clothes that morning, they hang out their clothes to dry. Afterwards, they return to school for their

afternoon classes. When school is out, two mothers meet them at school and walk them home. After dinner, all students shower and then work on homework from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Then, from 8:30 – 9:00 p.m. is parent-child reading time and then lights out at 9:00 p.m. This routine of a normal life is what provides these youth the stable family environment found within a traditional Chinese family.

Middle school and high school students live in the school dormitory. Middle school students return to their family unit each weekend, and high school students return once a month. They also return for school holidays. When they return, they sleep in the dormitory-student bedrooms. They eat all their meals with their family unit and spend time with them when they are at the center. University students also like to return to their family unit to spend time with their family. Once a student is part of a family unit, they belong to the same family unit, even after they graduate.

"I call her mama."

"I call my Auntie Mama because it makes me feel closer to her." With these honest words, a Family Village youth expresses their heartfelt desire to feel the love and security of family. Founder Li explained that when they first started Family Village, many people told him not to allow these children to call their caregivers mom or dad because if the staff member leaves, then the children will feel abandoned. For the first five years, the Family Village team asked the youth to call their caregivers "auntie" and "uncle". During this time, Founder Li had an American friend, Dawn Grand who opened a care center in Kunming for disabled youth. For five years, Dawn cared for a group of 20 special needs youth. She asked them to call her "mama." Tragically, Dawn passed away a few years later and her family sent the youth, Dawn's

inheritance. The youth built a gravesite in her memory. Each year they pay respects to her grave and consider her to be their mother. They all changed their last names to Grand. Founder Li discovered that these youth were emotionally healthy. He states, "it is as though they were emotionally satisfied." As a result, the Family Village team came up with a culturally appropriate solution – they decided to place the last name before the family title, in an effort to create a culturally acceptable adaptation. Often within Chinese families, if there is a close relationship with another family that is not related, the children may call a non-related adult a family title, placed after their last name. Founder Li, explained, "Now many of the youth call me Li Papa. But sometimes they drop my last name." The Family Village staff discovered the most important issue is that the children feel supported and loved.

Food, and red packets.

Food is an essential part of every Chinese family and Family Village is no exception. To foster this cultural tradition, each family mother regularly asks her children in her family unit, "what do you want to eat today?" Like a typical Chinese family, these children get to choose their favorite foods. Each day the caregiver goes to the market to buy the fresh food for the day. Each family unit has different meals; it all depends on the children's preferences. Often on the weekend, the children like to eat noodles instead of rice.

Chinese New Year celebration is the highlight of every traditional Chinese family. During this research, Family Village celebrated the Chinese New Year together. Gathering all the dining tables onto the Family Village courtyard, every family sat together at round tables and ate the special dishes prepared for this special occasion. Afterwards, they celebrated their Chinese New Year's Evening party, where all the children received red packets filled with

money. Through the platform WeChat, photos and greetings were exchanged between children at the center, and those who had graduated and were living in different locations.

Educational Support

The Chinese education system requires that all children attend nine years of compulsory education. Traditionally within the Chinese family, the mother oversees educational development, and the local school system requires that mothers are heavily involved in their child's education. Family Village staff carefully looks after all aspects of each child's educational development.

Public education.

Kindergarten and primary school.

Director Chen explains that Chinese children, 3-5 years old, attend all-day kindergarten. Kindergarten is divided into three levels, lower kindergarten, middle kindergarten, and upper kindergarten. When students finish kindergarten, they attend six years of primary school. All kindergarten and primary school students live at Family Village and attend public school in Lian Hua Shan. During the week, the family mothers escort the students to and from school. They communicate regularly with their child's teachers to support their student as required by the teacher. Family Village has teachers on staff who help with homework. Director Chen explained their support.

> In the evening, 7:00 – 8:30 is homework time. We will have volunteers, teachers, and their caregivers. We will divide them into groups. One group for grades one and two, one group for grades three and four, and one group for grades five and six. Then we will

help them with their homework and tutor them separately. On the weekends, we will also have some volunteers who will help tutor them with their homework.

Middle School.

Middle school education includes Grades seven, eight, and nine. Family Village students all attend the same middle school and live in the school dormitory. The students return to Family Village on Sundays. The family mothers continue to communicate with teachers to make sure their students are performing well at school.

High School.

High School education includes Grades 10, 11, and 12. Family Village students live at the high school dormitory and return to Family Village once a month and on holidays. At the end of high school, students take the *gao kao* examination, which determines if the student is qualified to enter university. Family Village mothers continue to communicate with teachers about their students' progress.

University.

Sixteen Family Village youth are attending university. Family Village continues to support the youth in university by paying their tuition and boarding fees. They also enlist the help of volunteers to support them in their studies. An American teacher provides online English support for the two English university students.

The arts & extra-curricular.

Besides the required public education, Family Village also provides their children opportunities to study music and art. A group of 12 students receive weekly online piano

lessons, and 10 high school students study guitar. Director Chen detailed the positive impact this is having on students.

> Music study enriches children's after-school life. The subject is fun. It also provides them a chance to cultivate their artistic interests. Music is a powerful force than can cure children's inner broken spirit. It can foster hopefulness and joy in the work. It is also a form of expression. They can learn to express themselves.

The following is the story of one of the caregivers from the Family Village Center. The story was published in their journal publication.

> A caregiver's story.
>
> When I started working at the care center, I always mixed up the names of a pair of twin sisters. They are very lovely with round eyes and double eyelids. Yet, behind the lovely faces, there are stories than can make anyone tear up. Only 1 month after the twins were born, their father passed away. Their mother abandoned them and remarried, leaving these twin babies with their grandmother in her 80's. Painfully, their grandmother sent them to live at Family Village. Now they are in their six grade, doing well at school and top in their class. Recently we discovered one of the twin girls is a talented artist. We love seeing her paintings. We do our best to make them feel the warmth of a family.

Figure 11. Artwork of a twin sister at Family Village from Family Village journal publication

Sharing with Others.

Family Village is committed to caring for the children at the care center. They also are committed to improving the lives of families in rural communities that need support. Family Village supports schools and families experiencing impoverished conditions. They also provide parenting resources and training for families in these communities. They call these foster family support. Founder Li believes in the importance of volunteering. In August, high school students travel to these rural communities where Family Village supports families and schools to do volunteer work. This experience generates a grateful attitude, and it reduces the victim mentality. The youth at Family Village have frequent opportunities to share their life stories. Since 2015, Family Village has produced a quarterly newsletter. Each issue features youth and

caregiver stories. Also, each year students reflect on their year and journal their experiences and growth.

Physical Support.

Child protection and safety.

Family Village staff realize it is imperative that all children feel safe and protected. As Director Chen indicated, the Family Village facility is like a traditional housing community within China. The facility employs a 24-hour security guard who watches the property. He operates from a small building located just outside the secured gate. The guard must provide approval for anyone visiting who is not part of the Family Village staff. They must sign in and out on arrival and departure.

Children cannot freely leave the facility without the permission of their family caregiver. Lily remembers this adjustment when she first arrived to Family Village. When I lived in my hometown "I could go to the river to catch fish and pick fruit on the hill. Here at Family Village, uncles and aunties care about our safety, so there are fewer opportunities to go out and play after school."

Within the facility, the children are also protected. Founder Li discussed the importance of protecting the child against any type of abuse. "Because the family units are all living together within one facility, it is much easier to closely monitor the care of the children to ensure there is no abuse. If there was, we would know."

Physical health.

All the daily physical needs of the children are cared for by the caregivers and the Family Village staff. Hot, nutritious meals, a Chinese family staple, are also central to the family unit's

daily routine. To make sure all children are healthy, they see a local doctor for regular physical examinations and immunizations. If a child gets sick, the caregiver notifies the office staff and they arrange for the child to visit the doctor. When there is an emergency medical need, they taken them to the hospital to receive appropriate care. The following is a story from the center's journal publication written by the aunt (biological) of a Family Village child:

> An auntie's story (biological) "My nephew's second life"
>
> In 2014, Sunny was diagnosed with a cancerous brain tumor. Already in a serious stage, Family Village immediately brought him to the university hospital in Kunming for brain surgery and chemotherapy. He was there for 6 months. Although his body was extremely weak, Sunny continued to endure six chemotherapies. After several years of recovery, in 2018, Sunny showed signs of recurrence and needed to undergo another operation. After an eleven-hour operation, Sunny survived the surgery and everyone was relieved. Without Family Village, there would be no hope for Sunny. Thank you so much!

Emotional Support.

All members of the Family Village staff help to provide emotional support. Director Chen explains the importance of providing "24-hour families" to support the emotional development of the children. Children are encouraged to talk with their family caregiver whenever they need to talk, just like a regular family. She goes on to explain,

> There are a lot of teenage girls in our center, when they were not happy in school, they would cry to us when they came back on Sundays. After crying, we would ask them, "do

you need to stay at home for a few more days and have some quietness?" They often respond, "No, I'm fine now. I can go back to school."

Sometimes, there are behavior challenges for which the caregivers and social workers are not equipped. In these circumstances, Director Chen and Founder Li reach out to the professional support team for additional support. Founder Li shared the story of a little boy who watched his father kill his mother. He was the youngest sibling, and no one took care of him. If he got hurt, no one was there to comfort him. He did not have a healthy attachment to a parent. He was about five years old when he came to Family Village. He always did the opposite of what he was told, in order to get attention. The Family Village support team's professional child psychologist counselled the social workers and caregivers working with this boy. Just like a family, each child has their own unique emotional needs. Family Village seeks to understand, support, and love each child.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to tell the stories of three at-risk youth who grew up in a care center located in southern China. The study researched the supports they received from the Family Village Care Center and explored themes of resilience that emerged from their lived experiences. Participants represented three youth studying at university, the founder of the care center, and the director. The interviews used the Zoom web-conferencing tool. The researcher was in Hong Kong at the time of the interviews.

The study provided the opportunity to hear the life stories of these three marginalized youth who shared common family experiences of abandonment, death, poverty, trauma, and neglect. The youth told their story in their own unique way. They detailed the pathway they

traveled to find the support and love they needed which empowered them to experience feelings of wellbeing.

The Family Village Care Center provided a culturally sensitive support system for these youth which helped to mitigate the effect of early childhood traumatic experiences. The Family Village's goal, as stated on their website, is for each child to grow up in a healthy, loving, and accepting environment, within a family setting. Creating an environment that mirrors the life of a traditional family unit in this community. Through the love and care of the Family Village staff, these youth experienced a normal life which mirrored a traditional Chinese family. The supports included: family supports, educational support, physical support, and emotional support.

Chapter V: Discussion, Implications, Recommendations

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of at-risk youth living at the Family Village Care Center located in southern China. The youth participants are currently studying at a university. The study examined the culturally-informed supports provided by the center to mitigate the effects of trauma and documented themes of resilience that emerged from their lived experiences.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews using the Zoom web-conferencing tool on a one-on-one exchange. Five respondents participated in the study, all from the Family Village Care Center located in southern China. These included three youth who grew up at the center and are presently studying at university, the director, and the founder. The interviews occurred in two locations, the researcher's office in Hong Kong and the participants' homes or offices in China. The researcher conducted the youth and director interviews in Chinese and the founder interview in English. After each interview, the translator transcribed the Chinese interviews into Chinese and then into English. This dual transcription allowed the researcher to double-check the translation when questions arose during the data collection stage. The translator returned the translation within 48 hours so that the researcher could use the content to inform the next interview. In addition to the interviews, the researcher reviewed 18 Family Village journals published between 2015 and 2020. After the interviews were coded and analyzed for themes, the researcher identified the emerging themes of resilience and described the culturally-informed support system of the Family Village Care Center.

Research Questions

To understand the lived experiences of these at-risk youth, the supports they received to mitigate trauma, and the themes of resilience that emerged, this study explored the following research questions:

1. Who are the youth of the Family Village Care Center?
    a. What do their lives look like?
    b. What supports do they receive to mitigate the effects of trauma?
2. How are they coping with traumatic events in their lives?
    a. What themes of resilience emerge from their lived experiences?

Conclusions

Against all odds

In 2010, the first group of orphaned children arrived at the Family Village Care Center. Without parents or family to care for them, each of our youth participants told their stories of the pain and trauma they experienced in their biological family. Now, twelve years later, this study's participants and their brothers and sisters from the care center are all studying at university. The study revealed a one hundred percent university entrance rate for the first group of Family Village Care Center children. These statistics are amazing, considering that China's minority students, as young as elementary, are more likely to drop out of school. A study conducted in Gansu province's elementary schools discovered that the attendance rate of minority children compared to Han children was substantially lower. The data revealed that 7.9% of the minority students drop out of elementary school, compared to 3.9% of Han students. Of the students who drop out, minority girl students are the most likely to drop out of elementary

school (B. Sun, 2015; B. Sun & Xu, 2010). M. Lu et al. (2016) conducted a study among 14,761 primary students in China's Northeast and discovered that the dropout rate in rural areas was 8.2%. However, the Hui and Salar minority students dropped out of primary school at a much higher rate. Notably, 23% of the Hui girls and 22% of the Salar girls dropped out of elementary school by Grade 6 (M. Lu et al., 2016). Yuan et al. (2004) discovered a 54% dropout rate of minority students studying middle school in China's Northeast. Yunnan province reported a 23% dropout rate among minority high school students (Chung, 2012). Given the documented high drop-out rate of minority children and youth in rural China, the youth in this study and their peers at the Center beat the odds as they graduated from high school and entered university. This study revealed that against all odds, at-risk youth can move from risk to resiliency through effective support systems.

The stories that emerged from this study are stories that had been waiting to be told. Listening to the everyday experiences of three at-risk youth living in southern China, provided the researcher the rare opportunity to see into the phenomena of personal struggles for wellness, despite the overwhelming odds of early childhood traumatic experiences. Masten (2001) described this phenomenon as the "ordinary magic" of lives lived well (p. 234). To understand this ordinary magic of at-risk youth in southern China, one needs to understand not only the individuals, but also their environments. As Gilligan (2001) stressed,

> Resilience is a process of repeated interactions between a person and favorable features of the surrounding context in a person's life. The degree of resilience displayed by a person in a certain context may be said to be related to the extent to which that context has elements that nurture this resilience. (p. 94)

As Boyden and Mann (2005b) emphasized, children who experience trauma during their early years lack social power and are among the most severely affected by adverse circumstances. Each of the traumatic experiences of the three youth occurred while they were still in primary school. Although these three youth were young, all three demonstrated resilience during the trauma. Boyden and Mann (2005b) posited:

> Children exposed to many and varied risks are not all inherently vulnerable. Many children are highly adaptable and able to adjust; some show greater personal resilience even than adults. (p.17)

David demonstrated more insight than his caregivers when he wanted to remain and wait for the Family Village staff to arrive to take him to the hospital. Cheri also showed maturity and insight as she recognized that living at Family Village would benefit her and her sisters. She wanted to go to school, to have a different life, but she felt compelled to obey her grandfather and stay behind to care for him. Lily became aggressive in response to uncaring adults in her life after losing both of her parents. The three youth in this study demonstrated individual traits of resilience through their adaptability and flexibility. However, as researchers have noted, resilience is not just a condition of the individual but also is a trait of the child's social and political setting (Kirby & Fraser, 1997; Luthar et al., 2000; Ungar, 2008). Ungar (2008) concurred, "whatever is going on outside the child is going to have to support resilience if the child is to experience well-being. Resilient children need resilient families and communities" (p.221).

Supports received to mitigate effects of trauma.

Within Chinese culture, the development of healthy children is the primary responsibility of Chinese parents (K. Wong & Lee, 2005), and the family is the child's identity (G. Wong, 2004). Johnson (1996) posited, to be without a family identity in Chinese cultures is to be shamed. The Family Village Care Center provides a support structure that filled this void in the participants' lives; in tangible ways, the Family Village Care Center became the participants' new family. This study documented a support system provided by the Family Village Care Center that includes family support, educational support, staff support, physical support, and emotional support. Within this support system, the structure and staff of the Center provide numerous practices that align with Chinese cultural norms and can be viewed as a framework to foster resiliency in at-risk children and youth.

The following table describes the best practices framework of the Family Village Care Center.

Table 9

Family Village Care Center's Best Practices Which Foster Resilience

Supports	Best Practices

Staff Support	• Office staff
	  ○ Like the management office in a China residential complex
	  ○ Facility upkeep and repair
	  ○ Supports all needs of caregivers and children
	• Caregivers
	  ○ Provides a stable, home-like environment
	  ○ Care for all needs as a mother would
	• Social workers
	  ○ Supports emotional needs of children and caregivers
	  ○ Arranges daily activities including group activities, entertainment, outdoor activities.
	  ○ Play therapy
	• Teachers & volunteers
	  ○ Homework support

Family Support	• A family's love
	  ○ Family member forever
	• A normal life
	  ○ Meals
	  ○ Daily routine
	  ○ Chores
	  ○ Escort to school
	  ○ Homework
	• I call her Mama
	  ○ Familial titles forever
	• Food and red packets
	  ○ Holidays and celebrations
	  ○ Traditions

Education Support	• Public education
	  ○ Homework support
	  ○ Communication with teacher
	  ○ Support all education needs

	○ University tuition and boarding fees • Arts and extra-curricular ○ Music & art • Sharing with others ○ Community volunteer opportunities
Physical Support	• Child protection and safety ○ 24-hour security guard ○ Facility layout ensures child safety • Physical health ○ Regular health check-ups ○ Illness and medical emergency
Emotional Support	• Professional development for all staff • Mental health experts on staff

Positive relationships among students and adults are paramount to this support system and best practices framework. Warm, supportive relationships with family, caregivers, and siblings can help facilitate resilience and serve as protective agents for at-risk youth (Masten et al., 1990; Mu, 2018). Mu (2018), in his resilience research among at-risk youth in Beijing, posited, "Resourceful resilience factors may include close, nurturing relationships with caregivers and siblings (p.50-51). Founder Li and Director Chen stressed the importance of creating a caring, family environment which mirrors a traditional Chinese family. The three youth participants in this study all described warm and caring relationships with the Center's caregivers and staff. As they encountered problems, they regularly went to their caregivers for comfort and advise.

When working with at-risk youth in China, it is important to provide them a routine, disciplined life. Mu (2018) detailed the need for "consistent and reasonably high parental expectations for children's development; and adults' deliberate arrangements for children to

complete chores or help their siblings" in order to foster resilience (p.51). Family Village Care Center creates a routine life for their youth. During primary school, each student has daily chores to help mirror the life of a traditional Chinese family. On the weekends, the older youth return from the middle school and high school dormitories and help their younger siblings. This practice follows the traditional Chinese family tradition of older siblings teaching the younger siblings (G. Wong, 2004).

Beyond the domestic milieu, interactions with teachers, counselors, peers, and other significant adults in the community are essential for building resilience in children (Boyden & Mann, 2005b; Mu, 2018). Researchers agree that education support and school connectedness are of paramount importance to foster resilience in at-risk youth (Benard, 1991; Mu, 2018; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, & Ouston, 1979; Sharkey, You, & Schnoebelen, 2008). Family Village Care Center provides comprehensive educational support for each child. Doing homework is part of the daily routine for all primary school youth. Teachers and volunteers provide homework support to ensure the youth are completing all required schoolwork. The middle school and high school students do their homework at school. All three youth detailed the support they received in their education, and at an early age, realized the importance of studying hard to enter university.

Not only does the support model mirror a Chinese family, but it is also culturally informed. Armstrong et al. (2005) emphasized the importance of developing a support model that is child-centered, community-based, and culturally competent. Wong and Lee (2005) researched the effectiveness of the Understanding the Adolescent Project (UAP), an intervention program designed to help meet the needs of underserved, at-risk youth in Hong Kong. The

researchers discovered the project lacked important cultural dimensions. As a result, they stressed the importance of incorporating Confucian codes of conduct when working with Chinese at-risk youth. Their study cited the important work of Choi (2003), who developed the cultural heritage model. This model identified cultural dimensions to fostering resilience among Chinese youth and includes three main concepts: 1) resilience is a virtue in traditional Chinese culture as seen in the Confucian teaching, 2) despite rapid globalization, Chinese parents still maintain traditional values and beliefs, and 3) culture provides the individual with resources for coping with adversity. The following table intersects Confucian principles with the supports of the Family Village Care Center.

Table 10

Confucian Principles Found Within Family Village Care Center's Best Practices

Confucian Principles	Everyday Practices of Family Village Support System
Filial Piety	• Family at the center of life • Honoring parents • Older siblings teach the younger • Sharing within the family, for the sake of the family • Traditions and celebrations • Solidarity
Self-Discipline	• Daily routine • Chores and responsibilities • Homework requirements
Self-Regulation	• Emotional support empowered them to work through difficulties

Value Education	• Provides all supports needed for success in local education system K-12 • Provides university tuition, boarding, and educational support
Benevolence, Caring for Others	• Opportunities for volunteer work among less fortunate

This study adds to our understanding of resilience in a non-western context, as it provides a detailed account of a support system that fostered resilience within a Chinese context. It demonstrates the impact that a carefully designed, culturally informed support system can have on marginalized youth who cannot navigate to wellness without outside support. The study discovered that the support system and best practices framework of the Family Village Care Center mirrors the traditional family unit found within the community of the at-risk youth. The Care Center's support system details practical, everyday actions which can foster resilience. In addition, this study discovered the intersection between the everyday practices of the support system and Confucian principles, which are woven throughout the fabric of Chinese culture. This research provides a framework which can be duplicated for use in other settings to help foster life-long resilience in at-risk youth, providing them the tools they need to move from risk to resiliency.

Implications for Practice

This study furthered our understanding of the process of resilience within a Chinese context and explored a culturally informed family living support system. It is the hope of the researcher that the support system and best practices framework detailed in this study will serve

as a model for educational leaders who serve at-risk youth. By hearing the stories of the participants' journeys from risk to resiliency through a culturally-informed support system and best practices framework, leaders can be better equipped to meet the unique needs of at-risk youth from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings drawn from the study can serve as a foundation for further studies. This study promoted the lived experiences of at-risk youth to contribute to understanding the process of resilience within a non-Western context. Documenting the process of resilience within these youth's lives provides a better understanding of the specific aspects of resilience as defined by this population. Additional qualitative research is needed to further the understanding of the process of resilience within a non-Western culture. As Mu (2018) and Ungar (2008) noted, the voices of at-risk children in non-western settings remain somewhat absent in resilient literature. Therefore, further research is needed among other care centers located in China and surrounding Asian countries that work with at-risk youth. Researchers should consider the support system and best practices framework described in this study when analyzing other child and youth programs. There is a need to analyze and compare supports provided to at-risk youth as an avenue to further our understanding of resilience in their cultural context. Additional research is also needed to explore the relationship between resilience and Confucian principles when working with Chinese at-risk youth. Finally, further research is needed to explore the use of creative art therapies among at-risk youth.

Concluding Comments

As the numbers of at-risk youth in China and the surrounding Asian countries continues to multiply, more needs to be done to provide them culturally informed support care systems. To do this, one needs to find pathways into their communities. Remote locations, impoverished conditions, and political controls all contribute to make this an extremely difficult task. The hope of this researcher is that this study will provide an avenue for youth voices to be heard so that culturally effective intervention programs can be initiated to support and empower the most vulnerable, to help give volume to the voices of marginalized youth.

References

Aigen, K. S. (2004). Conversations on creating community: Performance as music therapy in New York City. In Mercédès Pavlicevic & G. Ansdell (Eds.), *Community Music Therapy* (pp. 186–213). London, England: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

All-China Women's Federation. (2013). *National survey report on the situation of left-behind children and migrant children in China*. Beijing.

Amir, D. (2004). Giving trauma a voice: The role of improvisational music therapy in exposing, dealing with and healing a traumatic experience of sexual abuse. *Music Therapy Perspecitves*, *22*(2), 96–013.

Armstrong, M., Stroul, B., & Boothroyd, R. (2005). Intercepts of resilience and systems of care. In Michael Ungar (Ed.), *Handbook for working with children and youth: Pathways to resilience across cultures and contexts* (pp. 387–403). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Asis, M. (2006). Living with migration: Experiences of left-behind children in the Philippines. *Asian Population Studies*, *2*(1), 45–67. https://doi.org/10.1080/17441730600700556

Bakker, C., Elings-Pels, M., & Reis, M. (2009). *The impact of migration on children in the Caribbean* (No. 4; p. 19).

Barton, W. (2005). Methodological challenges in the study of resilience. In M. Ungar (Ed.), *Handbook for working with children and youth: Pathways to resilience across cultures and contexts* (pp. 211–226). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Barton, W. (2012). Methodological square pegs and theoretical black holes. In R. Greene (Ed.), *Resiliency: An integrated approach to practice, policy, and research* (2nd ed, pp. 95–114). Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Beh, L.-S. (2015). China's left-behind children (*liu-shou-er-tong*): Development and challenges for the future. *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies*, *32*(2), 58. https://doi.org/10.22439/cjas.v32i2.4758

Belmont Report. (1979). *The Belmont Report: Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research*. Retrieved from http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.html

Benard, B. (1991). *Fostering resiliency in kids: Protective factors in the family, school, and community*. Portland, OR: Western Center for Drug-Free Schools and Communities. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED335781.pdf

Benard, B. (2002). The foundations of the resiliency framework. Retrieved May 5, 2020, from Resiliency in action website: https://www.resiliency.com/free-articles-resources/the-foundations-of-the-resiliency-framework/

Biao, X. (2007). How far are the left-behind left behind? A preliminary study in rural China. *Population, Space and Place*, *13*(3), 179–191. https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.437

Bilgehan, E., & Gülnihal, G. (2017). The use of Orff-based music activities for educational and therapeutic purposes with disadvantaged group of Romani children. *Educational Research and Reviews*, *12*(22), 1062–1073. https://doi.org/10.5897/ERR2017.3342

Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. (2016). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods* (5th ed.). Pearson Education.

Bohr, Y., & Tse, C. (2009). Satellite babies in transnational families: A study of parents' decision to separate from their infants. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, *30*(3), 265–286. https://doi.org/10.1002/imhj.20214

Bowman, W. (2001). Music as ethical encounter. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, *151*(Winter), 11–20.

Bowman, W. (2003). Why musical performance? In D. J. Elliott (Ed.), *Praxial music education: Reflections and dialogues* (pp. 142–164). New York: Oxford University Press.

Boyden, J., & Mann, G. (2005a). Children's risk, resilience and coping extreme situations. In Michael Ungar (Ed.), *Handbook for working with children and youth: Pathways to resilience across cultures and contexts* (pp. 3–26). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Boyden, J., & Mann, G. (2005b). Children's risk, resilience, and coping extreme situations. In M. Ungar (Ed.), *Handbook for working with children and youth: Pathways to resilience across cultures and contexts* (pp. 3–26). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Chen, X., & Stone, C. (2013). China and Southeast Asia: Unbalanced development in the Greater Mekong Subregion. *European Financial Review*, 6–11.

Chen-Hafteck, L., & Xu, Z. (2008). Pulling the river: The interactions of local and global influences in Chinese early childhood music education. *Arts Education Policy Review*, *109*(3), 9–16. https://doi.org/10.3200/AEPR.109.3.9-16

Choi, P. (2003). *Resilience: Beyond skills*. Hong Kong: Save the Children Fund.

Chui, C., & Jordan, L. (2017). The role of international non-governmental organizations in service delivery for orphans and abandoned children in China. *International Social Work*, *60*(5), 1154–1168. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872816660603

Chung, C. (2012). Why do primary school students drop out in poor, rural China? A portrait sketched in a remote mountain village. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 9.

Cohen, M., Silber, L., Sangiorgio, A., & Iadeluca, V. (2018). At-risk youth: Music-making as a means to promote positive relationships. In G. McPherson & F. Graham (Eds.), *Special Needs, Community Music and Adult Learning* (Vol. 4, pp. 185–203). Oxford University Press.

Colton, M., & Williams, M. (1997). The nature of foster care international trends. *Adoption & Fostering*, *21*(1), 44–49. https://doi.org/10.1177/030857599702100108

Cook, P., & Du Toit, L. (2005). Overcoming adversity with children affected by HIV/AIDS in the indigenous South African cultural context. In M. Ungar (Ed.), *Handbook for working with children and youth: Pathways to resilience across cultures and contexts* (pp. 247–262). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Crawford, R. (2017). Creating unity through celebrating diversity: A case study that explores the impact of music education on refugee background students. *International Journal of Music Education*, *35*(3), 343–356. https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761416659511

Creswell, J. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Cross, I., Laurence, F., & Rabinowitch, T. (2012). Empathy and Creativity in Group Musical Practices: Towards a Concept of Empathic Creativity. In G. McPherson & G. Welch (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Music Education, Volume 2* (pp. 336–353; By I. Cross,

F. Laurence, & T. Rabinowitch). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199928019.013.0023

Dai, Q., & Chu, R. (2018). Anxiety, happiness and self-esteem of western Chinese left-behind children. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *86*, 403–413. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2016.08.002

DeFrancis, J. (1996). *ABC Chinese-English dictionary: Alphabetically based computerized*. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press.

Dello-Iacovo, B. (2009). Curriculum reform and 'Quality Education' in China: An overview. *International Journal of Educational Development*, *29*(3), 241–249. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2008.02.008

Etzion, D., & Romi, S. (2015). Typology of youth at risk. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *59*, 184–195. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2015.10.017

Fan, F., Su, L., Gill, M., & Birmaher, B. (2010). Emotional and behavioral problems of Chinese left-behind children: A preliminary study. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, *45*(6), 655–664. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-009-0107-4

Farmer, E., & Moyers, S. (2008). *Kinship care: Fostering effective family and friends placements*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Fei, X., Hamilton, G., & Wang, Z. (1992). *From the soil, the foundations of Chinese society: A translation of Fei Xiaotong's Xiangtu Zhongguo, with an introduction and epilogue*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gilligan, R. (2001). *Promoting resilience: A resource guide on working with children in the care system*. London: British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering.

Givaudan, M., & Pick, S. (2013). Children left behind: How to mitigate the effects and facilitate emotional and psychosocial development. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *37*(12), 1080–1090. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2013.10.019

Gonsalves, M. (2010). Music therapy and peaceful hearts for girls at war. In E. Ndura-Ouedraogo, M. Meyer, & J. Atiri (Eds.), *Seeds Taking Root: Pan-African Peace Action for the Twenty-First Century* (pp. 87–119). Retrieved from https://bethel-illiad-oclc-org.ezproxy.bethel.edu/illiad/illiad.dll?Action=10&Form=75&Value=151922

Graham, E., & Jordan, L. P. (2011). Migrant parents and the psychological well-being of left-behind children in Southeast Asia. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *73*(4), 763–787. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2011.00844

Heath, S., & Soep, E. (1998). Youth development and the arts in nonschool hours. *GIA Newsletter*, *9*(1), 14.

Hietolahti-Ansten, M., & Kalliopuska, M. (1991). Self-esteem and empathy among children actively involved in music. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, *72*, 1364–1366.

High, A. (2020). *Non-governmental orphan relief in China: Law, policy, and practice*. London; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Huron, D. (2001). Is music an evolutionary adaptation? *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, *930*, 43–61.

Hycner, R. (1985). Some guidelines for the phenomenological analysis of interview data. *Human Studies*, *8*(3), 279–303. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00142995

Johnson, K. (1996). The politics of the revival of infant abandonment in China, with special reference to Hunan. *Population and Development Review*, *22*(1), 77. https://doi.org/10.2307/2137687

Kirby, L., & Fraser, M. (1997). Risk and resilience in childhood. In M. Fraser (Ed.), *Risk and Resilience in childhood: An ecological perspective* (pp. 10–33). Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Koopman, C. (2007). Community music as music education: On the educational potential of community music. *International Journal of Music Education*, *25*(2), 151–163. https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761407079951

Krueger, R., & Casey, M. (2015). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Lee, T., Shek, D., & Kwong, W. (2007). Chinese approaches to understanding and building resilience in at-risk children and adolescents. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, *16*(2), 377–392. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chc.2006.12.001

Leung, J. (2006). The emergence of social assistance in China: Emergence of social assistance in China. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, *15*(3), 188–198. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2397.2006.00434.x

Liebenberg, L., Ungar, & LeBlanc, J. (2013). The CYRM-12: A brief measure of resilience. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, *104*(2), 131–135.

Ling, H., Fu, E., & Zhang, J. (2015). Effects of separation age and separation duration among left-behind children in China. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, *43*(2), 241–253. https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2015.43.2.241

Liu, J., Liu, S., Yan, J., Lee, E., & Mayes, L. (2016). The impact of life skills training on behavior problems in left-behind children in rural China: A pilot study. *School Psychology International*, *37*(1), 73–84. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034315618442

Liu, Y., Li, X., Chen, L., & Qu, Z. (2015). Perceived positive teacher-student relationship as a protective factor for Chinese left-behind children's emotional and behavioural adjustment. *International Journal of Psychology*, *50*(5), 354–362. https://doi.org/10.1002/ijop.12112

Liu, Z., Li, X., & Ge, X. (2009). Left too early: The effects of age at separation from parents on Chinese rural children's symptoms of anxiety and depression. *American Journal of Public Health*, *99*(11), 2049–2054. https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2008.150474

Liu, Zhengkui, Li, X., & Ge, X. (2009). Left too early: The effects of age at separation from parents on Chinese rural children's symptoms of anxiety and depression. *American Journal of Public Health*, *99*(11), 2049–2054. https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2008.150474

Lou, J., & Ross, H. (2008). *The Greenwood encyclopedia of children's issues worldwide* (Vol. 1; I. Epstein & J. Pattnaik, Eds.). Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press.

Lu, M., Cui, M., Shi, Y., Chang, F., Mo, D., Rozelle, S., & Johnson, N. (2016). Who drops out from primary schools in China? Evidence from minority-concentrated rural areas. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, *17*(2), 235–252. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-016-9421-1

Lu, Y. (2012). Education of children left behind in rural China. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *74*(2), 328–341.

Luthar, S., Cicchetti, D., & Becker, B. (2000). The construct of resilience: A critical evaluation and guidelines for future work. *Child Development*, *71*(3), 543–562. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00164

Ma, S. (2010). China's "left behind" children often suffer health consequences. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, *182*(16), E731–E732. https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.109-3674

Malchiodi, C. (Ed.). (2015). *Creative interventions with traumatized children* (2nd ed.). New York: The Guilford Press.

Malchiodi, C., & Crenshaw, D. (2015). *Creative arts and play therapy for attachment problems*. New York, NY: Guilford Publications.

Man, X., Barth, R., Li, Y., & Wang, Z. (2017). Exploring the new child protection system in mainland China: How does it work? *Children and Youth Services Review*, *76*, 196–202. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2017.03.012

Man, X., & Wang, Z. (2016). From "traditional welfare" to "positive welfare": A study on the construction of family-support welfare system for vulnerable children in China. *Journal of Northeastern University (Social Science)*, *18*(2), 173–178.

Marsden, S., & Thiele, M. (2003). *Engaging art: The Artful Dodgers Studio*. Richmond, Vic.: Jesuit Social Services.

Mason, J. (2017). *Qualitative researching* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Masten, A. (2001). Ordinary magic: Resilience processes in development. *Journal of American Psychologist*, *56*(3), 227–238. https://doi.org/10.1007/0-306-48572-9_2

Masten, A., Best, K., & Garmezy, N. (1990). Resilience and development: Contributions from the study of children who overcome adversity. *Development and Psychopathology*, *2*(4), 425–444. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954579400005812

McWhirter, J., McWhirter, B., McWhirter, E., & McWhirter, R. (Eds.). (2016). *At-risk youth: A comprehensive response for counselors, teachers, psychologists, and human service professionals* (6th ed.). Boston: MA: Cengage Learning.

Merriam, S., & Tisdell, E. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mu. (2018). *Floating children and left-behind children in the migration context*. New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Mu, & Hu, Y. (2016). Validation of the Chinese version of the 12-item Child and Youth Resilience Measure. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *70*, 332–339. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2016.09.037

Muijs, D. (2011). *Doing quantitative research in education with SPSS* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Orcher, L. (2017). *Conducting research: Social and behavioral science methods*. New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. Retrieved from https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=1386625

Osborne, M., McPherson, G., Faulkner, R., Davidson, J., & Barrett, M. (2016). Exploring the academic and psychosocial impact of El Sistema-inspired music programs within two

low socio-economic schools. *Music Education Research*, *18*(2), 156–175. https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2015.1056130

Palidofsky, M. (2010). If I Cry for You. Turning unspoken trauma into song and musical theatre. *International Journal of Community Music*, *3*(1), 121–128. https://doi.org/10.1386/ijcm.3.1.121/7

Pan, L., & Ye, J. (2017). "Children of Great Development": Difficulties in the education and development of rural left-behind children. *Chinese Education & Society*, *50*(4), 336–349. https://doi.org/10.1080/10611932.2017.1382137

Patton. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Patton. (2017). *Understanding research methods: An overview of the essentials* (9th ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyrczak Publishing.

Pavlicevic. (1994). Between chaos and creativity: Music therapy with 'traumatised' children in South Africa. *Journal of British Music Therapy*, *8*(2), 4–9. https://doi.org/10.1177/135945759400800202

Pavlicevic, & Ansdell, G. (2004). The Ripple Effect. In Pavlicevic & G. Ansdell (Eds.), *Community Music Therapy* (pp. 15–31). London, England: Jessica Kingsley.

Polkinghorne, D. (1989). Phenomenological research methods. In R. S. Valle & S. Halling (Eds.), *Existential-phenomenological perspectives in psychology: Exploring the breadth of human experience: With a special section on transpersonal psychology* (pp. 41–60). New York: Plenum Press.

Polkinghorne, D. (2007). Validity issues in narrative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *13*(4), 471–486. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800406297670

Qingyang, G. (2013). The reasons and solutions for problems in rural school consolidation. *Chinese Education & Society*, *46*(5), 76–95. https://doi.org/10.2753/CED1061-1932460506

Rabinowitch, T., Cross, I., & Burnard, P. (2013). Long-term musical group interaction has a positive influence on empathy in children. *Psychology of Music*, *41*(4), 484–498. https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735612440609

Rauscher, F., & Hinton, S. (2011). Music instruction and its diverse extra-musical benefits. *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, *29*(2), 215–226. https://doi.org/10.1525/mp.2011.29.2.215

Rickard, N., Appelman, P., James, R., Murphy, F., Gill, A., & Bambrick, C. (2013). Orchestrating life skills: The effect of increased school-based music classes on children's social competence and self-esteem. *International Journal of Music Education*, *31*(3), 292–309. https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761411434824

Riley, P. (2013). Curriculum reform in rural China: An exploratory case study. *Research and Issues in Music Education*, *11*(1), 7.

Rutter, M., Maughan, B., Mortimore, P., & Ouston, J. (1979). *Fifteen thousand hours: Secondary schools and their effects on children*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Saunders, P., Shang, X., & Li, Z. (2007). Using budget standards to estimate the costs of children: The case of Funan county. *Journal of Family Studies*, *13*(1), 57–71. https://doi.org/10.5172/jfs.327.13.1.57

Scarles, C. (2010). Where words fail, visuals ignite. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *37*(4), 905–926. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2010.02.001

Schrader, E., & Wendland, J. (2012). Music therapy programing at an aftercare center in Cambodia for survivors of child sexual exploitation and their caregivers. *Social Work and Christianity*, *39*(4), 390–406.

Schram, T. (2003). *Conceptualizing qualitative inquiry: Mindwork for fieldwork in education and the social sciences*. Upper Saddle River, N.J: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Seccombe, K. (2002). "Beating the odds" versus "changing the odds": Poverty, resilience, and family policy. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *64*(2), 384–394. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2002.00384.x

Shang, X. (2008). The role of extended families in childcare and protection: The case of rural China. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, *17*(3), 204–215. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2397.2007.00531.x

Shang, X. (2011). *Child Welfare in China—Stocktaking Report 2011*. New York: UNICEF.

Shang, X., & Fisher, K. (2014). *Caring for orphaned children in China*. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books.

Shang, X., Fisher, K., & Xie, J. (2011). Discrimination against children with disability in China: Children with disability in China. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, *20*(3), 298–308. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2397.2009.00666.x

Shang, X., Saldov, M., & Fisher, K. (2011). Informal kinship care of orphans in rural China. *Social Policy and Society*, *10*(1), 103–116. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746410000436

Sharkey, J., You, S., & Schnoebelen, K. (2008). Relations among school assets, individual resilience, and student engagement for youth grouped by level of family functioning. *Psychology in the Schools*, *45*(5), 402–418. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.20305

Smyth, M. (2002). The role of creativity in healing and recovering one's power after victimisation. In J. P. Sutton (Ed.), *Music, Music Therapy and Trauma: International Perspective* (pp. 57–81). London, England: Jessica Kingsley.

State Council, P. R. C. (2016). *State council's advice on strengthening the caring and protection of left-behind children in rural China*. Beijing: State Council.

Sun, B. (2015). A study of the education rate of return for rural residents in northwest minority areas. *Chinese Education & Society*, *48*(6), 400–411. https://doi.org/10.1080/10611932.2015.1119506

Sun, B., & Xu. (2010). Why ethnic minority children are more likely to drop out of school: A cultural capital perspective: evidence from ethnic minority rural communities in the Northwest. *Chinese Education & Society*, *43*(5), 31–46. https://doi.org/10.2753/CED1061-1932430502

Sun, X., Tian, Y., Zhang, Y., Xie, X., Heath, M. A., & Zhou, Z. (2015). Psychological development and educational problems of left-behind children in rural China. *School Psychology International*, *36*(3), 227–252. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034314566669

Sun, Z., & Leung, B. (2014). A survey of rural primary school music education in Northeastern China. *International Journal of Music Education*, *32*(4), 437–461. https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761413491197

Ungar. (2004). A constructionist discourse on resilience: Multiple contexts, multiple realities among at-risk children and youth. *Youth & Society*, *35*(3), 341–365. https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X03257030

Ungar (Ed.). (2005). Introduction: Resilience across cultures and contexts. In *Handbook for working with children and youth: Pathways to resilience across cultures and contexts* (pp. xv–xxxix). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Ungar. (2006). Nurturing hidden resilience in at-risk youth in different cultures. *Journal of the Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, *15*(2), 53–58.

Ungar. (2008). Resilience across cultures. *British Journal of Social Work*, *38*(2), 218–235. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcl343

Ungar. (2015). Resilience and culture: The diversity of protective processes and positive adaptation. In L. Theron, L. Liebenberg, & Ungar (Eds.), *Youth Resilience and Culture* (pp. 37–48). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9415-2_3

Ungar, Brown, M., Liebenberg, L., Othman, R., Kwong, W., Armstrong, M., & Gilgun, J. (2007). Unique pathways to resilience. *Adolescence*, *42*(166), 287–310.

Ungar, & Liebenberg, L. (2005). The International Resilience Project. In Ungar (Ed.), *Handbook for working with children and youth: Pathways to resilience across cultures and contexts* (pp. 211–226). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

UNICEF. (2008). UNICEF Concerns over orphans in China. Retrieved March 26, 2021, from https://www.unicef.org/chinese/infobycountry/china_45098.html

UNICEF. (2018). *Orphans*. Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/media/orphans

United Nations. (2009). *Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children*. Geneva: United Nations General Assembly.

United Nations. (2015). *World populations prospects: The 2015 revision, key finds and advance tables*. New York, NY: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs PD. Population Division.

Van Manen, M. (2016). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy* (2nd Ed.). London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Wang, H. (2009). Predicament and the outlet: A reflection on the rural left-behind children of Chongqing. *Journal of Yangtze Normal University*, *25*(3), 148–151.

Wang, J., & Zhao, Z. (2011). Basic education curriculum reform in rural China: Achievements, problems, and solutions. *Chinese Education & Society*, *44*(6), 36–46. https://doi.org/10.2753/CED1061-1932440603

Warren, B. (Ed.). (2008). *Using the creative arts in therapy and healthcare: A practical introduction* (3rd ed.). London, England: Routledge.

Wong, G. (2004). Resilience in the Asian context. In C. Clauss-Ehlers & M. Weist (Eds.), *Community planning to foster resilience in children*. New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Wong, K., & Lee, T. (2005). Professional discourse among social workers working with at-risk adolescents in Hong Kong: Risk or resilience? In M. Ungar (Ed.), *Handbook for working with children and youth: Pathways to resilience across cultures and contexts* (pp. 313–328). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412976312.n19

Xiang, B. (2007). How far are the left-behind left behind? A preliminary study in rural China. *Population, Space and Place*, *13*(3), 179–191. https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.437

Xin, W. (2002). Comprehensive reform of primary and middle schools in rural ethnic minority regions of the Guangxi Zhuang ethnic minority autonomous region with the integration of vocational-technical education dimensions. *Chinese Education & Society*, *35*(3), 47–64. https://doi.org/10.2753/CED1061-1932350347

Yan, Y. (2003). *Private life under socialism: Love, intimacy, and family change in a Chinese village, 1949-1999*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press.

Ye, J., Murray, J., & Wang, Y. (2011). *Left-behind children in rural China impact study of rural labor migration on left-behind children in Mid-West China*. Beijing; Reading: Social Sciences Academic Press; Paths International. Retrieved from http://site.ebrary.com/id/10449917

Yeh, L. (2011). *Awakening creativity: Dandelion School blossoms*. Oakland, CA: New Village Press.

Yin, R. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE.

Yu, Z., & Leung, B. (2019). Music teachers and their implementation of the new music curriculum standards in China. *International Journal of Music Education*, *37*(2), 178–197. https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761418820647

Yuan, G., Hong, L., Li, B., & Qin, Y. (2004). A study of dropout situation of rural junior middle schools and the control measures. (Nongcun Chuzhong Chuoxue Xianzhuang Diacha ji Kongxhi Chuoxue Duice Sikao). *Journal of the Chinese Society of Education*, *2*.

Zhang. (2000). *Transforming China: Economic reform and its political implications*. London, England: Palgrave.

Zhang, N., Bécares, L., & Chandola, T. (2015). Does the timing of parental migration matter for child growth? A life course study on left-behind children in rural China. *BMC Public Health*, *15*(1), 966. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-015-2296-y

Zhao, C., Wang, F., Zhou, X., Jiang, M., & Hesketh, T. (2018). Impact of parental migration on psychosocial well-being of children left behind: A qualitative study in rural China. *International Journal for Equity in Health*, *17*(1), 80. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-018-0795-z

Zhao, C., Zhou, X., Wang, F., Jiang, M., & Hesketh, T. (2017). Care for left-behind children in rural China: A realist evaluation of a community-based intervention. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *82*, 239–245. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2017.09.034

Zharinova-Sanderson, O. (2004). Promoting integration and socio-cultural change: Community music therapy with traumatised refugees in Berlin. In M. Pavlicevic & G. Ansdell (Eds.), *Community Music Therapy* (pp. 233–248). London: Jessica Kingsley. Retrieved from http://www.123library.org/book_details/?id=2078

Zhou, H. (2012). Promoting compulsory education in rural China: What are the NPOs doing? *Frontiers of Education in China*, *7*(4), 576–607. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03396955

Zhou, J. (2017). China's path to achieve world-class education. *ASIANetwork Exchange: A Journal for Asian Studies in the Liberal Arts*, *24*(2), 27–55. https://doi.org/10.16995/ane.239

Zhou, Y., & Xiong, Y. (2017). Live broadcast classroom: A feasible solution for Chinese rural weak education. *International Journal of Distance Education Technologies*, *15*(3), 31–46. https://doi.org/10.4018/IJDET.2017070103

Zimmer, Z., & Van Natta, M. (2018). Migration and left-behind parents and children of migrants in Cambodia: A look at household composition and the economic situation. *Asian Population Studies*, *14*(3), 271–289. https://doi.org/10.1080/17441730.2018.1513111

Appendix A: Research Questions

RQ1 Who are the youth of the Family Village Care Center?

a. What do their lives look like?

b. What supports do they receive to mitigate the effects of trauma?

RQ2 How are they coping with traumatic events in their lives?

a. What themes of resilience emerge from their lived experiences?

Appendix B: Linking the Research Questions to the Interview Questions

Interview Questions #1 Family Village Youth (18 to 23-year-old)

Research Question	Interview Question
RQ1 Who are the students of the Family Village Care Center? a. What do their lives look like? b. What supports do they receive to mitigate the effects of trauma?	1. Can you tell me more about yourself? How long have you been living at Family Village? What is your life like there? How did your life change after arriving to Family Village? 2. Where do you attend school? Tell me more about your school. Do you like to study? What is your favorite subject? Why? How about your least favorite? Do you have friends at school? Please describe them. Who is your favorite teacher? Why? Do you think getting an education is important for your future? 3. Where are you from? Tell me something about your home village community? What is it known for? What people groups live in your community? What are their special customs? What type of special clothing do they wear? When do you return to your home village? Could you tell me about that? What is your favorite part of returning?

	4. Now that you are at Family Village, describe your new life. Tell me the good things you have learned there. Tell me about your caregivers. How is your relationship with them? What is your favorite activity at Family Village?

Interview Questions #2 Family Village Youth (18 to 23-year-old)

Research Question	Interview Question
RQ1 Who are the students of the Family Village Care Center? a. What do their lives look like? b. What supports do they receive to mitigate the effects of trauma? RQ2 How are they coping with traumatic events in their lives? a. What themes of resilience emerge from their lived experiences?	1. Let's talk more about your school. Do you sometimes need help at school? When do you go to get the support your need? Can you describe a time in the past when you needed support and how you found it? 2. Do you have a best friend? What qualities do you admire in him/her? During difficult times, do your friends stand by you? 3. Can you describe why you came to Family Village? What happened in your family? 4. If you have a personal problem, to whom will you go for help? Can you share with me a story about how you were able to overcome challenges? 5. Out of everything in your life, what do you enjoy the most? What are you most confident about? 6. Picture yourself in 1, 5, and 10 years. What will you be doing at that time? 7. What would be your dream job? Why? What would it take for you to have your dream job?

Interview Questions Family Village Director

Research Questions:	Interview Questions
RQ1 Who are the students of the Family Village Care Center? a. What do their lives look like? b. What supports do they receive to mitigate the effects of trauma?	1. How long have you been working at Family Village? What made you decide to work here? 2. Can you describe the children you care for? What types of challenges do they face? How does the Family Village provide them support? 3. Have you seen changes in the students after they arrived at Family Village? Can you explain those changes? 4. How is life different for them compared to their friends who live with their parents? 5. How does the community treat the children at Family Village? Is there community support for them? 6. Does the Family Village offer educational support? Can you describe this? 7. How do you help the children overcome the trauma they have experienced? 8. How does the "Family" structure help these children overcome trauma?

Interview Questions Family Village Founder

Research Questions:	Interview Questions
RQ1 Who are the students of the Family Village Care Center? c. What do their lives look like? d. What supports do they receive to mitigate the effects of trauma?	1. Could you describe the town where Family Village is located? Schools, business, population (people groups) 2. Please describe to me when Family Village was founded and the circumstances. What model did you follow? 3. How many children live at family village? Please describe their daily routine. 4. How many caregivers are at Family Village? What qualifies them to become a caregiver? What type of special training do they receive? Is there ongoing professional development opportunities? 5. Does Family Village provide educational support for their schooling? 6. Does the community provide any educational service for them? 7. What types of Adverse Childhood Experiences have the children experienced: abuse, family/household challenges, neglect, etc. 8. In what ways have you seen your students benefit from living at Family Village?

Appendix C: Consent to Research at Family Village Care Center

October 15, 2020

As founder of Family Village Care Center, I hereby consent to allow Lynne Picker to conduct research at our center regarding the lived experiences of at-risk youth in southern China.

Signature Date

Appendix D: Written Consent to Participate

You are invited to participate in a study related to education and rural youth of southern China. I hope to learn about the experiences of youth growing up in a rural community and their life at Family Village Care Center.

If you decide to participate in this study, I will be interviewing you one time to hear about the life stories of rural youth at the Family Village Care Center. There are minimal anticipated risks as part of this study. Interviews will be conversation-like, and I will ask for your insight on the youth's experiences at Silver Lining Family Center. You may choose to not answer any question(s) during the interview if you are uncomfortable. Your identity will remain confidential throughout the entire research process. Your real name and your location will not be used in the final report, and all materials collected as part of this study will be destroyed after the results are written and presented. Findings of this study will be used to complete my doctoral dissertation.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and at any time throughout the study, you will have the option of opting out of the research. If you do decide to withdraw from the study, you will be given the choice to have all data about you destroyed upon your exit. Your decision whether to participate, or your decision to withdraw from the study, will not affect your future relationships with Mrs. Picker or Community Arts Center.

This research project has been reviewed and approved in accordance with Bethel University's Level of Review of Research with Humans. If you have any questions about the research and/or research participants' rights or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact Dr. Peter Jankowski at pjankows@bethel.edu or call at: 651.638.6901

You will be offered a copy of this form to keep. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice after signing this form, should you choose to discontinue participation in this study.

_____ _____

Signature Date

_____

Signature of Investigator

Appendix E: Information Sheet

Youth Participants,

You are invited to participate in a study related to education and rural youth of southern China. I hope to learn about your experiences as a youth growing up in a rural community and your life at Family Village Care Center.

If you decide to participate in this study, I will be interviewing you two times to hear about your life stories. There are minimal anticipated risks as part of this study. Interviews will be conversation-like, and I will ask for your insight on your experience as a rural youth. You can choose not to answer any question(s) during the interviews if you are uncomfortable. Your identity will remain confidential throughout the entire research process. Your real name and your location will not be used in the final report, and all materials collected as part of this study will be destroyed after the results are written and presented. Findings of this study will be used to complete my doctoral dissertation.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and whether you participate or not will not impact your relationship with Mrs. Picker or Community Arts Center. Further, you may choose to withdraw from the study at any time throughout the study and this will not impact your relationship with Mrs. Picker or Community Arts Center. If you decide to withdraw from the study, you will be given the choice to have all study data about you to be destroyed upon your exit.

This research project has been reviewed and approved in accordance with Bethel University's Level of Review of Research with Humans. If you have any questions about the research and/or research participants' rights or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact Dr. Peter Jankowski at pjankows@bethel.edu or call at: 651.638.6901.

Appendix F: Information Sheet

Director,

You are invited to participate in a study related to education and rural youth of southern China. I hope to learn about the experiences of youth growing up in a rural community and their life at Family Village Care Center.

If you decide to participate in this study, I will be interviewing you one time to hear about the life stories of these youth. There are minimal anticipated risks as part of this study. Interviews will be conversation-like, and I will ask for your insight on the experiences of youth at Family Village Care Center. You can choose not to answer any question(s) during the interview if you are uncomfortable. Your identity will remain confidential throughout the entire research process. Your real name and your location will not be used in the final report, and all materials collected as part of this study will be destroyed after the results are written and presented. Findings of this study will be used to complete my doctoral dissertation.

Your participation in this study entirely voluntary, and whether you participate or not will not impact your relationship with Family Village Care Center. Further, you may choose to withdraw from the study at any time throughout the study and this will not impact your relationships with Family Village Care Center. If you decide to withdraw from the study, you will be given the choice to have all study data about you to be destroyed upon your exit.

This research project has been reviewed and approved in accordance with Bethel University's Level of Review of Research with Humans. If you have any questions about the research and/or research participants' rights or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact Dr. Peter Jankowski at pjankows@bethel.edu or call at: 651.638.6901.