THE PERCEIVED IMPACT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN FATHERS' INVOLVED PRESENCE ON THEIR ADULT CHILDREN

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BY

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DEDICATION

To my wife, LaMaria T. DarDar, and my four little children, Kristopher Kirdell Jr., Amari Izaiah—David, Kaleb Zayde, and Kamorah Zy'Elle—Marie thank you for your never—ending patience and devotion. To my parents Kirby DarDar, Sr. and Vicky Evans, my late paternal grandparents Johnnie and Renza DarDar, and my maternal grandparents Francis and Shirley Sweet— thank you for inspiring the best in me and to live a life on purpose for a purpose. Lastly, to the late Dr. Jack Evans, Sr., former President of Southwestern Christian College, you believed that I could and gave me the platform to prove it to the world. Thank you!

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ABSTRACT

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The African American family can be viewed as a dynamic enterprise of tenacity, resilience, and flexibility. Throughout the African Americans' history in America, the African American family has lived within contexts that have, in many instances, been divisively constructed for their demise. Duly noted, African American families have been and continue to be more likely to live in poverty, live in at-risk communities, be undereducated, experience early, pre-martial pregnancies, die of disease and other unhealthy aliments such as high blood pressure and obesity, operate in social and systematic racism, and experience familial breakdown than any other racial group in America (Miller, 2018).

With these adversities daily besetting the African American family, including in many instances the absence, displacement, and disengagement of the "father role," I sought to explore the lived experiences of African American adult children who self-report the involved presence of their father during childhood through a phenomenological approach. Four major domains were explored for African American fathers' effect: (1) gender role development, (2) romantic attachment, (3) self-concept, and (4) future parenting styles.

These father-adult child dyads were explored through three theoretical lenses: (1) family systems theory, (2) resilience, and (3) Afrocentricity. The overarching purpose of this research project was to explore, through a phenomenological approach, the effects of the involved presence of African American fathers on their adult children. With this information, I wish to add to the body of knowledge the lived experiences of such families and add positive outcomes and elements to the literature concerning African American families, fathers and men in particular. The principal purpose is to share such results with everyday fathers in the community who may be statically and/or realistically absent, disengaged, invisible, or displaced. Such illuminating evidence would become vital for all to comprehend the important role constructive, fatherly engagement plays in the development and positive outcome of their children.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The African American family, particularly African American fatherhood, has received much scholastic attention over the past 30 years. Researchers have attempted to get a bird's-eye view on the impact and influences these men have on their families, their communities, and the world (Lamb, 2000; Morman & Floyd, 2006; Schoppe-Sullivan & Fagan, 2020; Townsend, 2002; Walker & McGraw, 2000). Throughout the African American's history in America, the African American family has lived within contexts that have, in many instances, been divisively constructed for their demise—one glaringly noted as the institutionalization of the enslavement of Black and Brown people (Miller, 2018). Duly noted, African American families have been and continues to be more likely to live in poverty, live in at-risk communities, be undereducated, experience early, pre-martial pregnancies, die of disease and other unhealthy aliments such as high blood pressure and obesity, and operate in social and systematic racism (Allen & Daly, 2007; Bamishigbin et al., 2017; Clark et al., 1999; Hill, 1998; Lemmons & Johnson, 2019). No institution has suffered more than the Black family that has for the past 450 years continuously experienced more familial breakdown than any other racial group in America (Miller, 2018).

Although the aforementioned issues are prevalent, research concerning the strengths of the Black family and the men who continue to defy those odds is vital to family scholarship and corresponding scholastic endeavors. To begin this journey, the

Black family, and fathers especially, must be properly framed (Afrocentricity) and placed within a realistic context seen from the lens of resilience instead of lens of deficiency (Isaacs et al., 2020); other suggestive lens pushes family life practitioners and policymakers alike to gravitate towards and further create policies and other institutions toward "fixing" the family and promoting practices that further endorse the narrative of brokenness (Gorski, 2008; Moynihan, 1965; Nieto & Bode, 2012).

As fatherhood research continues to gain momentum, this research study sought to yet again add clarity to the hazy lens by which the world sees into these populations by gaining the voices of the paternal practices from the men and women who have been reared by their own father. This study attempted to more clearly understand the impacts of African American fathers on the lives of their adult children. While many African American fathers have been found to be distant, displaced, demoralized, and even despondent (Lemmons & Johnson, 2019), this research project aimed to become acquainted with the resilient and impactful legacies of those men who became resilient among the few to father their children with intentionality and purpose. Without these voices that speak to the contributions and influence of these African American fathers, research risks the continuation of restrictive, overarching conclusions existing in scholastic literature that presents a narrowed, undeveloped view of Black men that reinforces and even enhances the representation of Black fathers as deadbeats and disconnected within scholarship (Bronte-Tinkew & Horowitz, 2010; Goodman, 2018; Guzzo, 2011; Hawkins et al., 2007). Simply stated, the remittance of these voices in

academic literature limits the scope by which society views the African American family entirely.

Statement of the Problem

As theorists, researchers, therapists, family scientists/educators, and health professionals/practitioners have sought to better understand and "help" the African American family dynamic, it has been consistently noted that one prized piece to the puzzle is missing—the African American father (Fleck et al., 2013; Goodman, 2018). Academic literature, as well as other forms of mass communication, has overwhelmingly shown the African American family to be in crisis with an obscure or invisible father role (Allen, 2016; Blankenhorn, 1995; Lemmon & Johnson, 2019; Popenoe, 1996; Summers et al., 2006; Thomas et al., 2008). Within the family structure, the African American father is perceived as either absent, disengaged, uninvolved, or at least non-residential resulting in 66% of African American children growing up in a single-parent family as of 2016 (Lemmons & Johnson, 2019). Researchers have explained the notion of invisibility and distancing of African American fathers from the family system due to several "barriers" that are consistently seen facing the African American family construct (Allen, 2016; Aja et al., 2014; Finley & Schwartz, 2004; Goodman, 2018; Madhani, 2013; McLanahan et al., 2013; McLoyd et al., 2013; Moynihan, 1965; Nikulina et al., 2011; Perry & Langley, 2013; Watkins, 2009). These barriers include, but are not limited to, poverty, inadequate and inconsistent employment opportunities, incarceration, homicide, matriarchal family structures, and maternal expectations regarding paternal roles (Fleck et al., 2013; Miller, 2018).

This physical and psychological absence has caused many in the world of academia and in the American social context to view the African American family as pathological and vulnerable to negative outcomes such as poor academic achievement, poverty, delinquent behaviors, gang violence, teenage pregnancies, drug abuse, grandparenting, family distortion, and more (Allen & Daly, 2007; Miller, 2018). The greatest and most devastating blows are dealt to the children of these men who are at higher risks of poverty and all that is attached to such a disparaging lifestyle (Lerman, 2010).

Although the scholarship on fatherhood is ever evolving, little can be found from the voices of the very African American children and adult children who experienced continued father involvement. Additionally, the depictions of African American fathers are inclined to be stereotypical, portraying Black fathers as low-income, displaced, depressed, drug-addicted, and enveloped with other negative life events (Toth & Xu, 1999). The voices of Black adult children sharing the transgenerational fathering messages they received during early childhood development are important to the continual narrative of their Black fathers and fatherhood academic literature (Nepomnyaschy, 2007).

Significance of the Study

Despite these foreseen barriers that face the African American fathers, through this research project I sought to offer another perspective of the African American family dynamic, in which fathers who were and are in fact present and involved are realized and better understood for the influence they have on their children as adults. In fact, all

African American fathers are not absent. Their invisibility in academic literature could denote such, but in fact, there are men of color who have been engaged in the lives of their children (Adamsons, 2018; Banks-Rogers, 2020; Barthelemy & Coakley, 2017; Brown et al., 2018; Goodman, 2018; Jessee & Adamsons, 2018; Trahan & Cheung, 2018).

With these adversities aforementioned that may daily beset the African American family, including in many instances the absence, displacement, and disengagement of the "father role" (Miller, 2018), I sought to explore the lived experiences of African American adult children who self-report the involved presence of their father during childhood through a phenomenological approach. Four major domains were explored for the children's perceived impacts of African American fathers' involvement: (1) gender role development—to explore how father involvement impacts the development of each adult child as a male, female, or other; (2) romantic attachment—to explore how father involvement influences each adult child's ability to create and maintain holistic, meaningful relationships; (3) self-concept— to explore how father involvement impacts each participant's constructed belief in themselves and their relationship with and responses to others; and (4) future parenting styles— to explore how father involvement influences the ways in which each participant currently parents, parented in the past, or would parent in the event of having children of their own. I believe these four domains offer an aerial view of each participant's life and life goals and how their perceptions of paternal involvement affected each of the aforementioned.

Research relating to paternal presence and active fathering has slowly increased in academia since its inception with Michael Lamb in the 1970s (Beaton & Doherty, 2007; Beaton et al., 2003; Doherty et al., 1998; Masciadrelli et al., 2006; Morman & Floyd, 2006; Nicholson et al., 2008; Townsend, 2002; Walker & McGraw, 2000). The exploring of four areas of active fathering advanced fatherhood research in the late 2000s: (1) the societal influence of a more progressive culture on fathering roles; (2) father-child relationships and outcomes; (3) theoretical and empirical research on fathering; and (4) identity development of fathers (Murray, 2016).

Research also suggested that boys' positive or negative experiences during developmental stages with fathers are influential markers to men's attitudes about fathering, feelings of effectiveness in the paternal position, the desire to become fathers themselves, and present/future parenting style (Doherty et al., 1998; Perry & Lewis, 2016). Thus, this phenomenological research project explored the impacts of the involved presence of African American fathers through the thick, richness of the retrospective recollections of their adult children's experiences in contrast to the current research of non-involvement of fathering that others have experienced.

Findings from this research will add to the body of knowledge the lived experiences of families and add positive elements to the literature concerning African American families, fathers/men in particular. An overarching purpose was to: (1) share results with fathers who may be absent, disengaged, invisible, or displaced to see the important role they play in the development and positive outcome of their children; (2) encourage the men who are engaged fathers to understand the significance and impact of

their involvement and presence; (3) educate future fathers to recognize that their paternal role has value and can change the course of the lived experiences of the children they will father; and (4) add to the body of knowledge in the family scholarship and offer a diverse (and even dissimilar) perspective to family life educators and policymakers in the practical world.

Theoretical Frameworks

Each father-adult child relationship was explored through three theoretical lenses: (1) family systems theory, (2) resilience theory, and (3) Afrocentricity. Bowen's family systems theory postulated that one could not fully understand an individual separate and apart from the family system or interconnected subsystems in which he or she functions (Cox et al., 2001). As I explored the African American fathering practices and impact on their adult children, it is important to understand the ways in which these systems function and develop. Investigating how these relationships interact, intersect, and intertwine is vital to unveiling the influences and impact of African American fathers. Four concepts of family systems theory are as follows: (1) nuclear family emotional system, which explains how families share anxieties and stresses among the members of the system in order to maintain homeostasis within the system; (2) multigenerational transmission process, which explains how parents transmit their ideologies down to the children and the cycle of this behavior becomes transgenerational; (3) family projection process, which explains how parents project their anxieties and stresses onto their children as these children absorb the tensions of their parents; and (4) societal emotional

process, which explains how the family system takes these roles, identities, and tensions into the societal levels in they live and function (Cox et al., 2001).

Secondly, resiliency theory, unlike many other models found within academic research, is a strength-based approach/framework versus a deficit-based approach. Using this model, researchers seek to find strengths and build on them instead of pathologies to remedy (West-Olatunji et al., 2008). Thus, I sought to explore and identify the strengths and practices that enable such strengths and resilience within the family system. Concepts of resilience theory that were considered in this project are: (1) making sense of adversity, which includes normalizing and contextualizing adversity and viewing stressors as manageable and even meaningful; (2) positive outlook, which focuses on potential, hope and optimism; (3) spirituality and transcendence, which focuses on one's connection with higher ideals and standards of living; (4) flexibility, which explores one's ability to reorganize and recalibrate during or after adversity to provide predictability; (5) connectedness, which includes providing others with mutual support; and (6) sharing emotions openly, which includes both positive and painful feelings (Walsh, 2016).

Lastly, Afrocentricity is a cultural-based model/framework that places African Americans at the center of the framework, seeing them in view of African heritage, customs, ways of knowing, recreated African American culture, and historical context (Asante, 1987, 1998, 2003, 2007). Using Afrocentricity is paramount to recreate the ways in which African American families are viewed and experienced in the world academia and beyond as well as it helps give space, especially in the scholarship, to marginalized

groups such as Black and Brown people while reforming and reinventing Westernized ways of knowing, experiencing, and educating (Cabrera et al., 2008; Coley & Chase-Lansdale, 1999; Kotila & Kamp Dush, 2013).

There are five fundamental pillars of Afrocentricity. They include the following: (1) psychological location, which is defined and determined through the use of symbols, languages, and rituals that African people create; (2) finding the subject-place of Africans in any social, political, economic, or religious experience; (3) the defense of African cultural ethics, customs, religions, and traditions against non-African interpretation; (4) lexical refinement which demands that all terminologies and definitions used to define Africana people must be defined using the African cultural-historical contexts and experiences from which they derived; and (5) the commitment to a new African narrative by introducing and rediscovering a new corrected history of the African people all over the world that does not falsify African history but promotes Afrocentric positivity (Omar, 2020).

The overarching purpose of this research project was to explore, through a phenomenological approach, the impacts of the involved presence of African American fathers on their adult children. With this information, I aimed to add to the body of knowledge the lived experiences of such families and add positive outcomes and elements to the literature concerning African American families, particularly men who are fathers. Such evidence would become vital to comprehend the vast role constructive, paternal engagement plays in the development and positive outcome of children.

Philosophical Perspective

This research project employed a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of African American adults who self-report to have had an active, involved father throughout their childhood. Phenomenological researchers seek to give voice to the lived experiences of otherwise unheard populations to explore how they make sense of a unique experience, how they comprehend it, and the way in which these experiences impact their behavior (Patton, 2002/2015).

Additionally, this study utilized an Afrocentric worldview to explore the lived experiences of the African American family dynamic. It is my perspective that in order to holistically understand the systems and social connectivity of the Black family, one should employ Afrocentric ideologies defining the Black family through Afrocentric meanings. Few studies have set out to understand the Black family from the lens of its "blackness"— Afrocentric ways of knowing and experiencing (Asante, 1998; Omar, 2020).

Accordingly, I sought to express the thick, rich experiences verbatim, as participants perceive their societal and familial context. Only when the researcher enters a person's lived experience within a perspective that centers their contextual, cultural, traditional, and spiritual heritages is that researcher able to understand the behaviors and actions that occur within that unique lived experience giving a holistic framework to the data collected (Asante, 1987, 1998, 2003, 2007). The voices heard through phenomenological research cannot only add treasured data to the overarching body of

knowledge, but these insights can guide future research to better understand an experience or phenomenon.

Research Question

This project has one major research question that guides the course of this research. That question is, "How has perceived paternal involvement among African Americans during childhood help shape their development during adulthood?"

Researcher's Assumptions

I approached this project with several biases and assumptions as an African American male who has had an actively present father for over 30 years and who believes that his current successes are intimately tied to his relationship with his father and his father's influences. I planned to bracket these biases by journaling during the investigation process and allowing an academic advisor to check for any insertion of bias into the data collection process. My assumptions were as follows:

1. Participants will answer questions clearly and honestly.
2. Participants will have accurate recollections of their father's involvement in their up bring.
3. Father involvement is influential in the overall positive and negative outcomes to their children.
4. Participants will be able to accurately explain this influence and impact.
5. Participants' childhood perceptions of their fathers' involvement are the realities of those experiences.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms are used in this project; therefore, a working definition is provided. The definitions provide a lens through which the reader is to understand and apply the terms.

Active father/Active Black father is defined as a father or specifically an African American father's engagement or direct interactions with his children. This engagement includes accessibility, availability, responsibility for the care of one's children, and financial support for children (Jones & Mosher, 2013; Lamb et al., 1985).

Adult child is defined as anyone 18 years of age and older who has self-reported the involvement, whether residential or non-residential, of his or her biological father.

African American/Black are terms used to denote people of color who originate from African descent living in America, who also have a common history of American enslavement (Agyemang et al., 2005). The terms African American and Black are used interchangeably in this project.

Afrocentricity as defined by Asante (1998, 2003) states that African-centered theory places people of African descent at the center of any investigation, regardless of the geographic spaces they occupy. All behavior and interactions are viewed through the lens of the values, traditions, connotations, and models found within the Black context.

Black masculinity and femininity are defined as the engendering of either the male or female roles within the African American social and familial contexts.

Father in this research project is defined as a biological male parent of a child. Additionally, both residential and non-residential fathers are noted as fathers, and only

the self-reported involvement from the adult child(ren) of the father will be reported in the findings (Lamb, 2010; Morman & Floyd, 2006).

Father/child relationship is defined as the dyadic relationship between a biological father and his children—both sons and daughters. Father/child relationships can be described as both healthy and unhealthy, involved or noninvolved, and effective and non-effective (Maurer et al., 2003).

Gatekeepers are defined as key people within a certain community who hold respect and prominence (i.e., local pastors, local politicians, barbers, teachers, coaches, parents, grandparents, etc.). Those individuals become the "doors" into the community. Once I was endorsed by these gatekeepers as trustworthy and respectable, I was allowed to explore within that community and gain credible knowledge (Allen & Hawkins, 1999).

Gender roles are defined as the socially constructed views and norms that are associated with both males and females. These norms formed and carried out through functions, characteristics, and responsibilities based on one's gender (Lamb, 2000).

Involvement is defined as the building of meaningful relationships throughout the child's developmental stages (Finley & Schwartz, 2004). In this project, this term is used in connection with presence as the participants in this study are interviewed concerning their perception of their father's involvement in their lives as children and their understanding of how it has affected them in adulthood.

Parenting Style is defined as the strategies one employs to rear children. For this project, the impact of paternal involvement is documented in the intergenerational

transmission of the father's parenting style to the parenting style of his adult children (Doyle et al., 2016; Perry & Lewis, 2016).

Perception is be defined as the adult child's recollection of and attitudes toward his or her father's involvement. With this data based on retrospective recollection, it is the person's assessment and opinion of their father's involvement and how that involvement has influenced them. A definite measurement of involvement cannot be quantified.

Presence is defined as rearing children via interaction, availability, and responsibility. Both quality and quantity of engagement are factors in capturing active parenting. The definition of presence is more than physical, residential presence but the emotional "closeness" the children feel to the father (Thomas et al., 2008). Many non-residential fathers visit their children regularly and are highly involved in the lives of their children. Contrastingly, some fathers may physically be in the home, yet are disengaged, detached, and disconnected from their children and the lives they lead.

Romantic attachment is defined as the relational connection within a martial or sexual relationship. Romantic attachment is measured by one's ability to create and maintain these partnerships, and one's ability to healthily experience love (Furman & Shomaker, 2008; Laufer & Laufer, 1984).

Self-concept is defined in this research project as the internalized character and manner in which a person sees themselves emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually/morally (Doyle et al., 2016).

Delimitations

This study had several delimitations, a few of which I now noted. First, this research project was limited to adults who met the criteria of being African American, parented by an African American biological father, and willing to honestly participate in the study. Trustworthiness is contingent on verbal responses gathered from the participant via self-reports of retrospective experiences from semi-structured, open-ended interview questions. Second, the father involvement criteria might have differing effects. For the participants who may be 18 years old and have had their father for 18 years may have a very different experience than an older adult who may be 60 years old and have had their father for 60 years who now have grandchildren introduced into the family dynamic. The relationship with fathers as viewed retrospectively may be more appreciated and viewed in light of one's own parenting relationships in comparison to young adult children who have yet to have such experiences.

Third, the exemption of "father figures" included in this study. Although father figures for children, especially in the African American community, who lack the presence of a biological father may show positive results in these studied areas, a separate study of father figures' impact should be conducted. Furthermore, this study was further limited as to the trustworthiness of the results as they are based on the recollection of the childhood memories of adults, which can be vague. Participants may have difficulty recalling with specificity childhood experiences.

Researcher's Perspective

This research topic is important to me because as an African American male who functions as a husband, father, son of an African American father, and pastor of a predominantly African American church, I have seen and witnessed the plight of the African American experience; the hardships attached to being an involved, Black father; and the enormous need for others like me to understand the necessity for Black fathers to impact their children in positive ways. As stated before, the gaps of positive paternal involvement among African Americans are prevalent, yet the "gaps" in the lives of such men and children are greater. It is my belief that Black men are in need of the positivity that shines from those who are defying the odds.

This research is important to me because of the positive, motivating relationship I have with my father and the type of relationship I have and wish to continue with my four children. During childhood, my father was actively present (even through years of being non-residential after my parents' divorce), supportive, loving, emotionally engaged, a spiritual leader/teacher, confidant, and friend. I believe that my father and his father before him are not anomalies, but they are the definitions of Black fatherhood unseen in the media, unwritten in the academia, and unsung in mainstream American culture. For this cause, I approached this topic of research and wish to continue their legacies by developing this topic in academic literature.

Summary

Although African American families have and continue to be more likely to live in poverty, live in at-risk communities, be undereducated, experience early, pre-martial

pregnancies, die of disease and unhealthy aliments, operate in social/systematic racism, and experience familial breakdown (Miller, 2018), I sought to explore the lived experiences of African American adult children who self-report the involved, active presence of their father during childhood through a phenomenological approach. Through four major domains: (1) gender role development, (2) romantic attachment, (3) self-concept, and (4) future parenting styles, I explored the impacts of African American fathers on their children.

With this information, this research project aims to add to the body of knowledge the lived experiences of such families and add positive outcomes and elements to the literature concerning African American families, particularly men who are fathers and future fathers. The principal goal is to share such results with such men in the community who may be otherwise marginalized to share such illuminating evidence of the important role constructive, fatherly engagement plays in the development and positive outcome of their children.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This dissertation aimed to investigate and further explore the impact in which African American fathers have on their children. Research has shown that fathers perform a peculiar and distinctive role within the family dynamic (Beaton & Doherty, 2007; Beaton et al., 2003; Doherty et al., 1998; Masciadrelli et al., 2006; Morman & Floyd, 2006; Nicholson et al., 2008; Schoppe-Sullivan & Fagan, 2020; Townsend, 2002; Walker & McGraw, 2000; Wilson et al., 2020). Research has also shown that when this paternal role is nonexistent, deficient, or dysfunctional, a void is created, and negative behaviors can be observed within others of that same family (Blankenhorn, 1995; Popenoe, 1996; Summers et al., 2006; Thomas et al., 2008).

There is a great number of studies on non-residential African American fathers who are incarcerated, divorced from the mother, or simply dislocated from their families. In American society, African American fathers have been generally stereotyped and clustered as being absent or distant from the family dynamic. Mass media and other venues of communication often paint these men as nonexistent and invisible (Bronte-Tinkew & Horowitz, 2010; Guzzo, 2011; Hawkins et al., 2007). This study attempts to explore the influences and effects African American fathers offer to the family dynamic when they are in fact “present” in and/or without the households of which their children

reside. The following research lays the foundation and offers a context to the men and families that are represented in this research project.

Theoretical Frameworks

Paternal impact has been viewed through various lenses throughout the span of research. In the current study, I seek to view African American biological fathers' impact on their adult children. These adult children retrospectively recalling their fathers' role and influence in their lives can be considered in various ways of knowing and theories. This study sought to view the testimonials and personal experiences through three theoretical frameworks: (1) Bowen's family systems theory- notes that every role and action with the family dynamic affects every other role and creates a reaction with that same dynamic; (2) resilience theory views the African American fathering experience in the context of the socio-political barriers of racism and the socio-economic pressures African Americans overcome in order to be impactful fathers; and lastly (3) Afrocentricity centralizes the African American family and father in particular while viewing the Black family through the lens of their unique lived experiences, ways of knowing, and cultural specificities.

With these three frameworks in mind, I believe that the gathered information can be assessed in a holistic manner and will aid in exploring the meaning, impact, and challenges associated with fathering within the African American family dynamic.

Family Systems Theory

The first theoretical approach is Bowen's family systems theory. Bowen sought to see families as emotional units and postulated that one could not fully or truly understand

an individual separate and apart from the family system in which he or she functions. Family systems theory (Cox et al., 2001) also posits that families are made of interconnected subsystems— including the mother-father, mother-child, and father-child relationships—that employ direct and indirect influences upon one another. This interdependence among family subsystems is a major principle of family systems theory (Cox et al., 2001), which postulates that father-child subsystems would also have reciprocal impact on each other (Fagan & Cabrera, 2012; Lee et al., 2020).

Bowen's major focus was to explain how a family expresses, defuses, transmits, and spreads its concerns and anxieties while analyzing the family as an emotional system. Bowen also postulated that family systems seek to maintain homeostasis and equilibrium within the system by the dispersal of emotional anxieties among members of the system (Brown, 1999). The issues that the fathers face directly and, in many instances implicitly, affect the children in various ways. This idea has been termed *spillover effect* (De Luccie, 1995). The idea is that behaviors and emotions experienced in one subsystem (spousal subsystem) can be shifted to another subsystem (parental subsystem) as well. Numerous studies have shown that feelings of dissatisfaction within a marriage and interparental conflicts would lead to negative parenting and negative parent-child relationships (Erel & Burman, 1995; Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000).

Conversely, some researchers feel that discontented spouses may become more involved with their children to compensate for the affections lost or dissatisfaction felt within the marital subsystem, yet the relationships are affected either way- positively or contrastingly (Goldberg & Easterbrooks, 1984). As many studies discussed African

American fathering practices and the impact on their adult children, it is important to understand the ways in which these families function and develop. Investigating how these relationships interact, intersect, and intertwine is vital to unveiling the influences and impact of African American fathers.

There are eight major concepts to family systems theory that influence the nature of this project. First is differentiation of self. This concept explains how a person seeks autonomy within the family system and seeks to make self-directed choices independent of the family in which he or she functions. Second is emotional cutoff that explains how members of the family system handle emotional stress by emotionally detaching from the family system either gradually, by growing away, or total emotional disengagement. Bowen defines a third concept as the nuclear family emotional system. This concept explains how families share anxieties and stresses among the members of the system in order to maintain homeostasis and equilibrium within the system.

The effects of this concept can be exhibited in four major functionalities: (1) martial conflict— in which the marital dyad disseminates stress and stressors within the marriage thus creating an environment of conflict and tension; (2) dysfunctional spouse- in which a spouse becomes dysfunctional by receiving a role of absorbing the stress; (3) impairment of the child(ren)- in which the parents transmit and project the dysfunction down to the child(ren); and (4) emotional distance- in which members of the system emotionally detach from the others due to the overwhelming amount of stress absorbed and/or perceived. Fourth major concept of Bowen's theory is triangles- a 3-person

relationship that is created within or without the family system in order to disseminate the stress/anxieties and maintain balance within the family system.

The fifth concept is sibling position, and the sixth concept is defined as the multigenerational transmission process. Multigenerational transmission process explains how parents transmit their anxieties and stresses down to the children and the cycle of this behavior become transgenerational.

The seventh is family projection process. This concept explains how parents project their anxieties and stresses onto their children as these children absorb the tensions of their parents. The last concept is what Bowen defined as the societal emotional process. This concept explains how the family system takes these role, identities, and tensions into the societal levels in which they function (i.e., the workplace, schools, etc.).

All of the aforementioned concepts are important in understanding the family dynamic, the emotional stability of the family, the self-concept of the child, the balance and equilibrium created within the family, what responsibilities are taken on by whom, and more. These ideas help shape and create the ideas of involvement, impact, influence, self-concept, romantic attachment, future family development, and more. With these in mind, I can best understand the interrelations of the father-child dynamic and its surrounding apparatuses.

Resilience Theory

According to West-Olatunji et al. (2008), the foundation of resilience theory is the innate ability of individuals to flourish despite the adverse hardships he or she may face,

and it proposes that such individuals need reinforcing support systems within his or her family and community to remain as such. Thus, resiliency theory, unlike many other models found within academic research, is a strength-based approach/framework versus a deficit-based approach (Masten, 2018). This model seeks to find strengths and build on them instead of pathologies to remedy. *Resilience* is defined differently across various segments of literature. Consequently, for the sake of this research I employ Brown's definition of resilience which refers to one's capacity to develop and maintain characteristics of adaptability in the face of adverse circumstances and events (Iacoviello & Charney, 2014; Luthar et al., 2000; Ogińska-Bulik & Juczyński, 2008).

Concepts of resilience theory include: (1) making sense of adversity, which includes normalizing and contextualizing adversity and viewing stressors as manageable and even meaningful; (2) positive outlook, which focuses on potential, hope and optimism; (3) spirituality and transcendence, which focuses on one's connection with higher ideals and standards of living; (4) flexibility, which explores one's ability to reorganize and recalibrating during or after adversity to provide predictability; (5) connectedness, which includes providing others with mutual support; and (6) sharing emotions openly, which includes both positive and painful feelings (Walsh, 2016).

Resilience among African Americans

Although research shows that there are numerous systems that plague the African American family, with specificity to the African American male/father, including but not limited to racism, people of color seem to have risen despite the odds of oppression in times past and the systems current perplex their communities (Bamishigbin et al., 2017;

Clark et al., 1999; Pieterse et al., 2012; Wilson & Thompson, 2020). LaMothe (2012) highlighted this fact by stating that is noteworthy when an individual or community can remain connected and creative in the midst of bigotry, hatred, and violence, and few theoretical concepts explain such as powerfully as resilience theory.

Factors That Support Resilience

Resilience theory postulates that persons deemed resilient possess eight major protective factors that allow an individual to adapt in adversarial situations. These eight major protective factors/characteristics include the following: (1) cognitive explanatory skills— one's ability to realistically place blame where it belongs; (2) cognitive flexibility— one's ability to adapt problem-solving techniques to given adversities; (3) acceptance— the ability to acknowledge and accept what is happening and what has happened; (4) active coping skills— one's ability to develop problem-solving skills and techniques; (5) social support systems— one's social networks that undergird them in times of hardship and offer support and reinforcement in these times (i.e., family, church, etc.); (6) spirituality— one's meaningful connection with higher powers which colors and tints the way a person ascribes meaning to oppressive situations; (7) positive outlook— one's ability to enhance optimism and positivity; and (8) reappraisal— one's ability to reframe a situation and ascribe new meaning to adverse events (Rutter, 1985).

Interestingly, although spirituality for many scientists cannot be measured or quantified, it does produce substantial meaning and significance within the African American culture. This attribution to spirituality can be found in numerous testimonies of Black people who have experienced financial hardship, the loss of homes, jobs, family,

and more (Laditka et al., 2010). Although in some instances this strength does not correlate with church attendance, activities such as communication with God through prayer, reading the Bible, and reading inspirational materials did seem to result in a spiritual strength leading to resiliency (June et al., 2009; Lawson, 2010).

In many instances, research supports the fact that support systems that include meaning making, protective processes, and mentorship systems, improve positive outcomes of resilience and self-concept, especially among African Americans (Johnson, 2010). These support systems seem to have been the roots beneath the soil of the communities and family systems that allow for growth, connectivity, accountability, financial assistance, therapeutic counsel, spiritual strength, and more. (Barber, 2012; Bonner et al., 2008; Hurd & Zimmerman, 2010; June et al., 2009; Prince, 2008; Utsey et al., 2008; Wormer et al., 2011).

Research also shows that within Black communities of America, upward mobility, resilience, and potency have all been contingent on education. Allen et al. (2007) noted that among African Americans, education is not only a means toward gaining equality and progress in this country, but it is the very essence of what it means to be a citizen of the United States. As enslaved African Americans were not allowed to become educated or even read, many believed their deliverance from racial oppression and equity within American society were concealed within books and the right to an education. Within scholarship, when asked to point to moments of resilience in their lives or the lives of their parents, many African American participants pointed to moments of educational

maturation (Cunningham & Swanson, 2010; Kimbrough & Hutcheson, 1998; Sealey-Ruiz & Lewis, 2011).

As other ethnic groups (such as Native Americans, Chinese Americans, Hispanics, and more) have displayed levels of resilience throughout history, African American families have employed extraordinary levels. Through the cruelest tortures of chattel slavery; Black Codes and peonage; the adversities of Jim Crow segregation; and even current conditions of poverty, discrimination, prejudices, overrepresentation in prisons, underrepresentation in universities, and more, the ideals of resilience have played a major role in ways in which these families interrelate, relate to the world, and the ways in which they view parenting and legacy (Wormer et al., 2011). All of the aforementioned are believed to impact the data that may be collected in this study concerning fathers' impact on their adult children.

Afrocentricity

Molfe Asante (1987, 1998, 2003, 2007) asserts that in order to holistically understand the African American experience, one must view any occurrences through a lens that allows ways of knowing, culture, heritage, and customs of African Americans to be at the center of the framework. This differs from seeing African Americans through a White, Eurocentric lens (Cabrera et al., 2008; Coley & Chase-Lansdale, 1999; Kotila & Kamp Dush, 2013)

Definitively, Afrocentricity is an African-centered model that allows and secures space for people to understand their own experiences and the experiences of others on their own terms without the preconceptions of westernized, Eurocentric insertions

(George & Dei, 1994). Masaka et al. (2012) defined Afrocentricity as a social change theory that has the ability to challenge all forms of oppression of African natives and descendants by White people through institutional racism, colonialism, and imperialism. Simply stated, Afrocentricity is a cultural-based model/framework that places the African American at the center of the framework, viewing him/her in the perspective of African heritage, customs, ways of knowing, recreated African American culture, and historical context. Asante (1987) emphasizes that Afrocentricity is a philosophical ideology, a way of knowing, living, and experiencing.

An Afrocentric worldview employs seven major tents: spirituality, interdependence, holism, humanism, emotional vitality, rhythm, and oral tradition (Borum, 2007). Much of the African American community's resilience is its spirituality; which in many cases is the heart of the African American community. The African American pastors serve as spiritual leader, social activist, health care practitioner, therapist, disciplinarian and much more. For African Americans, a connection with a higher power is stated to enable them to be resilient (as it is one of the protective factors of resilience) through the compound adversities they face daily (Borum, 2007).

As stated, social networks have been one of the keys to the African Americans' survival in America. It has been able to undergird them in times of hardship and offer support and reinforcement in these times through family accountability, spirituality/religion, mentorship, etc. These families are the support systems within the "Afro-centric community" that perpetrate "resilience."

These tenets are relevant to this study in that these are elements of the expectancies of African American fathers' paternal processes when interacting and influencing their children (Connor & White, 2011; Goddard, 1993). These fathers most likely will impart to their children those principles that are deemed important and eventually will become models of success and survival. When asking the level of connectivity, impact, presence, availability, and more of the like, these tenets become the metric to by which participants in this study measure father involvement.

Interestingly, African Americans also have cultural variation within their unified culture. I cannot take a monolithic approach in dealing with any culture, especially African Americans. African Americans are not homogeneous, even though many have encountered comparable experiences. For example, colorism- the discrimination of a person based upon the shade or hue of their skin, is very real within the African American community. Thus, one may hear the terms "dark skinned" or "light skinned," "good hair" or "bad hair." These terms bring with them a very real experience and emotion that differ from one another. The acknowledgment of variation and flexibility is key to understanding this population. The culture of African Americans is a dynamic/fluid process of variability, flexibility, and elasticity.

Working with African Americans using Afrocentricity helps me connect with the participants on a level incomparable to other approaches. Afrocentricity helps researchers and other helping professionals understand contextually why many African Americans are distrusting of "helping professionals." This distrust is embedded for a multiplicity of reasons: (1) historical malpractice and ethical issues (i.e., the Tuskegee Syphilis Project,

the Bell Curve, and others), (2) the projected pathologies of parenting practices on African American parents from professionals, and (3) the lack of acknowledgment of strengths and tenacity of African Americans in the face of adverse, American constructs and circumstances (Kennedy et al., 2007). Thus, one should avoid the aforementioned errors by seeking to understand the tenants of Afrocentricity and understanding the culture and contexts of this population.

Cochran (1997) asserts that African Americans (especially males) are obscure within academic research and literature because of mistrust and a plethora of other reasons; thus, when seeking to investigate African American populations, one should employ group approaches in data collection. Group approaches tie into the communal/social networks that are ingrained in the fabric of the African American community and way of living. In addition, group approaches are known to work well with oppressed populations as they are suspect of "helping professionals" in general. Thus, group interviews can show to be less rigid and would resemble a relaxed conversation between the social networks of family members, friends, and neighbors.

Using this theory can show paramount to reconstructing the ways in which people of color are viewed and experienced in the world academia and beyond. In addition, qualitative research is a vital way of amplifying the voices of these marginalized and often devalued fathers and children. As noted in the aforementioned sections, Afrocentricity and other adjoining theories are vital to help give space, especially in the world of academia, to those who have been written out of the pages of history while reforming and rebuilding Westernized ways of knowing, experiencing, and educating.

African American Family Resilience: The Link between Family Systems Theory, Resilience, and Afrocentricity

According to research, not only can individuals be resilient, but also families collectively can become resilient as well (Hawley & DeHaan, 1996). Hawley and DeHaan (1996) stated that families express resilience by characterizing the aforementioned protective factors with the addition of two others: family schema and coherence. One's family schema is a set of values, beliefs, worldview, and meanings a family possesses and maintains in order to face and adapt to adverse events. Coherence is broken into three aspects: (1) comprehensibility links to this question, "Does the event make cognitive sense to the family?"; (2) manageability which asks, "Does the family have the resources it feels it needs in order to effectively and positively adapt within an adverse event?"; and (3) meaningfulness which asks "What meaning does the family ascribe to the adverse event?" and "What level of stress does the family allow the event to have on its emotional system?"

Many systems researchers link family systems theory and family resilience together with the notion that as an individual member of a family system is resilient or become more resilient by strengthening their protective factors, the whole family system become more resilient. African Americans, according to Brown (2008), are a population in America that is more susceptible to adverse events; more likely to live in poverty; die from disease and other health ailments (i.e., diabetes, heart failure, high blood pressure, and obesity); live in violent, underfunded communities; work high-stress, low-paying

jobs; experience early, premarital pregnancies; are undereducated; and live within a social context and construct of racism, prejudice, and discrimination.

Borum (2007) stated that no other group in America has endured what African Americans have suffered to the level they have experienced such suffering. African Americans are neither immigrants nor indigenous, yet they were enslaved and brought to America against their will, made to surrender their heritage, ways of life, family structure, and more. Living daily within many of these compounded adverse situations (historically and contemporarily), African American families are flourishing, burgeoning in the social level, have made some if not most of the greatest contributions to American culture while recreating their own.

A unifying theme like resiliency theory linked with a centralizing theme such as Afrocentricity is useful for social sciences and more specifically this research project. Both aforementioned theories aid in developing a way of knowing that sees the African American family, specifically the father-child relationship, as victors versus victims to whatever adverse situations they have endured. These theoretical lenses also help to build knowledge and inform practice using a strength-based paradigm.

Theories Application to the Research

This research focuses on the African American parent-child relationship, namely fathers and adult children. I aim to explore the effects of involved presence of African American fathers in the lives of their adult children in four domains: gender role development, romantic attachment, self-concept, and family development. Consequently, the application of all three of theories in the current study is most advantageous to best

describe the relationship of these fathers with their children within the historical and social contexts in which such relationships were/are developed.

Viewing these relationships through a family systems lens allows me to understand the adult children in relationship with their father and be aware that they cannot be viewed separate and apart. Thus, any anxieties that may be viewed in these adult children would help me look at how the father either projected or transmitted such emotions to the children— not only in negative contexts but in positive ones as well. As aforementioned, I am working with African American adult children offering retrospective views of their relationships with their fathers.

In the aspect of resiliency, the major thrust of the research seeks to expose the African American fathers who were present and involved in the lives of their children. Instead of supplementing the overwhelming volumes of literature concerning African American fathers who absent, displaced, or disengaged, this research explores those that were resilient and involved in the lives of the children despite the stereotypes and statistics that are not in their favor. In addition, having a father who is present and involved, strengthens one's social support (one of the tenants of resilience theory), thus having a positive effect in the adult child's social emotional process.

Lastly, when investigating the lived experiences of African Americans, it is my belief that one should also employ the tenets of Afrocentricity-seeking to experience the population within their context, acknowledging their ways of knowing, culture, customs, parenting practices, and overall worldview. Employing a European, White/westernized approach could lead to misunderstanding, misinterpretations, failed communication

techniques, and more. Previously failed attempts in seeking understanding of African American familial customs and practices may be based on failed theorizing.

Pathological Scholastic Views of African American Fathering

The family system is a uniquely created environment designed to maximize growth and human development on all levels. All components of this system (fathers, mothers, and children with variation due to diversity in sexual orientations) have grave importance and offers unique attributes and positive outcomes to the overall system (Billingsley, 1974; Billingsley & Morrison-Rodriguez, 2007; Cox et al., 2001; Franklin, 1997). In the case of the African American family, the literature dictates that it is overwhelmingly matriarchal (headed by single mothers, grandmothers, aunts, and other female mentors), and thus, fatherhood among African Americans is in many instances devalued by policy makers, under researched in scholarship, and faintly esteemed in the community (Choi & Jackson, 2011; Connor & White, 2011; Fleck et al., 2013; Hamilton, et al., 2011; Jackson et al., 2015; Kreider & Ellis, 2011; Robinson & Werblow, 2013). Noting this phenomenon, African American families without consistent paternal presence are seen as pathologically broken and in a vicious cycle of pathological perpetuation (Lemmons & Johnson, 2019).

Scholarship concerning African American fatherhood has tended to perpetuate the stereotype of absent and disobliging paternal parenting (Ahadi & Mandy, 2007; Aja et al., 2014; Carroll, 1998; Finley & Schwartz, 2004; Goodman, 2018; Madhani, 2013; McLanahan et al., 2013; McLoyd, 1990, 1998; McLoyd et al., 2013; Moynihan, 1965; Nikulina et al., 2011; Paschall et al., 2003; Perry & Langley, 2013; Watkins, 2009). For

example, Hill (1998) discussed that after the 20th century the Black family seemed to be in a tumultuous whirlwind. He listed a series of problems that he suggested are the ills of the Black community as well as the family. Such problems included disease, divorce, poverty, unemployment, alcoholism, drug abuse, and single-parent mothering. These problems discussed by Hill are the focal theme of most of the literature on African American families and fatherhood. The bulk of the literature alike details the same problems and social ills of the Black family as being in poverty, disease, divorce, and absentee fathers, and yet seems to leave out important details of those Black men who are in the home and their noteworthy contribution to the Black family while in residence.

This representation, through scholarship and mass media alike, has seemingly silenced the voices of the many unheard Black men (and their families) who have taken the responsibility and accountability to actively affect the families in which they are members and who desperately attempt to defeat and reverse the negative stereotypes that constantly follow them due to their race and gender by impacting the next generation of African Americans (Adamsons, 2018; Banks-Rogers, 2020; Barthelemy & Coakley, 2017; Brown et al., 2018; Coles, 2001, 2002, 2009; Goodman, 2018; Jessee & Adamsons, 2018; Lemmons & Johnson, 2019; Roy & Dyson, 2010; Trahan & Cheung, 2018).

Father Involvement

Throughout the literature, the term “father involvement” can seem at times vague and ambiguous. Some researchers define *involvement* and *presence* as the amount of time spent with children thus gaining this information through time logs and journaling which included alone time with the father, educational activities, and structured and

unstructured activities (Cano et al., 2019). This seems problematic due to the fact there are many fathers who are nonresidential and may not have the quantity of time compared to residential fathers, yet may be just as or more involved in the lives of their children (Adamsons, 2018; Cabrera et al., 2008; Palkovitz, 1997). Others have sought to define the terms in differing ways such as engagement or direct interactions with children, accessibility and availability, responsibility for the care of one's children, and financial support for children (Jones & Mosher, 2013; Lamb et al., 1985). Thomas et al. (2008) defined *father involved presence* within the context of feelings of closeness (quality) to the father as well as the quantity of interaction. Fathers are now using terms to describe the paternal engagement such as enjoyable, fulfilling, and love (Trahan & Cheung, 2018).

As African American fathers seek to define and redefine their role in the family structure, researchers have found such roles have been restructured and metamorphosed throughout history moving from the breadwinning (Lamb, 2000), distant father to the contemporary involved, nurturing father (Cabrera et al., 2008; Carrillo et al., 2016; Pafs et al., 2016). Some researchers have mentioned that contemporary African American fathers, regardless of their residential status or relationship with their child(ren)'s mother, are sometimes more involved in their children's lives than their White or Hispanic counterparts (Edin et al., 2009; Jones & Mosher, 2013; King, 1994; King et al., 2004; Nebbitt et al., 2013; Seltzer, 1991).

Within the Afrocentric framework, father roles are dynamic and fluid, ranging from provider to disciplinarian to spiritual leader (Wilson & Thompson, 2020). Murray and Hwang (2015) and others have noted that African Americans fathers have self-

reported to view themselves in the function of seven major fathering roles: (1) provider, (2) role model/sex role model, (3) disciplinarian, (4) leader, (5) supporter, (6) teacher/spiritual leader, and (7) guide (Hawkins et al., 2002; Olmstead et al., 2009; Perez-Brena et al., 2012; Trahan & Cheung, 2018)

Impact of Father Involvement on Child Development

It should also be noted that the body of literature has adequately shown that father involvement has numerous positive effects in child development (Doyle et al., 2015; Lamb & Tamis-LeMonda, 2004) including academic achievement (Gordon, 2016; Jenyes, 2015), positive behavior outcomes which can determine one's life trajectory (Bernard et al., 2015; Goncy & van Dulmen, 2010; Howard et al., 2006; Osborne & McLanahan, 2007; Sarkadi et al., 2008; Tautolo et al., 2015; Weitzman et al., 2011), and even positive economic mobility (Sarkadi et al., 2008).

In the realm of cognitive development in infants, father involvement (measured by interaction, play, and caregiving) has been shown to have significant correlation to enhanced problem solving skills, speech and vocabulary development, and higher cognitive functionality at 6 months than those without father involvement (Cano et al., 2019). Among school age children, father involvement increases grade point average, higher reading achievement, better test scores on standardized intellectual assessments. Physically, school-age children are less likely to be obese, less likely to be diagnosed with asthma, diabetes, and other poor health concerns (Allen & Daley, 2007; Brown et al., 2012).

Adolescents and young adults who have involved fathers have greater career success, occupational competency, and higher educational attainment (Zimmerman et al., 2000). Emotionally, children of involved fathers have overall better life satisfaction, are more resilient, trusting, have superior problem-solving skill sets, and demonstrate greater internal locus of control (Smith et al., 2005). Socially, such young adults show themselves to be socially mature, are involved in less conflict, have better peer interactions, and show tremendous decreases in maladaptive and delinquent behaviors (Bean et al., 2006).

Time-use research shows that more highly educated fathers spend a higher quantity of time with their children than that of lesser-educated fathers, and that such highly educated fathers usually spend more of their time in cognitive-enhancing activities (Cano et al., 2019). Sadly, this fact could be another contributing factor to transgenerational propagation of educational inequalities within African American communities in contrast to that of their counterparts. Unfortunately, much of the research detailing fathers' impact on child development, like most fatherhood literature, either compares Black families to their White counterparts or explores White families in general- leaving Black families to fall into the gaps of the research (Jackson et al., 2015).

Thus, we see that fathers have a lasting impact on the developmental processes and outcomes of their children- both positively and negatively. The next sections highlight how fathers impact their children in the specific areas of gender roles, romantic attachment, self-concept, and future parenting styles.

Impact of Father Involvement on Gender Roles

Research showed that fathers are significant socializers in the development of gender roles and identities globally (Leaper & Friedman, 2007; Leavell et al., 2012). Children who demonstrate stereotypical behaviors are believed to be associated with their prescribed gender taught to them by their parents and the world around them (Berk, 2009). Since children, especially toddlers, have limited abilities to question these ideologies, parents (fathers included) are able to impact the gender identities of their children by "gender specific" toys, gender specific color schemes of clothing and room décor (i.e., pink or blue), advocating that children spend more time with other children of the same gender, and model engendered behaviors for their children without restraint (Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Harris & Morgan, 1991; McHale et al., 1999; McHale et al., 2003; Pomerleau et al., 1990; Rheingold & Cook, 1975). Children then may not be able to pick up on what behaviors their parents convey are acceptable for their gender and which are unacceptable but also accept those ideologies as their own value system (Bulanda, 2004; Leavell et al., 2012).

Within traditional gender roles, women are viewed as nurturant, mothering, and domestic while men's roles are more with leadership, dominance, and family provision. These ideologies have in many cases and for centuries translated into the expectancy for women to work within the domestic sphere, such as taking care of the children, housekeeping, teaching, nursing, or other nurturing occupations, while men thought to be the primary financial provider for the family outside the home (Turner & Gervai, 1995). In contrast to the traditional views, the contemporary views of feminists, womanists, and

other egalitarians minimizes the roles variations between the genders and encourage the equality of roles (Halpern & Perry-Jenkins, 2016; Perry-Jenkins & Gerstel, 2020). Thus, studies show that as fathers live within these traditional roles and further promote them, their children may in many instances embrace and confirm them as their own ideologies as well. The way in which people express gender roles also affect social skills, romantic attachment and mate selection.

Research also mentioned that in the specificity of African American fathers' gender role communication to their sons, themes of responsibility, provision, and independence often arise due to the fact that African American men are often unemployed (Hoffman et al., 2003; U.S. Department of Labor, 2013; Wilkinson, 1999), arrested and jailed (Mauer, 1999; U.S. Department of Justice, 2012), characterized as absentee and unfit (Johnson, 2001), and exploited due to racism (Crenshaw et al., 1995). It seems that this is the place where race, gender, and resilience intersect, as these African American fathers display and communicate lessons to their sons of their role as men and show them how to navigate the adversities specific to Black men so they can redefine spaces for success and legacy (Allen, 2016).

Impact of Father Involvement on Romantic Attachment

Some of the earliest paternal research showcased how children without involved fathers suffered with social adaptation skills (Cabrera et al., 2008; Hennigar et al., 2020). Research showed that fathers who were present taught their children social and emotional skills needed for positive social development, and their children were more likely to engage in positive, reciprocal, and loving interactions. As these children interact with

their fathers in cultivating, nurturing ways, they are more likely to learn to positively interact with their peers and enjoy other social interactions (Berscheid & Reis, 1998; Davidson et al., 2011; Updegraff et al., 2010).

There are findings of correlations between paternal presence and initial sexual experiences. Studies showed that children who come from two-parent households typically experience sexual debuts at later ages than those from single parent households (Langley, 2016). Langley (2016) also reported that parental communication, monitoring, and permissiveness are also factors that are linked to the dating practices and sexual behavior among adolescents as well as the gender of the child- as males respond more positively to the monitoring of their mothers while females to their fathers. Clear and consistent messages concerning sexual relationships lead to high rates of sexual abstinence, condom use, and intentional delay sexual debuts (Coakley et al., 2017). Research also showed that lower paternal presence and interaction predicts lower expectations for male investment in romantic relationships as adults among women. Also, lower expectations for these men as romantic partners predicts higher numbers of sexual partners, higher rates of teenage pregnancies, and earlier sexual debut among such women (DelPriore et al., 2019).

Studies showed that African American fathers by large scales display a strong value system in opposite-sex, heterosexual relationships. Few fathers, shown in research, openly support homosexual relationships or communicate the ideology with their children (Conley, 2011; Rosenberg, 2003). This can show problematic issues within those children whose sexual orientation differs from that of their parents. In areas lacking of acceptance,

openness, communication, and transparency, such could thwart healthy emotional growth. Coakley et al. (2017) noted that paternal communication concerning romantic attachment, sexuality, relationships, monogamy, multiple partners, and marriage mostly came from conversations with foundations in sex, sexual health, personal experience, and cultural background.

Research also showed that consistent with attachment and behavioral theories, positive adolescent relationships with one's parent and friends can become predictors of future positive romantic attachment (Connolly & McIsaac, 2011; Kochendorfer & Kerns, 2017). This is because these are foundational relationships that teach the child socially acceptable manners to engage in healthy social and emotional bonding and relational maintenance (Bowlby, 1982; Cassidy, 2001; Fuligni & Eccles, 1993). Furman and Collibee (2018) discovered that parent-child relationship styles are in fact correlated to the romantic relationship styles of the child. If the child was nurtured in an avoidant or anxious environment while growing up, that trend may lead into romantic relationships. Thus, we find that the influence and impact of the father-child relationship has a lasting impact on the child and his or her future relationships, the health of those relationships, and the health of the homes and environments in which future generations will be reared.

Impact of Father Involvement on Self-Concept

Despite the overwhelming amount of literature from a deficit model concerning African American fathers, studies highlight how Black fathers in fact provide, nurture and act as playmates for their children (Coles, 2001; McLoyd et al., 2000). These actions within father-child relationships also increase the child's positive racial socializing

behaviors (Doyle et al., 2016), endorses self-confident messages of racial pride and dignity (Howard et al., 2013; Thomas et al., 2012), prepares them to navigate probable racial obstacles (Thomas et al., 2012), and builds resiliency and strong self-concept (Hrabowski et al., 1998; Mandara, 2006). Positive self-concept among children is associated with increased scholastic and professional achievement, decreased behavioral problems, and overall holistic health (Allen, 2016; Caldwell et al., 2004; Hebert et al., 2009).

Allen (2016) found that African American fathers taught their sons lessons about self-concept through Black existentialist perspectives that embrace the idea that Black men must be responsible for creating their own identity and define, and in some cases, redefine what Black masculinity looks like independent of White norms and discourse. Although very few articles were found concerning paternal contributions toward self-concept in general, cultural pride seems to be a major contributing theme across the literature concerning paternal messages to children concerning self-concept and legacy among African Americans (Doyle et al, 2016; Wilson & Thompson, 2020). Allgood et al. (2012) found similar results among African American father-daughter relationships. They found that the similar engagement, accessibility, and responsibility of father-daughter relationships correlated to daughters' self-esteem, life satisfaction, and lowered psychological distress.

Impact of Father Involvement on Future Parenting Styles

Literature of parenting influences, parenting styles, and family development state that family of origin plays a major role in adult's attitudes concerning fathering, fathering

roles, and fathering expectations for women-as research shows that women who experienced low-quality paternal involvement in childhood reported lower expectations for men as fathers (DelPriore et al., 2019). Research showed several methods of paternal impact on children future parenting styles: (1) intergenerational transmission (Doyle et al., 2016; Perry & Lewis, 2016); (2) social learning theory (Cano et al., 2019; Jessee & Adamsons, 2018); (3) modeling (Doyle et al., 2016; Langley, 2016); and (4) compensation hypothesis in which the child receives a negative parenting model yet compensates that model by providing a positive parenting experience for their children (Cooper et al., 2021; Perry & Lewis, 2016; Wilson et al., 2021). Research showed that fathers' interactions with their children were largely influenced by their personal interactions with their own fathers (Doherty et al., 1998; Gaunt & Bassi, 2012; Murray & Hwang, 2020; Pleck, 1997; Shears et al., 2006).

Murray and Hwang (2020) explored the parenting practices of married, resident African American fathers and found that they attributed their parenting style to their "birth father" being engaged during their childhood, described themselves mirroring the parenting practices of their fathers, and in some cases using the complete opposite techniques of their father. Research also shows that parents with fewer economic resources, many who are from minority communities, accentuated the importance of "being there" or present for their children, showed concern about their children's security, and felt it their duty to defend their children from detrimental influences (Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2020).

Research showed that young men with residential fathers during adolescence reduced the odds of those young men experiencing fatherhood at an earlier age and increased the chances of young adult fathers residing with their own children (Forste & Jarvis, 2007; Guzzo, 2011; Perry & Lewis, 2016). These findings are consistent with the conclusions of other researchers that men who were highly affectionate with their children were the sons of fathers who were either high affectionate as well or not affectionate at all as they were offering their children what they never received from their fathers (Coles, 2001, 2003; Cooper et al., 2021; Perry & Lewis, 2016; Wilson et al., 2021). This finding is interesting especially when compared to the common and well-documented data of the Black family's absentee fathers' statistics.

Summary

This research study aimed to explore the impact in which African American fathers have on their children. Fathers perform a peculiar and distinctive role within the family and on their children in particular. As research has well defined, if this role is deficient or dysfunctional, a void can be created; and critical, defective behaviors can be observed within others of that family. Although much has been stated of the negative impact many fathers have made and others continue to make in the lives of their children, the literature just provided seeks to highlight the positive influences fathers have made as well.

In this section, I aimed to explore how fathers affect their children's development in the areas of gender role development, romantic attachment, self-concept, and future parenting styles. This project was created to explore these influences holistically through

lenses that centers the Black family (Afrocentricity), explore how the paternal role influences the child or children (family systems theory), and examine the power of "resilience" within these African American family systems that despite the barriers of racism, sexism, low socio-economic statuses, and more, these relationships were nurtured, developed, and flourished. Men and women alike, are impacted by other the presence and or the absences of their father. I set out to discover the impact made by the African American fathers on the adult children that participated in this study, how it correlates with the literature found in this section, and hopefully began to rewrite the Black stories of men and women for generations to come.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research study employed a phenomenological methodology while studying the effects of the involved presence of African American biological fathers on their adult children during their childhood. To understand the participants' (African American adult children) lived experiences, I employed phenomenology, a form of qualitative research that focuses on the significance of one's direct experience. The connotations the participants attributed to these experiences provided me with a greater understanding and more holistic comprehension of the study at present (Patton, 2002/2015). Creswell (2009) and Patton (2002/2015) both assert that a phenomenological approach offers the type of research that explores and meets the heart of the human experience. Utilizing this approach offered a way to understand the phenomena of Black fathering, through the lens of their adult children who revealed their own experiences and identified experiences and interactions they believed vital and impactful. It gave voice to their unique experiences while exploring their distinct context, perceptions, traditions, and practices (Patton, 2002/2015). Additionally, through a phenomenological methodology, this research project will add to the body of knowledge on the effects of African American fathering by getting the intimate experiences of these relationships through interviews.

This approach to data collection collaborated with the communal/social networks and oral traditions of sharing and storytelling that are pertinent within the African

American community and ways of knowing (Asante, 1998/2003). Additionally, due to the COVID-19 pandemic ailing our country currently and the social distancing restrictions, all interviews were conducted virtually. This project had one major research question that guided the course of this research. That question is, "How has perceived paternal involvement among African Americans during childhood help shape their adult children's development?" This chapter also describes protection of human subjects, study population, sampling procedures, procedures for data collection, procedures for data analysis and coding, trustworthiness, and the role of the researcher.

Protection of Human Subjects

According to Patton (2002/2015), ethical practices include: (1) explaining the study's objective, (2) obtaining an informed consent from all participants involved, (3) supplying a statement of confidentiality, and (4) explaining data access. All these elements were completed prior to participation in the interview. Thus, I submitted an expedited review of Protection of Human Subjects application to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at TWU in Denton, TX. After obtaining approval to begin this research project, I employed an informed consent document that detailed the purpose of the study, the limited risks involved, and a printed statement stating indicating that participants could end their participation at any time without reason or penalty (see Appendix A).

All risks, though very limited, were outlined and steps to minimize those risks were provided on the informed consent. The study purpose was explained using simple, clear language with the participants prior to their involvement. To maintain confidentiality, I informed the participants that their names would not be used and would

be changed in all written documents that will appear in the research, all notes and writings will be stored by the researcher in a locked office, copies of the final project would be made available upon request, and all data, specifically notebooks and journals, were subject to review by the researcher's academic advisor.

Patton (2002/2015) suggested that due to the nature of qualitative research, extensive interviewing may cause expected or unexpected levels of participant stress. For example, as the participants were recalling the paternal practices and father-child relationships in this study, some may have experienced levels of physical fatigue and/or emotional exhaustion during the interview process. With this information understood by myself and explained to each participant, I allowed and offered participants momentary breaks within the interview process. All participants were given the option of ending the interview at any time. In addition, I provided a list of community resources (see Appendix B) to minimize risk related to emotional distress and have a beneficial outlet to further discuss any issues that may have come up during the interviewing process.

Population

Participants for this study consisted of 10 African American adults, ages 18 years and older who self-reported to have had an active, biological father. Fictive fathers, father figures, or other male mentors such as coaches, teachers, pastors, or relatives were not included in this study.

Sampling Procedures

Criterion sampling was primarily employed in this study (Patton, 2002/2015). According to Patton (2002/2015), criterion sampling is a sampling technique that

qualitative researchers use to intentionally recruit participants who can offer thorough knowledge and information concerning the subject being explored, and meet the predetermined, qualifying criteria to be selected for the research study. Sampling methods are also important to the success of a well-designed study. Convenience sampling was also be used which draws a sample that is closest or available to the researcher. This method is also referred to as availability sampling. Third, snowball sampling was also employed since interested parties suggested others that may have been interested as well. This sampling technique is used when a researcher identifies a few people to participate in the study and then relies on those initial participants to refer or assist the researcher in identifying potential participants who may meet the criteria (Patton, 2002/2015).

All participants were recruited by first gaining access through some gatekeepers of the African American communities (local pastors) and getting full permission and clearance through agency letters of support for recruitment to recruit within their areas of influence (see Appendix A). Gatekeepers had no additional role other than to allow access to the building to post flyers and to grant access to social media platforms. The criteria for participation in this study includes the following: African American, have a biological father, 18 years of age or older, and self-reported involved presence of one's father.

I then employed the following methods to gain access to potential participants: (1) placed flyers (see Appendix F) at local, predominately African American churches, and (2) flyers were posted on Facebook by myself in order to gather additional participants.

All information concerning participation in this study contained my contact information (email address and phone number) and general information about the purpose and nature of the study. After a potential participant contacted me and met the criteria, I set a time for interview. All participants were entered into a raffle for a $25.00 gift card for their time and contribution to the study. Participants were notified that they could withdraw from this study at any time without reason or consequence.

Data Collection Overview

I began the research process by submitting a complete review application to the TWU IRB for approval to begin the study. I provided all ethical considerations to establish trustworthiness (i.e., reflexivity journals, member checking). Corroboration techniques such as triangulation were employed to establish consistency across data sources and forms. Member checking was engaged by offering the participants of the study an opportunity to review all transcriptions of the participation in the study to ensure that accuracy of transcription as an additional ethical consideration.

Since the active role of the researcher was undeniable, I engaged in bracketing to suspend preconceived ideas, feelings, and viewpoints concerning a phenomenon in order to truly understand it in its natural form (untainted by subjective dispositions and experiences). Bracketing for this research project consisted of journaling to express any biases throughout the research data collection as well as allowing an academic advisor to look through the data collection process to expose any forms of bias.

Rigor is a fundamental aspect of the qualitative approach. Thus, I ensured rigor was employed in this study through field notes and a reflexive journal. Several data

collection techniques were employed as well (audio recordings, field notes, and reflexive journals). Data were collected using personal, semi-structured interviews as discussed earlier in this chapter. The approach of interviews is the data collection methodology that uses a question and answer (semi-structured) to enlist the thoughts, ways of knowing, and lived experiences of the participants. Interviews provided participants a less rigid approach that resembles a relaxed conversation between family members, friends, and neighbors. This approach also acknowledged and gave voice to the concerns, thoughts, lived experiences, and pressures of a given population.

One major aspect of the data collection process is to establish trust and rapport with the participants. The qualitative approach is to gain access the treasured information that marginalized populations have. Techniques like member checking, helps participants trust that researcher wishes to portray one's thoughts and experiences with accuracy thus building trust. With the noted limitation of the distrust African Americans have in such projects, I recruited African American participants by employing the aforementioned sampling methodologies. This also aided in the time-sensitivity element and gain quicker starts during the data collection process.

Thus, I used the aforementioned three methods to collect data from the participants: (1) demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C), (2) semi-structured interview (see Appendix D), and (3) field journaling. General demographic information allowed me to better identify basic information about the participants in the study. I used open-ended interview questions and an informal conversational interview approach as outlined by Patton (2002/2015).

Data Collection Procedures

After filing my dissertation prospectus with the TWU Graduate School, receiving approval from the TWU IRB, and approval from all recruiting sites, I began the recruitment process. Individuals were recruited in collaboration with administration staff of local churches. I provided each site with an electronic recruitment letter (see Appendix E) and the informed consent document (see Appendix F). Upon approval, I posted the research recruitment flyer (see Appendix G) at each site and on church social media platforms. Interested individuals were able to contact me via email or telephone. I then verbally verified that the interested party met the aforementioned criteria for participation during an initial telephone/email correspondence and once again prior to the start of data collection. After all participants agreed to participate in the study, an email was sent explaining and detailing the following: (1) the purpose of details of the study, and (2) specifics concerning the time and medium (Zoom) of the virtual meeting. If the potential participants had any further questions that had not been answered via the email, they were asked to use the contacts provided to them to reach me for answers. Finally, I ensured that the participant had access to a computer, a quiet place to be interviewed, and scheduled the virtual interview.

At the time of the interview, I hosted each interview on the virtual platform Zoom due to the current COVID-19 regulations and for the health and safety of myself and each participant. I conducted all interviews, which were audio recorded on a mobile, password—protected device to ensure accuracy, for verbatim transcription, and data analysis. Again, I used the Zoom platform, audio recorded with a mobile phone recording

device, and safely stored each interview on a password-protected computer. Each participant was given a zoom link with a password. The Zoom waiting room was activated and only the participant who the met the research criteria was allowed to join the interview. This process was employed to lower any potential "zoombombing." The data collection process began with a review of the informed consent document, which was signed and stored on a Google Drive to ensure confidentiality. I reviewed and explained each section in detail and answered all questions. I explained the risks involved with participating in the study and provided each participant with a list of community resources (see Appendix B) should the research process illicit any adverse responses.

Each participant's copy of the consent form was stored on the Google Drive of which only the participant and I had access. At that time, each participant completed a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C). Each participant was assigned a distinctive code or number (i.e., Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.) that was recorded on the demographic questionnaire to maintain the participants' privacy. The interview then began after the questionnaire was completed. Prior to starting the interview, I asked for verbal consent from each participant to audio record the interview as well as record handwritten field notes. Recordings were to be stored on the password-protected computer and the field notes in a notebook stored in a locked safe in my office. Following a brief introduction, interview questions were presented as outlined in the interview guide (see Appendix, D). The data collection process was scheduled to last 60 to 90 minutes in length, although most lasted 45 to 50 minutes. At the conclusion of each, I issued a numbered ticket that was sent to the participants via email for their opportunity

to win the raffled $25 gift card. All participants also received a summary of the research results, and were asked to engage in the member checking process after the completion of the interview transcriptions.

Audio recordings were saved to my personal, password protected computer, and I transcribed them verbatim using a transcription software, Otter AI. I followed up with the participants via email or telephone to find if further clarification was needed about information given during the interview. Subsequently, all participants were emailed member checking instructions along with their own verbatim transcript and a list of initial themes for their comments.

For this project, all data were collected in the following ways to meet the methodological triangulation ethics of qualitative researcher: demographic questionnaire, semi—structured interviews, and field notes. The demographic questionnaire offered information concerning the participants' background: socioeconomic, language, age, gender, and education. The semi-structured interview gathered information concerning the retrospective perspectives of the participants regarding their fathers' impact within the aforementioned four domains studied. The field notes, taken by myself, were notes that elaborated on the unspoken emotions of the participants during the interviews as well as other pertinent information that stood out to the researcher during the interviews.

Procedures of Data Analysis/Coding

Phenomenological research allows me to experience and re-experience the data on multiple levels. Coding techniques, further discussed in Chapter 4, were also employed for data analysis in which I sought out relative text and common themes that emerged

from verbatim transcriptions of all collected data. The identification of themes was taken from analyses of the verbatim transcripts of the interviews. Data analysis was conducted manually through thematic coding through observational techniques identifying categories in the transcriptions. I searched for repetitive texts and "key-words-in-context" techniques to identify such themes. These techniques were used with all data: interview transcripts, field notes, and reflexive journal.

Observational techniques involved reading through the transcripts, highlighting them with varying colored pens and highlighters to indicate differences found. Manually searching the data for repetitive text was the first step towards reduction. The first step was to search transcripts manually for repetitive text. All data was read at least two to three times seeking repetitive words and statements. The more often a word or thought appeared in the interview, the more likely the idea became a theme of that participant's experience or across interviews. Repetitive words and/or statements were highlighted and then grouped by correspondences. A list of initial themes and subthemes was then produced from the aforementioned techniques.

Words and phrases that summarize the participants' experiences were grouped by similar topics or ideas. These clusters served as the foundation for primary categories and codes (Creswell, 2009). Additionally, I triangulated the audio recordings with both the recorded field notes and reflexive journal entries that corresponded with each interview to cross examine the data collected. The field notes and reflexive journal contained my initial thoughts and reactions throughout the interview process. Themes were also assigned numbers denoting the number of times it appeared in the data for the

corresponding question to easily identify repetition. This approach aided in synthesizing the participants' lived experiences and perceptions while giving meaning of these shared experience as indicated through the study themes.

Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness and corroboration, the triangulation of data collection was employed- gaining data from audio recorded interviews, field notes, and reflective journal in order to give thick, rich descriptions of the interview. The process of reflexivity, showing how I may influence the research process, was maintained by keeping a reflexivity/observational journal that detailed my pre-existing assumptions, experiences, opinions, and biases. Also, I triangulated the data analysis as well through myself, peer debriefers, and member checking to ensure trustworthiness.

Reflexivity

Due to the nature of qualitative research, with myself being the instrument utilized for data collection and analysis, individual bias can be a primary concern of methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Reflexivity imposes upon the researcher the importance and opportunity to reflect upon and even tease out his or her cultural/political opinions and beliefs (Patton, 2002/2015). Carlson (2010) suggested maintaining a journal during the research process to engage reflexivity. Thus, for this research project, I created and maintained a reflexive journal that contained my emotions and experiences throughout the research process. This aspect of trustworthiness aided me in avoiding any previous assertions and notions about this research area, especially because of my

background with positive paternal experiences. Journal notes were stored in a notebook that was stored in a locked cabinet in my office to ensure confidentiality.

Thick and Rich Descriptions

According to Patton (2002/2015), thick and rich descriptions of the contextual settings also aid the researcher in addressing concerns of trustworthiness. Such detailed descriptions provided aspects of the research concerning the participants, data collection, and analysis. This project employed verbatim quotations from participants to provide the rich, colorful details of each participant's experience and to give credence to the actual words of those participants. Such details are provided in Chapter 4.

Triangulation

Triangulation involves collecting and coding data from various sources, at varying times, in various settings, and utilizing various methodologies to analyze the data collected during the research process (Patton, 2002/2015). For this project, the data were collected in the following ways to meet the methodological triangulation ethics of qualitative research: demographic questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and field notes. I also triangulated the collected data by examining findings from the theoretical lens of family systems theory, resilience theory, and the perspective of Afrocentricity. Data codes were triangulated using first cycle/holistic coding, initial coding, and emotion and value coding. Data was lastly triangulated through peer debriefing, member checking, and the review of dissertation committee chair.

Peer Debriefing

Peer debriefing is another strategy that was used in data analysis process that maintained the trustworthiness of the research project and can help maintain the validity of participants' experiences (Patton, 2002/2015). The process of peer debriefing involves exchange of thoughts and ideas concerning the research project with colleagues that are not integrated into the research project via data collection or analysis (Creswell, 2009). I solicited the assistance of a former classmate of the family studies program who completed his PhD at TWU to serve as a peer reviewer. He had also taken a qualitative methodology course. I met with the peer debriefer via Zoom to discuss the data collection and analysis process. The peer debriefer offered suggestions on how to best carry out the aforementioned processes.

Member Checking

Member checking is the process that involves validating the researcher's data analysis by obtaining the feedback of participants themselves to check the accuracy of their narrative (Patton, 2002/2015). All participants were informed and given details concerning the member checking process before the start of each interview. Any participant who expressed an interest was provided with an electronic copy of their transcripts and a draft of the study results for further feedback and to check the accuracy of their words and a summary of themes. All of the participants gave feedback stating that the transcriptions of their interviews were accurate and indicated their truest intent of their words. Feedback from the participants were given both by email and phone calls.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in a phenomenological study is to become a "human

instrument" used to gather qualitative data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). To fulfill this role, researchers are to consider how they will be involved in the research process and how to abstain from possibilities of coloring the data. Thus, I utilized reflexivity techniques to expose personal biases and subjective feelings brought to the research (Greenbank, 2003). I sought to provide an informative story of a phenomenon considering the current body of knowledge, the theoretical lens utilized, and the data gathered from the research (Punch, 1998). Accordingly, researchers should consider how they will be involved in the research process and how to abstain from possibilities of coloring the data. To ensure such, I answered the following questions.

First, "Who am I as a researcher?" As a researcher, I am a young, African American male who had a heavily involved father in my life. Although at 10 years old, my parents divorced, my father lived less than 5 minutes away and was a constant presence in my life in every aspect: church, school, and personal. Although, I am aware that my situation is not the norm, I do believe that I am not an anomaly. As a young father of three African American sons and one daughter, I work diligently to be the father that I wish for my sons to become one day and the husband my daughter to marry in the future. As a researcher, I brought with me all of the aforementioned experiences, yet seek not to impose my experiences upon the participant, rather merely explored the incidents and impact of others who may have similar stories.

Second, "What is my role as a researcher?" As a researcher, I am a tool used to create an environment conducive to the participants' open and candid responses to the interview questions. In addition, as the researcher I am engaging the information gathered

in several ways: theming, interviewing, data collecting, transcribing, analyzing, verifying, and reporting findings.

Third, “How might my biases and experiences color/taint the data?” As an African American male, I want to be able to expose the world to African American families who have experienced positive and constructive relationships versus repeating the pathological narratives seen and heard in mass media and scholarship. Being a young African American male, who has been privileged to having a biological, African American father presently involved in my life, I may see the world and fathering in a different lens than those without such a privilege. Lastly, as a doctoral candidate, I may see my father’s influence in my life and the success I have experienced as a direct connection to his influence. My noted achievements may be for other reasons outside of my father’s control or impact.

Summary

The aim of this chapter has been to specify data collection and analysis procedures. The methodologies that were employed in this research project included the following phenomenological research methods: an overview of population, protection of human subjects, ethical considerations, role of the researcher, trustworthiness, and researcher’s plan for data collection and analysis. For this project, I found that phenomenology methodology was most appropriate as I was ultimately interested in investigating the participants’ lived experiences. Lastly, this chapter discussed data analysis and the researcher’s approaches to authenticate trustworthiness within the data collection and analysis processes.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presented the data findings from 10 participants who self-reported through semi-structured interviews the presence of their African American father in their lives during their childhood. Specifically, this study explored the African American adult children's retrospective perceptions of their father's impact in four key areas: (1) gender role development, (2) romantic attachment, (3) self-concept, and (4) future parenting styles. I, the principal investigator, gathered the data through semi-structured, individual interviews via Zoom. All the interviews were audio recorded on a mobile, password-protected device, and transcribed using a transcription software Otter AI.

Transcriptions were verified multiple times to ensure that all words transcribed were in fact the authentic words of each interviewee and were confirmed by each participant as well. All transcriptions were examined by a peer debriefer and myself. Four themes and 14 subthemes were concurrently developed. All data were sorted, grouped, and compared for similarities and corresponding language/themes across the interviews. After this process, the four themes that are mentioned in this chapter were developed. I utilized phenomenology as the philosophical perspective of this study, thus, the themes discussed in this chapter are a representation of the collective experiences of the participants interviewed.

This study explored and attempted to answer the following research question, "How has perceived paternal involvement among African Americans during childhood help shape their adult children's development?" With this question in mind, this chapter presents a description of the sample, procedures for data collections and analysis, research findings, and summary of the data collected.

Description of the Sample

Participants for this study consisted of 10 African American adults- ages ranging from 20 years old to 81 years old who all self-reported having had an active, biological father in their lives. Fictive fathers, father figures, or other male mentors such as coaches, teachers, pastors, or relatives were not included in this study. Twenty-four adults showed interested in participating in the study initially. Of the 24, six did not meet the criterion for participation, being their "fathers" were either not biological or they were fictive kin (i.e., family friend, coach, or spiritual father). Four of the initial persons were unresponsive to email attempts, and the other four could not patriciate due to scheduling conflicts. Thus, 10 participants were available, consented, and were interviewed for data collection.

Participants were recruited via social media platforms and flyers posted at three predominately African American churches- one in Dallas, TX, one in Fort Worth, TX, and one in Shreveport, LA. Flyers directed all interested participants to contact me directly via email or cell phone of their interest in the topic and sharing their lived experiences. Upon each potential participant expressing an interest in the study, I emailed a consent form (see Appendix F) and a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C) via

Google Docs in a Google Drive to ensure privacy and confidentiality was preserved. Both forms were electronically signed before the start of each interview.

The demographic questionnaire asked each participant of their age, gender, racial/ethnic origin, educational background, language spoken, income range, and more. Also, the demographic questionnaire asked the following questions:

1. Was your biological father present in your home between the ages of 0—18 years old?
2. Rate the level of involvement of your father in your home.
3. Rate your father's involvement in your life.

Table 1 displays the demographics of the sample collected for this study. The sample offered a wide range in age, ranging from 20 years old to 81 years old. The sample also varied in gender. This study had four males and six females. All participants identified as African American as being such was a prerequisite to participation. All of the participants were married with children with the exception of one, a single, college-aged student. All were college-degreed or currently of obtaining such. All participants were employed earning between the ranges of $0–$25,999 and more than $75,000. Two of the adults earned between $0–$25,000 in the previous year. Five of the adults earned $52,000–$74,999, and three of the adults earned over $75,000 in the previous year. All participants spoke English as their native language.

Information concerning children and answers to research questionnaire are not listed in Table 1 but are described here. Nine of the 10 participants had children that varied in gender and age. One participant did not have any children. All participants self-

reported that their biological father was present in the home between the ages of 0-18 years old. Nine of the 10 participants rated the father's involvement as *highly involved* while one rated their father was *involved*. Lastly, all 10 participants rated their father's involvement in their lives as *highly affected*.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Sample Participants

Characteristics	Category	*N*	*N*	%
Race		10		
	African American		10	100%
	Other		0	0%
		10		
Gender				
	Male		4	40%
	Female		6	
	Other		0	
Age		10		
	0–18		1	10%
	19–29		0	0%
	30–49		5	50%
	50–69		3	30%
	70 And Above		1	10%
Level Of Education		10		
	High School (Partial)		0	0%
	High School Diploma/Ged		1	10%
	Associates		0	0%
	Bachelors		5	50%
	Masters		4	40%
	Doctoral		0	0%
Total Income Last Year		10		
	$0–$25,999		2	20%
	$26,000–$51,999		0	0%
	$52,000–$74,999		5	50%
	$75,000 & Above		3	30%
Native Language		10		
	English		10	100%
	Spanish		0	0%
	Other		0	0%

Data Analysis

In qualitative studies, data analysis starts when the principal investigator completes the first data source collection. In this study, the conclusion of the first interview began the first step in data analysis. The thoughts that began to form in my mind at the conclusion of the first interview formed a base that was eventually used to analyze subsequent data collected (Patton, 2002/2015). Transcriptions of interviews provided rich, thick description of impact of the participants' fathers on their lives. These descriptions were stored, organized, examined, and re-examined in the data analysis process.

Interviews and Transcriptions

All interviews were audio recorded on a mobile, password-protected device and transcribed using a transcription software called Otter AI. I edited all the transcriptions to ensure that the words recorded were in fact verbatim and the authentically the thoughts of each participant. During the transcription process, notes were made in comparison to the field notes written during each interview as patterns began to emerge. Such patterns developed very early in the process. After transcriptions were completed, I read through the transcripts, made preliminary notes, identified key words, expressions, and viewpoints that were used recurrently in all 10 interviews. Although each participant used different words to describe his or her thoughts and memories of their father's influence in the aforementioned domains, common ideas began to emerge that developed the themes that would form the foundation for coding that is discussed below.

Coding

The literature indicated that there is a multiplicity of purposes for the coding process (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Richards & Morse, 2007; Saldaña, 2013). Data gathered from interviews and field notes informed the coding process. Words and phrases summarized each participant's lived experiences and recollections of their fathers' impact combined with the knowledge gained from the literature mentioned in Chapter 2 informed the data analyzed in this chapter.

Creswell (2009) suggested clustering or grouping similar topics or ideas. These clusters provided the basis for the initial codes (Creswell, 2009). Thus, I began to read each transcript, word for word, prior to beginning the coding process. Each transcript was coded manually using first and second cycle coding (Saldaña, 2013). Furthermore, I also wrote and reviewed all field notes taken during the interview and reflexive journal entries that corresponded with each interview to cross-reference information. The field notes and reflexive journal contained my initial thoughts, impressions, and observations that were used to enlighten the first cycle coding process.

After coding the data, patterns and themes were identified. Possible codes and themes were then highlighted using color codes to show continuity across the interviews. Themes were also assigned numbers denoting the number of times it appeared in the data for the corresponding question to easily identify repetition.

First Cycle/Holistic Coding

Creswell (2009) also suggested that researchers should read all of the data to gain a general sense of the overall meaning of the participant's words and thoughts. Saldaña

(2013) described this type of initial data reduction as first cycle coding methods. This research study used holistic coding as a first cycle coding method. With this methodology, I was able to capture the initial impressions of the participants, reach each statement, and assigned a word or phrase that expresses that point or point or view. These first cycle codes expressed my first view of the data unfiltered. Table 2 showed an example of holistic coding in this study.

Table 2

Example of Holistic Coding

Interview Questions and Responses	Holistic Codes
Participant 5 Interviewer: "Reflect on your childhood. What role did your father play in those memories/stories? How was he instrumental in your upbringing?" P5: "Okay the role he played was basically the role of our main support as far as financial support. My mother had was college educated, my dad had gone to high school… quit in his senior year and started working. But he always worked two or three jobs in addition to his main job, which was as a preacher. So, we always had enough of everything. So, one of his main roles was to provide for us. And he had a good role model and that his dad was a good provider. His other role was to be playing more supportive role to my mother. Because she was the one involved in the day-to-day operation of getting us to school and joining PTA and see that we got to music lessons and all of that and he supported her in that. He also did a lot of housework. He washed dishes he cooked him up. He did everything he washed clothes he ironed. So, he played a lot of roles in our home in addition to providing us with a good financial background.	Main Support Financial Support Provider Support to Mother Challenged Gender Roles

Initial Coding

Initial coding provided deeper analysis of the original holistic codes aforementioned. I began by writing the responses of the participants on the left side and the initial codes on the right. The initial codes were key words and phrases used by the participant. These words and phrases derived from the transcriptions produced additional codes that helped inform the reduction process. Table 3 provided an example of initial coding in this study.

Table 3

Example of Initial Coding

Interview Questions and Response	Initial Codes
Participant 7	
Interviewer: "In what ways do you feel your father's presence in the home effects the way in which you see yourself?"	"never questioned"
P7: "It was never questioned. I never had those issues in as a child. That's why I asked my parents, why is it that never had these issues… I mean of course… he, you know, treated me like I was beautiful, or did this and that. But he never really said it. He was all his… his actions. His actions, spoke for him. So, I always felt like, you know, his little pretty girl. It's funny, if somebody called me ugly, he was like, I don't know what you're looking at. I don't know what you're talking about! Even now, how I feel in my head has a lot to do with that too. But as far as my dad, yeah, he just, um, He never made me feel any type of way about how I looked. My mom's side of the family, they always talked about how big my forehead was, and they would point out different things. But my dad never did. And I knew that he loved me for the way I was. And that was the way anybody else had to be anybody that I bought in my life. They had to be the same way."	"treated me like I was beautiful" "never really said it" "actions spoke for him" "loved me for the way I was"

Emotion and Value Coding

Emotion and values coding is another method used in the coding process of data analysis. Using the field notes and transcriptions, I was able to describe the emotions, values, and beliefs shared and observed during the interviews. Emotions characterized the verbal and nonverbal cues and affects the story had on the participant as they shared (i.e., crying, emotional pauses, and laughter). Values and beliefs describe the participants' viewpoint, attitudes, and positions on certain topics. I used single letters to represent each: (E) for emotions, (V) for value, and (B) for belief. See Table 4 for emotion and values coding example in this study.

Table 4

Example of Emotion and Values Coding

Interview Question and Response	Emotion and Values Codes
Participant 10	
Interviewer: "In what ways did your father's involvement in your life affect your personal involvement with your own children?"	E: Emotion V: Values B: Beliefs
P10: "Being there, like just being present. Because I can honestly say, if it wasn't…I can't really speak to what my life would be like if I didn't have my dad, but I can honestly say that him being there is why I'm here. It's why I strive so hard to be the role model for the boys that I have. Because I don't… Excuse me. (chokes up with tears) I don't want. I don't. (emotional pause) I don't want them to not have me, have an impact in their life. I want to be present, regardless of anything that happens. No one knows what the future holds, but I…my dad being in my life is very important. It's very important to me because I don't know where I would be if I didn't have him, I don't. So, I'm grateful to have had my dad. Um, I cherish these days every day that I wake up and he's still here. Um, some of the stuff that he's going through I wish he wasn't just so we could be closer as far as you know, me being able to see him all the time. So, I'm so grateful that my dad, I really am. I just, I don't even…I don't even want to imagine what it would be like if I didn't have him cuz he was just there." (tears continue to fall)	B: be present B: be a role model E: crying and very emotional (observed) E: emotional pauses (observed) V: fathers should be present and impactful V: gender role expectations

Findings

This section presented the themes that derived from the data analysis. The findings included the research questions, interview questions, themes, and verbatim transcripts from all 10 participants' interviews. The study produced themes within all four domains of gender role development, romantic attachment, self-concept, and future parenting styles. Table 5 summarized the major themes and subthemes that were produced.

Table 5

Major Themes and Subthemes

Domains	Themes	Subthemes
Gender Role Development	Traditional Gender Roles	Male- Provider, Protector, Leadership Female- Helpful Father- Head Of Household, Supportive, And Disciplinarian
Romantic Attachment	Action- Oriented	Examples, Respect, Commitment
Self-Concept	Black Excellence	Pro-Black And Confidence
Future Parenting Styles	Active Presence	Present And Standard/Model

Presentation of Themes Gender Role Development: Traditional Gender Roles

Under the first domain considered in this research project, gender role development, several themes were produced under three headings: (1) male gender roles, (2) female gender roles, and (3) father roles. These themes were connected to the interview questions listed under "Gender Role Development." They included the following questions:

4. How do you identify on the gender spectrum?
5. In what ways did your father teach you about your role within that gender?
6. In what ways did your father uphold or challenge traditional views of gender roles?
7. How did your interactions with your father influence your view of Blackness within the gender spectrum?

The themes delineated from this domain express the perceptions of what their fathers taught verbally and expressed through the actions of what their personal gender roles were and their role as father meant in the home. The gender roles described were often connected to traditional gender roles and described by the academic literature and often shared how their fathers mostly upheld traditional values with few exceptions within this domain. Individuals with traditional gender roles view women possessing the aspects of nurturant, mothering, and domestic while men's roles are more with leadership, dominance, and family provision. These ideologies have in many cases and for centuries translated into the expectancy for women to work within the domestic sphere, such as taking care of the children, housekeeping teaching, nursing, or other nurturing occupations, while men thought to be the primary financial provider for the family outside the home (Turner & Gervai, 1995).

Male Gender Roles: Provider, Protector, and Leadership

The subthemes for male gender roles of provider, protector, and leadership all corresponded with Questions 2 and 3. Research showed that fathers are significant socializers in the development of gender roles and identities globally (Leaper &

Friedman, 2007; Leavell et al., 2012), and children who demonstrate stereotypical behaviors are believed to associate with their prescribed gender roles taught to them by their parents and the world around them (Berk, 2009).

Research also mentioned that in the specificity of African American fathers' gender role communication to their sons, themes of responsibility, provision, and independence often arise due to the fact that African American men are often unemployed (Hoffman et al., 2003; U.S. Department of Labor, 2013; Wilkinson, 1999), arrested and jailed (Mauer, 1999; U.S. Department of Justice, 2012), characterized as absentee and unfit (Johnson, 2001), and the exploited due to racism (Crenshaw et al., 1995). It seems that this is the place where race, gender, and resilience intersect as these African American fathers display and communicate lessons to their sons of their role as men and show them how to navigate the adversities specific to Black men so they can redefine spaces for success and legacy (Allen, 2016).

Provider and Protector

All of the participants reflected on their father's teachings on male gender roles with provision being the priority. For example, most participants spoke of their father either teaching the boys their role as a hard worker to support their future families or teaching the girls of the responsibility of their future husbands to support them financially. A common theme throughout the interviews was that their fathers demonstrated such ideals by working tirelessly, many times working multiple jobs to create multiple streams of income for the family, and instilling in them a work ethic for the future. Participants connected these action-oriented ideals as their father's

expectations for them as both males and future fathers, and for the girls to seek in future husbands. Most of the participants also shared similar views of their father believing that men should be protectors of their wives and children.

When asked, “In what ways did your father teach you about your role within that gender?” most characterized and described the role of provider for males:

> He taught me to be a man, a husband, and a father. He was an excellent provider. He worked every day, got home late, but we knew he loved us… He upheld rather, the traditional- this is the male's responsibility. This is a man's responsibility in his home to be the breadwinner to provide or to protect them. And he upheld those traditional male roles and taught us guys that. (Participant 3, Male)

> … my father very much played the role of… He was always a provider so when I think about the role he played, we knew that providing was number one. If we had any type of events or anything like that it was already a common understanding that he would, he would do what he would prioritize, providing over attending. (Participant 4, Female)

> …okay the role he played was basically the role of our main support far as far as financial support. My mother was college educated, my dad had gone to high school, quit in his senior year and started working, but he always worked two or three jobs. In addition to his main job, which was as a preacher. So, we always had enough of everything. So, one of his main roles was to provide for us, and he

had a good role model and that his dad was a good provider. (Participant 5, Female)

He upheld them [traditional gender roles], as far as… you know… being there for my mom being the provider. (Participant 10, Male)

…and I remember my father was always protective of all of us. And one thing that I really remember about my father… and I tried to copy the same thing with my children. (Participant 3, Male)

…and that was part of my growing up as a young man. He made sure Mama was content and adjusted and had no problems. So, we grew up in the protector role. And also, I never had to feel afraid. That's something that I never knew. I've never had that moment where I felt unsupported or afraid, and I tried to, you know, pass that on to the males in the family now. (Participant 6, Male)

He was the provider and protector, and that was his responsibility. So, there were things that we didn't have to worry about because he was going to do them. (Participant 8, Female)

Leadership

Another subtheme of male gender role development was the leadership of males within the family dynamic. Many of the participants spoke of this subtheme from spiritual worldview. Most expressed that their fathers shared biblical views of the male's role within the family as being a leader, especially spiritual leadership.

> I still see him as still that authoritative figure— someone not to push too hard; however, he has become also that friend to me, and I guess instead of authoritative I should use the word respect, it's a natural respect that I have for him, and all that he's done for our family. (Participant 4, Female)

> Well first of all, he taught it from the perspective that he knew, and that was from a biblical perspective. As far as what he thought was the biblical perspective, and that was that. Especially in a marriage relationship that the man has the authority. When he made decisions… he's the leader in everything. He took care of his family and lead in the spiritual. (Participant 5, Female)

> I feel like he exemplified standard in the roles as the head of the household. And not at the role of the head like in charge over a woman, but you to have the responsibility to lead appropriately. He taught me that as a man I should lead financially most of all spiritually. (Participant 9, Male)

> I am the way I am, as far as like God and church and everything because of my dad's teaching. He just wanted us to just stay straight with God, stay straight with our family, and just this be a man in the house. He wanted us to be a leader but a helper as well. (Participant 10, Male)

Female Gender Roles: Helpful

Yeah, and girls couldn't play marbles because that was the boys game. And boys better not be caught playing with no doll either. We could not play with dolls

Most of the participants expressed the clear distinctions their fathers made between binary gender roles- male and female. Participant 3 stated the following:

> We did not in my growing up. We did not… how should I say it… we did not lean towards stuff that belonged to girls. We had to lean toward everything that belonged to boys, and my sisters had to lean toward everything that belonged to girls. Because my dad thought that was the best way to make sure that we knew who we were, and that we were secure and our own identity and gender. (Participant 3, Male)

Helpful

Several participants expressed that their fathers upheld the ideal that women are to be helpful around the home with domestic chores. Domestic work is traditionally a female gender role, while males are expected to work more laborious jobs outside of the home. These ideals seemed to translate into the chores around the home for young girls.

> So, I grew up thinking that one of my roles as a woman was to be supportive to my husband… and that your role is to be submissive to him. We [the daughters] did learn a submissive role as relates to male and female relationships, and father/husband and wife relationships. (Participant 5, Female)

> My role as a woman…hmmm…My mother fixed his plate for dinner. Right, so that was, you know, that was the gender role assignment in our house. He definitely encouraged and perpetuated that, so you know when I started working in the kitchen with her, I would bring his plate. He ate first and my brother ate

> first and we ate last. As a woman, I think that he thought of it as the male role was superior, but I think a lot of the role assignments in my in our house probably stemmed from our faith. (Participant 8, Female)

Father Roles: Head of Household, Supportive, and Disciplinarian

In respect to gender roles, many participants shared their experience with their father's role within the home. Although, fathers gave verbal and exemplar lessons of their roles as males, females, future mothers, and future fathers, many of the participants shared how they viewed their father's role within their individual family dynamic. The paternal roles that emerged in this study reflected existing conceptualizations in the literature such as: provider, spiritual guides, protector, disciplinarian, supporters, and role models (Murray & Hwang, 2020). The themes discussed below are those the derived from the experienced mentioned in their interviews.

Head of Household

Fathers were often denoted as the "head of the house." He was often referred to as the leader, spiritual standard, and authority within the home. Often, these ideals came from spiritual foundations and biblical principles that were believed and perpetuated in the home. Most of the understanding of the authority was obtained through observation rather than verbal communications.

> He was the head of our household. And my mother had a lot of respect for him as our father. (Participant 4, Female)

> I feel like he [father] exemplified the standard in the roles as the head of the household. And not as the role of the head like in charge over a woman, but to have the responsibility to lead appropriately. He taught me that as a man I should lead financially most of all spiritually. (Participant 9, Male)

> I've always viewed Black men and my dad, as far as family and fathers, as the leaders of their household. Truly the leaders. I mean, when I say leader I mean, setting a plan for the family…. listening to that partner/your wife, and asking for her input, making sure that you know, she is along for the ride. (Participant 10, Male)

Supportive

Most participants expressed their feelings being supported by their fathers. Fathers were described as supportive, encouraging, compassionate, and helpful.

> He believes that everyone should do with their own thing, like, a woman isn't just set in stone, what she should do in a relationship. So he just let me explore different things. (Participant 1, Female)

> I probably am as okay with myself… I grew up… I'm a dark—skinned Black woman on top of that, so knowing those type of issues in the African American culture, he pushed, you know, he made sure that didn't affect me. You know, because of course in childhood, you get teased for being darker, but he counteracted that with, "No, that's nonsense. We're not going there! You are this..." (Participant 2, Female)

> Dad always told me I was the smartest person in the room and that was not always the truth, but he thought I was smart and he thought I was pretty. The first speeches I had to write in school if it was a paper, I always go to dad and I tell

> him this is the subject. He'd always give me the first line. And I would always take his first line and I could write a great paper, just from his first line. He always get it started for me. And then that was it. And so, I always depended on him and I miss that about him. (Participant 5, Female)

> He was super supportive! It's like he had to make sure I had everything I needed. If I even thought that I saw a book when we were somewhere that I might be able to use to help me understand theology or anything else, it didn't matter what the book cost, he would buy it, and really push you. (Participant 6, Male)

> I say because he was such an encourager. I think he saw more in me than I saw in myself, so I would always try to see what he saw. Or he might ask me to take on a task or do something…and it was because, you know, he saw who I wanted to become not necessarily who I was. And so he would trust me with things that he knew I could accomplished. (Participant 8, Female)

Disciplinarian

Most of the participants also expressed that their father was the main source of discipline in the home. As disciplinarian, their father was seen as the authority for school and other areas of social interaction. The phrase "didn't play" was often used in reference to their father's discipline style.

> My dad did not play about education! So, whenever I missed school, he would get mad at me, and he made sure that I will make As and Bs. He'd come in my room, and make sure I was studying. Make sure that if I had a test one day, he would be in my room helping me study for it- making sure that whatever I need to know I knew. (Participant 1, Female)

I copied his parenting style. I just had to smooth it some because of the change in times, but I copied his parenting style. All the way, discipline and everything else, because that's all I knew. I didn't know how to bring up no family except but what he taught me, my mother taught me. And that was about it, and it worked… Some of them that were here at the church to say “Don't whip them.” You will stifle his creativity and all of that, but I got whippings when I was coming up and my kids did too. They didn't get no unnecessary whippings. They got necessary whippings. So, sometimes, well Solomon said that you won't kill him if you bring that rod out; so, that’s the way I did with my family. (Participant 3, Male)

Oh, I think he’s the model. I mean yeah, it's the model. The ever-present cheerleader. The biggest fan, yet, the honest discipline- the honest evaluation of missteps. Like from a parent, “Hey I can tell you this, you know, that wasn't cool.” (Participant 8, Female)

I looked at him as the guy that laid down the rules and enforced them, and he did that very well. (Participant 9, Male)

…but my dad was more of the discipline there and then she [mother] was. He was the one that was always strict to be quite honest. That's where I get my disciplinary tactics from… him. He just wanted to make sure he got the best out of us, and that we completed tasks as quickly and as thoroughly as possible. Yeah, I honestly believe his discipline and his guidance made me the man I am today. (Participant 10, Male)

Romantic Attachment: Taught by Example

Lessons of romantic attachment are critical for a child's social maturation and relational skill sets. This section seeks to share the lived experiences of the participants as it relates to the ways and methods their fathers employed in influencing their present-day romantic relationships. Participants expressed that their fathers taught with few words and more by examples, and taught lessons of respect and commitment as vital aspects of a functional romantic relationship. The interview questions that referenced ideals of romantic attachment included the following:

1. In what ways did your relationship with your father effect your romantic relationships?
2. Describe some of the lessons you feel your father taught you about relationships.
3. In what ways or methods did your father teach you these relational lessons?

Example

Although some participants did share that their father communicated lessons concerning romantic relationships with them, most expressed that their fathers mainly taught lessons by example, and they observed behaviors in the home that impacted their present romantic relationships.

> Well, he affected my romantic relationships because of the way I observed my father treating my mother… (Participant 3, Male)

> So, my home did not talk a lot about, we show love, we didn't talk a lot about love. We showed love, but there was not a lot of sexuality conversation that took

place. Yeah, I would say more of his lessons on that [romantic relationships] came through actions. He's not a man of a whole lot of words, and so he just really made sure that he showed us. (Participant 4, Female)

Although my dad was a preacher, he wasn't preachy. It wasn't lectures or preaching to you, but just his presence and the way he was with mom. (Participant 5, Female)

If my mom ever came home said she was tired, we as kids knew we were going somewhere and give them some space. And you know he would sit down and talk with her. I've seen her walk in the house crying, for whatever reason, and then 30 minutes later come out of the bedroom with a half a smile and knowing that whatever it was gonna be alright. I've learned to be super supportive to my wife from Dad. (Participant 6, Male)

We didn't have like the "Let's sit down and talk about this…" He was a man of few words, unless he was, you know, wound up about something. He always made sure to show that he loved me. He made sure I knew that he loved me, and nobody could take care of me like he could. He even told my husband before we got married, "Nobody can take care of her like me, but I'm gonna let you give it a shot!" (Participant 7, Female)

I think those were lessons over commitment, the attention, the compassion, kindness, yeah. Those yeah, those are those are definitely things that I saw. I will say he didn't teach them. He just lived them. So, it was never like he sat down one

> day and said that when you started dating, make sure the boy opens your car door. Like I don't think he ever said that. I just think that this is kind of what I saw and expected. (Participant 8, Female)

> As I got older, like in college, I kind of went my own way. But I did always have in the back of my mind to make sure that when I did meet the one to treat them the way my father treated my mother. From what I saw growing up, to the best of my ability, I've done that. I mean we're not perfect. I'm not perfect. I've made my mistakes. But I saw the way he treated my mother, when we were in the house… (Participant 10, Male)

Respect

As it pertains to romantic relationship and attachment, participants often spoke of their fathers teaching lessons of respect. Respect was spoken of in terms of both being demanded and given. The fathers of the participants in this study taught their sons and daughters that in romantic relationships respect must be given and expected.

> I want to deal with her [wife], you know, the way he did- with respect. Make sure you maintain a respect for your partner. Make sure you listen to what they're saying. And always have fun. (Participant 10, Male)

> Let's go way back…opening the door. He taught me to open the car door for a lady, taking them out to dinner, or paying for the meal. You know, dressing up and buying them flowers- really enjoying their time and being respectful of their time. (Participant 9, Male)

> He would tell us not to ever take advantage of a little girl sexually. He said that was wrong. That was a no-no! He said, “You wouldn't want anybody to treat your sister like that, so you shouldn't do any other little girl like that.” So that’s one of the lessons he taught me. He also taught me to always respect the girls and respect everybody, but especially the little girls. And that worked out pretty well. But he was pretty strict on that! (Participant 3, Male)

> He would take me and my sister out on pretend dates and tell us a man is supposed to open the door for you. A man is supposed to sometimes pick up the bill. He taught me to find somebody that can take his place, somebody that would respect me. And, you know, being able to put characteristics of my father into my relationship. So that's what he's taught me and to be able see what a man really wants from me, how he's going to treat me, and if he's going to treat me like my dad. (Participant 1, Female)

Commitment

In the area of romantic attachment and relationships, commitment was a common theme that surfaced in several of the interviews. Participants expressed that their father taught them lessons of monogamy, staying married, and being committed to one’s spouse.

> He taught me first of all that commitment is important to relationships. (Participant 5, Female)

> He taught me about monogamy, faithfulness, the benefits of being married. He and my mom had 46 years before he passed. He said we never had to worry about hearing that we had outside siblings. And even though I had children with several women. He wasn't proud of that fact. You know I always tell people that any mistakes I made, didn't belong to my father, my mother, or God… that was all me. And I stress that because my dad did not have as many children as me. He didn't have a whole bunch of babies out in the streets and whatever else. He was very tender with my mom in front of us…He wanted to kind of give us examples of what a Black man should look like and how we should act. (Participant 6, Male)

> He taught me about commitment, being open, and transparent. Patience. Okay, so patient like he was just he was so patient. I can look back and just see the attention- the opening the car door. Attention to detail like he loved cards, you know, and I love cards. So thankfully I still have cards that have his signature on it. I think those are lessons over commitment, the attention, the compassion, kindness, yeah. Those yeah, those are those are definitely things that I saw that, I think, and I will say he didn't teach them… he just lived them. (Participant 8, Female)

Self-Concept: Black Excellence

Despite the overwhelming amount of literature from a deficit model concerning African American fathers, studies highlight how having a father present positively

impacts their children's positive racial socializing behaviors (Doyle et al., 2016), endorses self-confident messages of racial pride and dignity (Howard et al., 2013; Thomas et al., 2012), prepares them to navigate probable racial obstacles (Thomas et al., 2012), and builds resiliency and strong self-concept (Hrabowski et al., 1998; Mandara, 2006). The participants in this study were asked questions as they pertained to their father's influence on their self-concept and how they viewed themselves in social and racial dynamics. The interview questions that referenced ideals of self-concept included the following:

1. In what ways do you feel your father's presence in the home effects the way in which you see yourself? As an African American?
2. How did your father effect your emotional, intellectual, and spiritual/moral development?
3. How did these values develop your character?

Standard of Excellence

Many of the participants stated that their fathers expressed a standard of excellence for their lives. Most of the participants shared that their fathers set precedence, and they were constantly challenged to rise to the standard set. Mediocracy and being average, for many of these African American homes was not an option; thus giving their adult children a sense of self-worth, pride, and dignity. This was especially sensed in the realm of scholastic education and intellectual development.

> Boy, we got, we got the belt for acting up, not doing good in school, or not trying to make honor roll. Again, with his limited education, he wanted college

graduates. It was not a lot of wiggle room or not trying to develop in the summertime. We were made to read encyclopedia. We had to learn a word; I think two or three a week. I mean this is torture because kids enjoying kickball and whatever, and we could move out the house before chores were done, but you had to be able to say what you read in that encyclopedia. You might have had to write a report on it. We had to write the definition out for that word because he didn't allow us to use words without knowing what they meant. So that was the start of having an expansive vocabulary. He was a stickler for it, because he worked for a lot of wealthy White people. We had to kind of learn what stock was about. We had to learn what an IRA was compared to a 401k, just because if one of those people asked me, he didn't want you to look uninformed. (Participant 6, Male)

Oh, he didn't play about school, and that's the only thing… talking about emotion, that'll get you a negative emotion. My dad never played by school. So, he helped, he helped a lot. It was one area you didn't really want to fool with him on. (Participant 2, Female)

Okay, well that era now, you have to remember, when I was when I was coming up there with my father in my home, there was my teachers in school, and then there was a preacher at church. And all of them agreed in one…They taught me all of them, the preacher included, “Never, ever let a White man outdo you in

> anything. You ought to come out on top because that's what you are." And that should be your self-image from now on. You are to excel! (Participant 3, Male)

Pro-Black Confidence

Often, communications of confidence correlate with messages of racial dignity. Participants expressed that these messages of pro-Black confidence were consistently taught, portrayed, and expected of children. Also, messages of excellence that were aforementioned in the section above many times consisted of pro-Black teachings.

> …so, I know all these stories, you know about the discrimination he faced in the 40s in the 50s, so was I was very aware that we were Black, that Black was different in America, but not that it was less than. And so coming full force, you know, fast forward 40 years to be able to go with him to the inauguration of the first Black president, and I interviewed him like so I have it on video, just to capture that moment. And so just like to know all of those things and for him to have lived to have seen that, and to experience that with him based on all the things that he said that he experienced. He was like, "I never thought I would live to see it, but of course, I'm not surprised because you know I knew that we could." (Participant 8, Female)

> My dad grew up during a time during, you know, segregation, and things of that nature. So, he was pro-Black everything. So, he taught us to be strong, like you don't let anything bother you, you work hard, and take care of your family. And that was his main thing, and you support your people. And I see myself in that

way today- strong, hard-working, you know, and I'm definitely gonna support. (Participant 7, Female)

I'm now 50 years old, and I was raised in the era of proud to be Black. I am wholly, unapologetically Black. I don't try to water it down. Even though I can code switch, I don't necessarily leave my "Ebonics" in my trunk when I go back into the corporate arena. Even when I preach at predominately White congregations, you will get some of this African American male. And that's because even again, regarding like my size and things of that nature, He [father] always gave you a chin up, kind of, stance, you know. We didn't know what it was to be ashamed or whatever. Today, I'm very grateful for the kind of dad that I had. I've never had to go to a bar to find him. I never had to visit him through no glass or no bars. Even though he was not very, very well educated, you couldn't find a time that I was ever ashamed of him. (Participant 6, Male)

One participant referenced their father's teaching of Black history and historical figures.

Well, I've never heard in my growing up, stereotypes about races of people, if there was any talk about it. Never about any group of people being evil- not from my dad. He was a more compassionate person as related to ethnicity and cultural differences. But he did teach us a lot about Black history. We never took Black history in school- never as a course. And so, his grandfather had had been a Garvey guy— following Marcus Garvey. So, he had instilled in him a lot of Black

> pride, and he idolized his grandfather. And so, he did, He did tell us stories about famous Black people, took us to concerts where Black musicians were performing … and so he gave us the education I think that we needed, and then he also gave us the message that we were important as a person and as a people. (Participant 5, Female)

Future Parenting Style: Presence

Researchers have shown that parents' interactions with their children are in large influenced by their personal interactions with their own fathers (Doherty et al., 1998; Gaunt & Bassi, 2012; Murray & Hwang, 2020; Pleck, 1997; Shears et al., 2006). When asked about personal parenting styles, many of the participants referenced their father's presence in the lives, the father being the standard of parenting practices, and their father's disciplinary tactics as becoming their own. The interview questions that referenced the ideals of future parenting styles included the following:

1. How did your father's parenting style help shape your parenting style?
2. In what ways did your father's involvement in your life affect your personal involvement with your own children?

Active Presence

Most of the participants, when asked of the influence of their father in their parenting practices, mentioned his active presence. Fathers were often spoken of as being a presence that was more felt than heard. The presence of father expressed as consistent, active, reliable, and trustworthy to the children.

He played a very big role because, without my dad, I just feel like I wouldn't be the person I am now. If he wasn't involved in my life… there was probably a lot of things that happened when I was little, if it wasn't for my dad being, you know, there… things would probably be different than they are now. Um, yeah, he's just, he played a very big, big part in my childhood. (Participant 1, Female)

I mean he’s in all of my memories. I don't have any memories without him in them. He's always been there and very influential, from the beginning to now. (Participant 2, Female)

My father got up at the break of day and went to work, especially after he went into business for himself. And a lot of times he didn't get back home until late in the evening. But he was always energetic to listen to us. We didn't have any television, so we listened to the radio. He'd listen to the radio with us while we all sat at the table and ate together. And then he would ask us how our day went and whether we got into any trouble or anything like that. I guess it went just like a normal family during those days. (Participant 3, Male)

That was very involved. He attended everything. He also worked for the school district that I attended. So it was no shock, in high school, if I were to look up and see my daddy, looking in the window of my classroom. So, people knew he didn't have to make an effort to drop in. People knew who he was. And he just would make his presence known, and it was it was a very strong presence but pleasant. (Participant 4, Female)

He was always present. If we had school plays and stuff like that, even in the middle of the day, he might not have got there in time to sit in the front, but I knew when I was on stage, I could look and definitely see him. I can't remember many events in my life at all, that he wasn't there, and for the few that he wasn't, he would tell me in advance that it was gonna be impossible for him to get away. So it wasn't like, you know, I ever had to do that guessing game. (Participant 6, Male)

Well, I don't have childhood memories that don't, you know, involve my dad. Some of my fondest memories are of my dad are things we did together. We used to skip at church in the parking lot when I was a kid, and then we would jokingly do it again as adults. So somehow my childhood memories were brought into my adulthood. He was just very present, wanting to be very present for both of his children. Because of his own experience of having his birth father die before he was born. So, he very much wanted to be involved in his children's life. (Participant 8, Female)

I want to be present for my kids, regardless of anything that happens. No one knows what the future holds, but my dad being there in my life was very important. It's very important to me because I don't know where I would be if I didn't have him there. I cherish these days because every day that I wake up, he's still here. So, I'm so grateful that I have my dad, I really am. Like I said, we may not always get along, but he's my dad. (Participant 10, Male)

Father as Standard

Lastly, when asked, how has their father's parenting style influenced their own parenting style, most participants expressed that their father is the standard for proper parenting. Even one participant who does not have children expressed that her father will be the standard for future parenting styles.

> We are carbon copies of him. He's the standard. His presence in my life and the way he did things was so important that it filters beyond him to how I parent my sons. (Participant 10, Male)

> So yeah, just being able to become a parent that's letting my child be able to come into themselves, like my dad does with me and my sister. I want to be like that. (Participant 1, Female)

> I copied his parenting style. I just had to smooth it out some to change with in times, but I copied his parenting style. All the way! Discipline and everything else, because that's all I knew. I didn't know how to bring up no family except for what he taught me and my mother taught me. And that was about it, and it worked! (Participant 2, Female)

> Oh, I think he's the model…I want that for my now teenagers in the future when we have the adult relationship. I want to emulate that I am someone they still want to be around when they are adults. And not just in a checking the box way. Not just because they have been trained and taught to take care of their parents, but to actually love their parents. (Participant 8, Female)

Summary

This chapter offered a demographic description of the 10 adults who self-reported to have had an active father presence during their childhood and shared the impact he had on their lives. This chapter also summarized the procedures for sampling, data collection, and data analysis. All participants completed the demographic questionnaire and participated in a semi-structured interview. The interview questions were designed to elucidate the participants' lived experiences concerning the impact and influence of their fathers in four major domains: (1) gender role development, (2) romantic attachment, (3) self-concept, and (4) future parenting styles. Verbatim transcripts were used first to develop codes and then themes. Procedures for data analysis were detailed including examples of coding methodologies; first and second cycle coding were used for data reduction.

Major themes and subthemes emerged in all four domains. In the domain of gender role development, male role themes consisted of the following: provider, protector, and leadership, while female role themes consisted of helpfulness. In the domain of romantic attachment, the themes of example, respect, and commitment emerged from the data. In the domain of self-concept, themes of excellence and pro-Black confidence emerged. Lastly, in the fourth domain of future parenting styles, themes of active presence, and being a standard/model emerged.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study explored the lived experiences of 10 African American adults who self-reported the impact of the involved presence of their biological fathers. Specifically, four major domains were explored for African American fathers' effect: (1) gender role development, (2) romantic attachment, (3) self-concept, and (4) future parenting styles. Conducted through semi-structured interviews, the participants self-reported their lived experienced which were transcribed verbatim and used to discover and explore common themes across the interviews. These father-adult child relationships were explored through three theoretical lenses: (1) family systems theory, (2) resilience, and (3) Afrocentricity.

These theoretical frameworks provided the lens by which, I was able to view the data using the one central research question, "How has perceived paternal involvement among African Americans during childhood help shape their adult children's development?" Qualitative analysis transforms data collected through interviews and other methods into information that answers research questions (Patton, 2002/2015). By sifting through marginal information gathered through the interviews from the significant patterns/themes observed in the data, the pertinent information needed to answer the research questions was revealed.

The basic tenets of phenomenological research permit the principal investigator and the participants to express and discover a phenomenon for the fundamental processes that occur within the experience (Van Manen, 1990). The lived experience is made up of authentic mechanisms as well as emotions, behaviors, and values that are intersected within the dynamic that converge to create the experience expressed. The analysis of the lived experience is one's effort to explore and investigate the experience as articulated by the participants, revisit those thoughts, and finally, inspect the moving parts of the experience.

The overarching purpose of this research project was to explore, through a phenomenological approach, the effects of the involved presence of African American fathers on their adult children. With this understanding, I aimed to add to the academic body of knowledge the lived experiences of such families and add positive outcomes and elements to the literature concerning African American families, and the positive impact of African American fathers, in particular. My intention was to share such results with typical fathers in the community who may be statically and/or realistically absent, disengaged, invisible, or displaced. Such enlightening evidence is useful and instructive for all to comprehend the important role constructive, fatherly engagement plays in the development and positive outcome of their children.

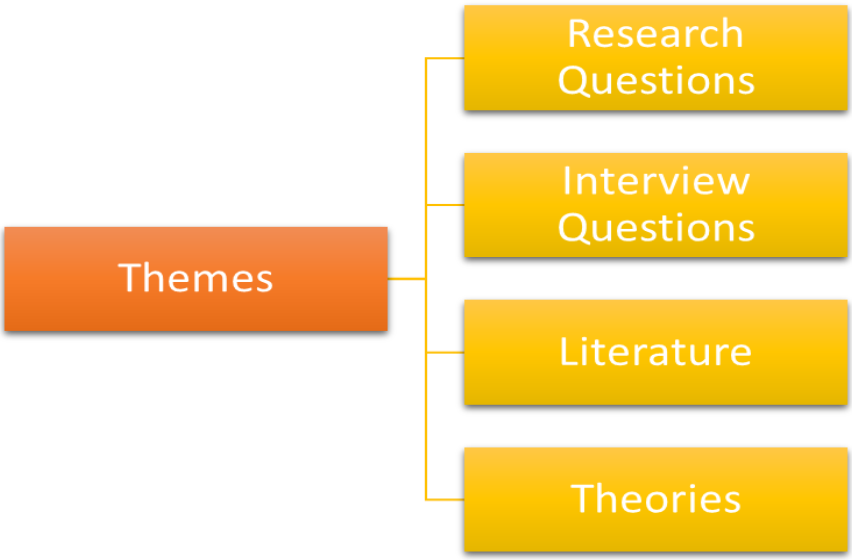
This chapter presented an overview of the findings and denotes the connections between the research questions, interview questions, previous research, and revealed themes. Connections between the findings and theoretical frameworks, study limitations, implications, and recommendations for future research are discussed in this section.

Discussion of the Findings

As shown in Figure 1, four factors informed the themes revealed in this study: (1) research questions, (2) interview questions, (3) the literature, and (4) theories. As previously stated, the current study utilized three theoretical frameworks: family systems theory, resilience theory, and Afrocentricity through which the data were critically analyzed. In the current study, phenomenology provided a philosophical perspective for understanding participants' lived experiences, and the meanings they gave to these experiences. Theory also guided the research questions, interview questions, coding, data reduction, and the theme development in this study. The following sections discussed the themes and subtheme while offering explanations for how they corroborate to confirm, verify, validate, and authenticate the literature and the theoretical frameworks.

Figure 1

Theme Development



Gender Role Development

Father's impact on gender role development has been a profound element within child development and fathering literature. Research indicates that African American fathers often communicate concepts of responsibility, provision, and independence to their children. This juxtaposition is often due to the fact that research often show African American men as jobless (Hoffman et al., 2003; U.S. Department of Labor, 2013; Wilkinson, 1999), incarcerated (Mauer, 1999; U.S. Department of Justice, 2012), characterized as absent and incompetent (Johnson, 2001), and the demoralized due to racism (Crenshaw et al., 1995). With this in mind, these fathers seemed to demonstrate resilience, as they express and transfer messages to their children responsibility and leadership so they can redefine their familial and social spaces for success and legacy (Allen, 2016).

The main theme of traditional gender roles addressed the research question, "How has perceived paternal involvement among African Americans during childhood help shape their adult children's development?" (see Table 6). The participants of this study reported that their fathers were thought to display and teach traditional gender roles to their children. The literature is consistent with this notion in several ways. Research showed that fathers are substantial socializers in the development of gender roles and identities (Leaper & Friedman, 2007; Leavell et al., 2012). Additionally, studies showed that fathers who have lived within traditional roles further promote them. Their children may, as seen in the interviews, usually embrace and confirm those same ideals as their own gender ideologies (Berk, 2009; Bulanda, 2004; Leavell et al., 2012).

Table 6

Research Questions and Aligned Interview Questions

Research Question	Interview Questions
RQ: "How has perceived paternal involvement among African Americans during childhood help shape their adult children's development?"	1. In what ways did your father teach you about your role as a man or woman? 2. Did your father uphold or challenge traditional views of gender roles? 3. How did your interactions with your father influence your view of Black masculinity or femininity?

When asked about what their fathers taught them about their role within the gender roles, three descriptions were expressed most frequently for the males: (1) provider, (2) protector, and (3) leadership. Only one subtheme was frequently highlighted by the females: helper. It is significant to note that the participants' expressions were congruent with the literature and theory. Participants in this study articulated that their fathers were displaying and teaching gender role based upon what they were taught in their own developmental years. Viewing these relationships through a family systems lens allowed me to understand the adult children in relationship with their father and be aware that they cannot be viewed separate and apart. Thus, all of the lessons taught and observed throughout the participants' childhood can be understood as how the father either projected or transmitted such ideologies of gender roles expectations to the children, how such ideologies worked within the family system, how each member of the family was expected to function, and how those ideologies are lived out contemporarily as the children become adults with families of their own.

According to the literature, traditional gender roles for men are usually translated as being the primary financial provider for the family who work outside the home (Perry-Jenkins & Gerstel, 2020; Turner & Gervai, 1995). Fathers discussed in this research project denoted as the key provider or "breadwinner" is consistent with previous research describing early ideals of paternal roles with the family dynamic (Lamb, 2000). In the current study, participants highlighted features of provision by sharing examples of financial stability and support, providing basic necessities for living such as: food, clothing, and shelter. The role of provider seemed to be expected of male children and not female children, although lessons of financial independence were mentioned by a few female participants.

In this study, fathers were also perceived as the protector of the family. He was considered to be the defender of the family. This corresponds with Freud's view that the father is the image of safety, power, and authority for his children (Papaleontiou-Louca & Al Omari, 2020). Several participants expressed how their father defended them against others who attempted to take advantage of them and created a safe space in which they felt unafraid. The attribute of protector seemed to be expected of male participants, especially those that expressed that they had female siblings. Male participants expressed their fathers' expectation to protect younger siblings as well as female siblings. This did not seem to be a common theme among female participants concerning paternal expectations.

Leadership was also a common theme of gender role development for male participants. Leadership seemed to encompass spiritual leadership and leadership in the

home. Most participants expressed that their fathers were the spiritual leader of the family. Through the Afrocentric worldview, one of the major tenets is spirituality and spiritual leadership. (Borum, 2007; Wilson & Thompson, 2020). For African Americans, a connection with a higher power is stated to enable them to be resilient (as it is one of the protective factors of resilience) through the compound adversities they face daily (Borum, 2007). Also, the fathers' leadership in the home seemed to be without question among participants. This expectation of spiritual and domestic leadership for male participants was expressed by their fathers expecting male children to lead the prayer at dinner, by expressing leadership expectations at school, and by communicating for excellence throughout the children's developmental years.

For female participants, expectations of helpfulness were a common theme. The literature also denotes that individuals with traditional gender roles view women possessing the aspects of nurturant, mothering, and domestic while men's roles are more with leadership, dominance, and family provision. These ideologies have in many cases been interpreted as an expectation for women to be "helpful" in domestic dynamics, such as caring for the smaller siblings and children, housekeeping chores, cooking, and helping their mother in kitchen duties such as "fixing plates." Although these actions often connect with traditional gender roles, they served as the foundations upon which each participant viewed and performed her romantic attachment, self-concept, and future parenting styles.

As for gender roles and romantic attachment, male participants expressed that they found themselves looking for partners who held traditional gender roles as well as

practiced them (Li et al., 2020). Male participants found themselves seeking partners that were helpful and domestic, while female participants sought partners that were providers, protectors, and exhibited strong leadership. The connection between gender role development and self-concept was seen in both male and female participants who approached their value in how they were able to function with their role (Harris & Orth, 2020). Males felt more confident in themselves as they expressed that they followed their father's example of being a provider, disciplinarian, and spiritual leader, while females felt a sense of pride and dignity in being available and present to help their spouses and children. The tie between gender role development and future parenting styles was evident in the ways in which most participants expressed their role as father and mother and traditional ideals of their familial functions.

It should also be noted that although fathers in many instances were nurturing and domestically helpful, the practices of provision, protection, and overall leadership were dominant in the narratives. This was also true of the female participants, as fathers many times expressed notions of leadership and financial independence through hard work, the ideals of being nurturing and helpful were more dominant. These notions of fluidity are congruent with the literature as well (Coakley, 2013; Dolan, 2014; Murray & Hwang, 2015).

Romantic Attachment

In the domain of romantic attachment, participants reported three major themes of their fathers' impact: (1) example, (2) respect, and (3) commitment. Research suggested that fathers in many instances connect and teach lessons of emotion through actions

(Dollahite et al., 1996; Palkovitz, 1997; Pleck, 2010). When asked, “In what ways did your relationship with your father effect your romantic relationships?” (see Table 7), most participants responded by describing their fathers’ actions toward their mothers or stepmothers, and for female participants that their father’s actions were done toward themselves (i.e., daddy/daughter dates, opening doors, and “ladies first” lessons). Although few participants noted that their father had “small talks” about romantic relationship expectations, most lessons were gathered through observation. As alluded to in Chapter 4, participants observed ways in which their fathers treated their mothers with respect, care, concern, compassion, and physical touch. Observing these visual, positive lessons impacted their understanding of romantic relationships and created as expectation for future relationships. Thus, most participants expressed that their current relationships imbibe the same traits, and those who were single articulated that these are characteristics they seek in a future romantic partnership.

Table 7

Research Question and Correlating Interview Questions

Research Question	Interview Questions
RQ: “How has perceived paternal involvement among African Americans during childhood help shape their adult children’s development?”	1. In what ways did your relationship with your father effect your romantic relationships?
	2. Describe some the lessons you feel your father taught you about relationships.
	3. In what ways or methods did your father teach you these relational lessons?

Another subtheme that resonated in this domain was respect. Most participants offered a resounding response that their father impacted their romantic attachment by

teaching the lesson of respect— respecting others and demanding the respect of others, especially in romantic partnerships (Kochendorfer & Kerns, 2017). Lastly, a strong theme of commitment was also expressed across the interviews. In this study, participants reported that their fathers consistently expressed to their children that a strong level of commitment should be expected in romantic relationships. Studies have shown that African American fathers by large scales display a strong viewpoint for opposite sex, heterosexual relationships (Conley, 2011; Rosenberg, 2003). Coakley et al. (2017) also noted that paternal communication concerning romantic attachment included: sexuality, relationships, monogamy, and marriage. Eight participants' parents were either still married or remained married until the death of a spouse. This also communicated to the participants that commitment must be an expectation.

This finding was also supported by resilience theory and Afrocentricity. According to the American Psychology Association, a staggering 40% to 50% of American marriages end in divorce. With these staggering numbers in mind, fathers have expressed a resilient ideology that counteracts the national statistics. Through the lens of Afrocentricity theory, commitment within social networks have been one of the keys to the African Americans' survival in America. To place African Americans in their historical context, Blacks, during slavery, were not allowed to legally marry, and their bodies were used only for reproduction. Thus, commitment and marriage became of vital importance to those who were constantly being denied (Wilson & Thompson, 2020). This value has been able to undergird the Black family through times of hardship while offering support, reinforcement, and accountability (Wilson et al., 2021). Such powerful

ties of commitment to family and spouse created and sustain the support systems within the Afro-centric community that perpetrate resilience (Asante, 2007).

Self-Concept

In the domain of self-concept, the theme of "Black excellence" emerged from which two subthemes developed: (1) pro-Black and (2) confidence. Studies have shown how Black fathers provide, nurture, and interact with their children (Coles, 2001; McLoyd et al., 2000), while increasing their children's positive racial socializing behaviors (Doyle et al., 2016), validating self-confident messages of racial pride and dignity (Howard et al., 2013; Thomas et al., 2012), preparing them to navigate probable racial obstacles (Thomas et al., 2012), and building resiliency and strong self-concept (Hrabowski et al., 1998; Mandara, 2006). Positive self-concept among children is associated with increased scholastic and professional achievement, decreased behavioral problems, and overall holistic health (Allen, 2016; Caldwell et al., 2004; Hebert et al., 2009). Thus, paternal influences build self-concept as one learns how to view himself or herself and one's value juxtaposed to the world and culture in which he or she lives.

Participants expressed their feelings of value and worth derived from their father's persistent messages of Black excellence in response to the racial divide and marginalization they would experience in school, the workplace, and beyond. Nine participants in this study communicated that as African Americans, their fathers articulated that they could not be "average" or even "the same as a White person," and a standard of excellence and distinction was expected, encouraged, and demanded of them. Thus, such messages of Black excellence in turn created the participants' self-concept,

how they perceived their worth, value, and significance in the world. These paternal influences were conveyed through pro-Black ideologies and a created strong confidence among participants. Participants voiced that they were obligated to community service, to have strong work ethics, and excel academically.

Allen (2016) found that African American fathers taught their sons lessons about self-concept through Black existentialist perspectives, which embraces the idea that Black men must be responsible for creating their own identity and define and in some cases redefine what Black masculinity looks like independent of White norms and discourse. In the literature, cultural pride was to be a contributing theme concerning paternal messages to children in reference to self-concept and legacy among African Americans (Doyle et al., 2016). Allgood et al. (2012) found similar results among African American father-daughter relationships.

When asked, “In what ways do you feel your father’s presence in the home effects the way in which you see yourself?” (See Table 8), phrases of pro-Black ideologies and confidence emerged. Phrases such as “Black as beautiful” and “honoring ancestors,” were mentioned. Others shared feelings of “demanded excellence” and mentioned the importance of “leaving a legacy for your children worth following.” It should be noted that all female participants spoke of their father fostering and encouraging their self-concept by communicating how “smart and beautiful” their daughters were, and how they trusted that their daughters could excel at anything wished to do. Fathers were also said to be supportive and encouraging which made daughters feel assertive and self-assured as adults.

Table 8

Research Question and Correlating Interview Questions

Research Question	Interview Questions
RQ: "How has perceived paternal involvement among African Americans during childhood help shape their adult children's development?"	1. In what ways do you feel your father's presence in the home effects the way in which you see yourself? As an African American? 2. How did your father effect your emotional, intellectual, and spiritual/moral development? 3. How did these values develop your character?

Future Parenting Styles

In the fourth domain of future parenting styles, the major theme of "active presence" emerged while subthemes of "presence" and "father as the standard/model" emerged as well. These findings showed consistency with the literature in several ways. The literature showed that fathers' interactions with their children were in large influenced by their personal interactions with their own fathers (Doherty et al., 1998; Gaunt & Bassi, 2012; Murray & Hwang, 2020; Pleck, 1997; Shears et al., 2006). Thus, having a paternal presence affects the likelihood of a future parenting either being present or absentee.

Other research explored the parenting practices of married, resident African American fathers and found that they attributed their parenting style to their "birth father" being engaged during their childhood, described themselves mirroring the parenting practices of their fathers, and in some cases using the complete opposite techniques of their father (Murray & Hwang, 2020). Research also showed that parents with fewer

economic resources, many who are from minority communities, accentuated the importance of "being there" or actively present for their children, showed concern about their children's security, and felt it their duty to defend their children from detrimental influences (Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2020).

When asked the interview questions (see Table 9), participants expressed in numerous ways that their father's active presence was foundational in their lives. Active presence is summarized as entuned, engaged, and engrossed in the needs, wants, and activities of family life. All participants described their fathers as actively present and engaged in their lives. According to the participants in this study, their fathers' active presence became the model or standard by which they view parenting. Each participant voiced that either they have accepted their father's parenting style as the standard by which they currently practice or plan to one day practice with the conception of children. The model of parenting used seemed to consist of communication, support/encouragement, attentiveness, disciplinary skills, and quality time.

Table 9

Research Question and Correlating Interview Questions

Research Question	Interview Questions
RQ: "How has perceived paternal involvement among African Americans during childhood help shape their adult children's development?"	1. How did you father's parenting style help shape your current or future parenting style?
	2. In what ways has or will your father's involvement in your life affect your personal involvement with your own children?

As each participant rendered these qualities of paternal parenting style, most mentioned that such became the standard/model by which they currently or one day plan

to parent their own children per Interview Question 2. Participants mentioned that their father was “the standard” and “my role model.” These findings are consistent with the conclusions of other researchers which concluded that men who are highly affectionate with their children have fathers who are highly affectionate as well (Coles, 2001, 2003; Perry & Lewis, 2016). Similar findings were observed as research showed that young men with residential fathers during adolescence reduced the odds of those young men experiencing fatherhood at an earlier age and increases the chances of young adult fathers residing with their own children (Forste & Jarvis, 2007; Guzzo, 2011; Perry & Lewis, 2016). Findings in the current study are also consistent with family systems theory as they relate to the generational transfer of ideals, values, and beliefs. Interestingly, an Afrocentric view of paternal engagement would not assert the breadwinner philosophy as adopted by most Westernized ideologies of paternal roles, but instead allow for fathers to value the respect earned from active engagement (Coles, 2001).

The Resilience of the African American Father: Family Systems Theory, Resilience Theory, and Afrocentricity

As mentioned in Chapter 1, four concepts of family systems theory were explored in this research project are as follows: (1) nuclear family emotional system, which was discovered as fathers and children created and maintained environments of emotional stability, spiritual connectivity, and confidence of pro-Black ideologies; (2) multigenerational transmission process, which explains how the fathers mentioned in this project transmitted their ideologies of pro-Black confidence, spirituality, gender role identities, and parenting styles down to the children and the cycle of such behaviors

became transgenerational; (3) family projection process, which explains how parents project their anxieties and stresses onto their children as these children absorb the tensions of their parents, yet in this project the fathers mentioned projected their strengths of confidence, strong discipline, academic excellence, and spirituality onto their children and all of the aforementioned absorbed by these adult children; and (4) societal emotional process, which explains how the family system as a whole takes the roles and identities into the societal levels in they live and function (Cox et al., 2001).

Concepts of resilience theory that were considered in this project are as follows. First, making sense of adversity, which includes normalizing and contextualizing adversity and viewing stressors as manageable and even meaningful. Participants highlighted that although their fathers understood the plight and disadvantages of Black people in America, fathers managed the racial stressors they constantly endured and created new, meaningful ways of experiencing the world for their families. These men also seemed to demand the excellence of their children because of the racial stressors endured. Second, was positive outlook, which focuses on potential, hope, and optimism. Fathers were reported to have demonstrated these optimistic characteristics when dealing with their families, jobs, and personal growth.

Third, spirituality and transcendence, which focuses on one's connection with higher ideals and standards of living was explored as fathers were said to have taught and demonstrated high spiritual values and gave much attention to the spiritual development of their families with church, prayer, and spiritual events. Next was flexibility, which explored one's ability to reorganize and recalibrate during or after adversity to provide

predictability. Participants reported that their fathers were seen as men who “beat the odds,” who challenged them to a standard of excellence, yet they were men who were flexible, especially with daughters. Father/daughter relationships seemed to exhibit more flexibility than father/son relationships.

Fifth was connectedness, which includes providing others with mutual support. Most participants felt that their fathers supported them and demonstrated connectedness throughout their childhood. Lastly, sharing emotions openly, which includes both positive and painful feelings. Participants reported that their fathers created environments in which free expression of emotions were allowed. Even in homes where emotions were not always displayed physically, emotions were allowed to be felt and expressed (Walsh, 2016).

Considering Afrocentricity, all five pillars that were utilized in this project by centering the African American family in its historical-cultural context through the following: (1) psychological location which was defined and determined through the use of symbols, languages, and rituals African people create; (2) finding the subject-place of Africans in any social, political, economic, or religious experience, (3) the defense of African cultural ethics, customs, religions, and traditions against non-African interpretation, (4) lexical refinement which demands that all terminologies and definitions used to define Africana people must be defined using the African cultural-historical contexts and experiences from which they derived, and (5) which is the overarching purpose of this study— the commitment to a new African narrative by introducing and rediscovering a new corrected history of the African people all over the

world that does not falsify African history but promotes Afrocentric positivity (Omar, 2020).

To view the African American family holistically, one should begin by placing in the African American his or in her social context within American history as well as his or her contemporary presence. The Constitution of the United States of American, ratified in 1787, begins with the renowned words,

> We the people of the United States, to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

These words were drafted by Thomas Jefferson, a slaveholder and a founding father of the United States, who purposed to established law and governance in the United States of America. Although the Preamble is contemporarily employed to envelop all people, Black, White, and Brown persons, through the 13th amendment, it was contextually written for a certain people, “White people.” Those of Black and Brown hues and complexions were contrastingly thought to be subhuman and even animalistic (Lyman, 1991).

The African American story is one of great divisions and discords through the act of enslavement and later impoverishment (Fleck et al., 2013). The resilient, contemporary African American family is the glory and honor of their predecessors who came through the tumultuous epochs of the Middle Passage and the brutality of chattel slavery. The modern-day Black families are the descendants of those who were sold by their own

families and friends in the homelands of Africa, others captured and trapped like animals by colonists, brought to an foreign land, deprived of their identity, emasculated by their masters, raped by their owners, retailed like pieces of furniture, their art, music, and literature embezzled, deprived of hopes and dreams, exploited for master's entertainment, abused for the master's sexual deviances, denied their human rights, divested of an honest living, placed in the slums and ghettos of the inner city, repudiated from higher learning environments, and disrespected by mainstream society; and yet through all these toxic cruelties, African Americans remained in their eyes "a people." A people who through tenacity and audacity could rise above the hate and of their new neighbors and recreate a new home/family of connection and spirituality, work ethic occupied with vitality, and a nucleus of social support (Wilson et al., 2021; Wormer et al., 2011).

Through the pains of protest, sit-ins, and even marches, the African American family and most intriguingly, the African American father, fought to remain family centered (Wormer et al., 2011). Black fathers were torn apart for the sake of shame and to weaken the African American slave, the economic and ego-centric wellbeing of the slave master, and the American economy at large. Largely, the degradation and obloquy of the African male, was the center focus of the slave masters' mortification of the African family system. To belittle the African male/father was to discredit, demean, disgrace, and the provider, protector, and perpetuation of the African's culture, family, and linage.

Yet within this horrifying, historical context the African American father seemed to help, and in some instances lead the maintenance and recreation of a culture, racial identity, spirituality, social network, family system, and moral compass- all core elements

of resilience (Barber, 2012; Hurd & Zimmerman, 2010; June et al., 2009; Prince, 2008; Rutter, 1985; Wormer et al., 2011).

Contemporarily, African American men have sought to recall and revive the Black family through “pro-Black” ideologies and teachings to their own family. On large scales, starting with the Black Power Movement of the 1960s, African American men contested their identification with being slaves with embracing the understanding the passive cruelty of enslavement. Being a slave is an identity while “enslavement” is a horrific action imposed upon thousands of people against their will.

This stance against the enslaved mentality came across in African American poetry, song, cinema, and more. The late hip-hop artist Tupac Shakur (2006), a young African American male rapper from the inner city of Harlem, wrote his view of resilience among African Americans nearly 70 years after the Harlem Renaissance saying,

Did you hear about the rose that grew from a crack in the concrete? Proving nature's laws wrong, it learned to walk without having feet. Funny, it seems to by keeping its dreams; it learned to breathe fresh air. Long live the rose that grew from concrete when no one else even cared.

Limitations of the Study

This project has added to the scholastic body of knowledge concerning paternal involvement and impact by presenting the lived experiences of a unique sample of participants who range in age, gender, and more. One limitation of this study derived from the lack of spiritual belief diversity. Although the sample did range in age and gender, most of the sample embraced Christian ideologies and were children of church

leaders or men who portrayed biblical values. This may have caused some of the gender roles, romantic ideologies, and parenting styles to form a more unilateral belief system.

An additional limitation could be that all of the participants shared positive views of their father and his impact on their lives. No participants expressed negative views of their father. Those with positive experiences may have been more attracted to the study and willing to share their story. It would have been interesting to hear how negative, yet active paternal experiences impacted participants' adult lives. Another limitation could be the restriction to biological fathers only. Many adults who did not have their biological fathers present were impacted and influenced by stepfathers, grandfathers, uncles, cousins, coaches, pastors, teachers, and more. These relationships were not explored in this study.

Finally, all of the participants of this study were either college-educated or obtaining a college degree with high socio-economic status. In 2019, approximately 40% of African American adults aged 25 to 29 years had at least a two-year college degree, an increase from 26% in 2000 (de Brey et al., 2019). The sample could have been more representative of the African American population and its educational and socio-economic status make up.

Implications/Recommendations

The overall purpose of this research project was to explore, through a phenomenological approach, the impact of the involved presence of African American fathers on their adult children. With this information, I aimed to add to the body of knowledge the lived experiences of these families and add positive elements to the

literature concerning African American families and fathers in particular. Based on the findings of this study, a number of implications/recommendations may be useful and relevant for family practitioners/educators, policy, and future fathers.

Implications for Family Practitioners/Educators

- Family scholars, practitioners, and educators should continue exploring the paternal dynamics of African American fatherhood in regard to the impact on adult children through the strength-based theoretical lens of resilience theory and Afrocentricity. Instead of exploring the African American family through a deficit model, family scholars and educators should continue to explore and approach these family dynamics through the cultural, historical contexts in which they live and explore the strengths they imbibe and exude. Results of this study showed that by using strength-based models, themes and subthemes became centered around the strengths and veracity of fathers mentioned in the study instead of exploring deficiencies. If family practitioners and educators utilize similar strength-based frameworks to explore African American family systems and other marginalized populations, such familial and cultural strengths could be considered and used for both prevention and intervention.
- The data generated from this study can inform the creation of interventions for future African American fathers. By looking at the parenting styles utilized by the fathers in this study, family practitioners and educators can gain insight into their parenting practices as well. When designing educational curricula, family practitioners and educators should be considerate of these approaches that have rendered positive results and look for additional methods that enhance them.

- Family life educators may design fatherhood programs to educate fathers and future fathers on how to become more communicative in messages of gender role, romantic attachment, self-concept, and parenting styles. As participants in this study shared, lessons learned from their fathers were more observed than verbally communicated, fathers may benefit from learning stronger, more effective communication skills while teaching such valuable lessons.
- Using the findings of this study in connection with previous research, family practitioners/educators may be able to create or reevaluate professional development trainings for social workers, other family life educators, parent educators, and family counselors. Using strength-based and cultural-based theories along with these findings, professionals who engage with fathers may be able to create more sustained levels of father involvement among those who are uninvolved.
- Findings viewed under the lens of family systems theory, resilience theory, and Afrocentricity should see fathering among African American males as an adaptive response to the cultural and racial climates in which they parent. Thus, family life educators, practitioners, and policymakers must begin to embrace solutions that foster and strengthen father involvement among African Americans should not be corrective but supportive-creating programs and policies that emphasize removing the hurdles that impede actively present fathering. It is vital to remember, the Black family is not a dynamic needing to be "fixed" but rather a structure that needs to be "supported."

Implications for Policy

- The findings of this research could be useful in creating policies in the workforce and beyond to ensure that fathers are available and actively present in the lives of their children. For example, policies like "paid paternal leave," career training, and college debt reduction could all be implemented to aid fathers who may be economically struggling. Such policies could help fathers to place more importance of active paternal involvement.
- These findings could also inform policymakers concerning poverty reduction and unemployment among African Americans. Using these findings, we can better understand how important provision and protection is to African American fathers. With this in mind, policymakers could ensure that jobs are available that pay well enough for fathers not to have to work multiple jobs which in turn take them away from their families or reduces the energy given to them when they come home.
- The results of this study could also inform policymakers concerning prison reform, school maladaptive behavior policy, and more. Fatherhood and male mentorship programs could be adapted and integrated into the reform policies to educate and promote the positive outcomes of father involvement.

Implications for Faith-Based Organizations

- Most of the participants in this study were "people of faith" and highly spiritual. Many of the responses were identifiably faith-based. Thus, the results of this research could also help inform churches and other faith-based organizations on fatherhood programming, male mentorship programming to promote and enhance father involvement, and community ministry opportunities.

- Also, pastors can get unify to develop a network within their respective town or city to ensure the support for men who are fathers. Programs, services, and job trainings/opportunities can be created.

Implications for Future Fathers

- The overarching purpose of this study was to: (1) share results with future fathers who may become statically absent, disengaged, invisible, or displaced, due to the multiplicity of paternal and racial challenges they face; (2) to share the essential role they play in the development and positive outcomes of their children; and (3) encourage them to become actively present and involved in the lives of their children. Hopefully, these findings can assure the vital role they play as a father and how they can change the course of their children's lives to a better path.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings of this research project, I offer the following recommendations for future research:

- This study was qualitative in methodology, exploring the lived experiences of the sample. This was vital in answering the research question and gaining deep insight into the stories of those who felt first-hand the impact of their father's involved presence. Yet, a quantitative or mixed-methods approach would ascertain more participants and add to the unique statistical data to the thick, rich descriptions given in this study.
- Future research should explore the impact of the involved presence of non- biological fathers on their adult children. Such data would add to the depth of understanding

concerning the impact of fathering, male mentorship, and parental involvement. Additionally, the inclusion of various races and ethnicities of fathers would be appropriate for future study.

- The use of a variety of research methods could be deemed valuable for future studies. The inclusion of quantitative and mixed methods methodologies could add to the richness of information gathered with the implementation of pretesting and posttesting, focus group, or case studies. The use of a case study methodology could be useful to gather the deep understanding of all sides and experiences of every member of a nuclear family and to compare the experiences of each.
- Future research should explore the impact of residential vs non-residential fathers. This could be helpful in evaluating if fathers are present in the home or not to explore the level of impact and influences their children. Comparing and contrasting residential fathers to non-residential fathers could embolden the research on fathering and impact family practitioners' initiatives.
- Future research could also explore the juxtaposition of active vs non-active fathers' impact on adult children. Exploring how each type of father involvement influences the behavior and overall outcomes could provide helpful information to the family life education, programming, and practices.
- This research project did explore both male and female perspectives of father impact but did not focus on comparing and contrasting the two. Future research could seek to focus on male vs female perceptions of father impact in the areas of gender role development, romantic attachment, self-concept, and future parenting styles. Such

data may produce useful findings that could influence many areas such as school programming, counseling strategies, fatherhood education programs, and more.

Reflections of the Researcher

As principal investigator of this study, I came to this study with biases of which I am very open. Growing up, I was privileged to have an actively engaged father present throughout my childhood. My father, who was a pastor, never missed a game, a band concert, or any important event. Because of his impact and influence in my life, I too am a pastor who seeks to parent my four children with the same level of involvement he. As a researcher, transparency is a requirement for qualitative research. Phenomenological methodology also challenges the researcher in the process of reflexivity to tease out personal biases and preconceptions that may influence the findings. The use of a reflexive journal throughout this project has assisted me in reflecting on my personal biases and responses to the research process, especially during interviews.

This research process has allowed me to experience the stories and experiences of others and to deepen my own thirst for advocacy and family life education. The power of these experience highlighted in this study offered me a multiplicity of perspectives, worldviews, and perceptions that will inform the way in which I pastor my church, rear my children, advocate for active paternal involvement, and more. My goal is that the findings from this study will add to the scholastic body of knowledge, provide helpful information to others as an insight in a world in which the majority have not experienced, and serve as conduit for future research in this same field. I would like to add to this current research by further exploring African American fatherhood and the cross-

sectionality between spirituality/religiosity, resilience, and fatherhood impact. Also, I would like to explore the impact of non-biological fathers in the same domains.

Due to this experience, I would like to continue to engage in African American family studies and Black fatherhood through academic research, community advocacy, and collegiate teaching. This research project allowed me to expound on strength-based models and theories such as resiliency theory and Afrocentricity that can be used to understand the power and potentials of the Black family dynamic, and I would like to deepen my personal knowledge of additional strength-based approaches while focusing in the area of study.

Summary

The purpose of this research project was to gain an in-depth understanding of the impact of the involved presence of African American fathers on their adult children by exploring the lived experiences through phenomenological research. African American adults who self-reported to having had their biological father present during their childhood were recruited. After completing an informed consent and demographic questionnaire, 10 adults participated in a semi-structure interview and data from those interviews were analyzed to produce the findings mentioned in this chapter.

The study explored one central research question regarding the impact of the involved presence of African American fathers within four domains: (1) gender role development, (2) romantic attachment, (3) self-concept, and (4) future parenting styles. Three theoretical frameworks were employed in this study: (1) family systems theory, (2) resilience theory, and (3) Afrocentricity. This study also employed a phenomenological

approach which explores the thick, rich descriptions of the lived experiences and perceptions of the participants interviewed. This chapter discussed the findings of the research, themes and subthemes that emerged through data analysis, the researcher's reflections, study limitations, implications, and recommendations for future research.

The findings from the current study will add to the body of knowledge the lived experiences of such families and add positive outcomes and elements to the literature concerning African American families, fathers in particular. Lastly, as such, I aim to also share these results with everyday fathers and future fathers in communities of color to impede the realistic absence, disengagement, displacement, and invisibility of the African American father. Such illuminating evidence is vital in holistically understanding the important role active father engagement plays in the development and positive outcomes of their children.

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APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

Texas Woman's University
Institutional Review Board (IRB)
irb@twu.edu
https://www.twu.edu/institutional-review-board-irb/

April 27, 2021

Kristopher DarDar
Human Dev & Family Studies

Re: Initial — IRB—FY2021—85 The Perceived Impact of African American Fathers' Involved Presence on their Adult Children

Dear Kristopher DarDar,

The above referenced study has been reviewed and approved using expedited review procedures on April 27, 2021 by the TWU IRB — Denton operating under FWA00000178. If you are using a signed informed consent form, the approved form has been stamped by the IRB and uploaded to the Attachments tab under the Study Details section. This stamped version of the consent must be used when enrolling subjects in your study.

Note that any modifications to this study must be submitted for IRB review prior to their implementation, including the submission of any agency approval letters, changes in research personnel, and any changes in study procedures or instruments. Additionally, the IRB must be notified immediately of any adverse events or unanticipated problems. All modification requests, incident reports, and requests to close the file must be submitted through Cayuse.

Approval for this study will expire on April 26, 2022. A reminder of the study expiration will be sent 45 days prior to the expiration. If the study is ongoing, you will be required to submit a renewal request. When the study is complete, a close request may be submitted to close the study file.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please email your IRB analyst at irb@twu.edu or refer to the IRB website.

Sincerely,

TWU IRB — Denton

APPENDIX B

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Free or Low-Cost Counseling Services

TWU Counseling and Family Therapy Clinic

Wookcock Building 114
P.O. Box 425769 Denton, TX 76204
(940) 898-2600
www.twu.edu/family—sciences/counseling-family-therapy-clinic-asp Hours: Tuesdays – Fridays 9am to 8pm
Saturdays 9am to 3pm

UNT Dallas Counseling Clinic

7300 Houston School Road Dallas TX
(972) 780-3646
Hours: Mondays 3:30pm to 6:30pm Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:30pm to 8:30pm

Center for Family Counseling

SMU in Plano
5528 Tennyson Parkway, Building 3, Suite 102 Plano
(972) 473-3456

Other Counseling Resources

Psychologist Locator of the American Psychological Association Practice Organization

http://locator.apa.org

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONAIRE

Demographic Questionnaire

This demographic questionnaire is used to identify the researchers target group of people or target interviewees that will provide information to satisfy the requirements of this research project. This form simply deals with general identifying markers of a group, which is defined by the age, profession, passion, thinking factor, gender and more. Thank you for your participation.

Personal Information

- Participant # _____
- Year of Birth_____
- Email Address_____
- Highest Level of Education

  - ☐ High School (Partial)
  - ☐ High School Diploma/GED
  - ☐ Associates Degree
  - ☐ Bachelor's Degree
  - ☐ Master's Degree
  - ☐ Doctoral Degree

Background Information

- Gender

  - ☐ Male
  - ☐ Female
  - ☐ Other

- Age

  - ☐ 0–18
  - ☐ 19–29
  - ☐ 30–49
  - ☐ 50–69
  - ☐ 70 and above

- Race

  - ☐ Black/African American
  - ☐ Other

- Race of Biological Father
  - ☐ Black/African American
  - ☐ Other

- Race of Biological Mother
  - ☐ Black/African American
  - ☐ Hispanic/Latino
  - ☐ White/Caucasian
  - ☐ American Indian/Native American
  - ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander
  - ☐ Other_____
  - ☐ Unknown

- Total Income Last Year
  - ☐ $0–$25,999
  - ☐ $26,000–$51,999
  - ☐ $52,000–$74,999
  - ☐ More than $75,000
  - ☐ Decline to Say

- Native/Primary Language Spoken
  - ☐ English
  - ☐ Spanish
  - ☐ Other_____

Child	Age	Gender

Research Questionnaire

- Was your biological FATHER present in your home between the ages of 0–18 years old?

  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No

- Rate the level of involvement of your father in your home?
  - ☐ Disengaged
  - ☐ Present but Uninvolved
  - ☐ Involved
  - ☐ Highly Involved

- Rate your father's involvement on your life.
  - ☐ No effect
  - ☐ Mild effect
  - ☐ Highly affected

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions for Dissertation Project

The following are questions that will be asked of the interviewees who will participate in this research project. Four major domains will be explored for African American fathers' effect: (1) gender role development, (2) romantic attachment, (3) self-concept, and (4) future parenting styles.

General Background Information

1. How would you describe your relationship with your father?
2. Reflect on your childhood. What role did your father play in those memories/stories? How was he instrumental in your upbringing?
3. How would you describe your father's energy levels during your childhood to meet your needs?

Gender Role Development

1. How do you identify yourself on the gender spectrum?
2. In what ways did your father teach you about your role within that gender?
3. In what ways did your father uphold or challenge traditional views of gender roles?
4. How did your interactions with your father influence your view of Blackness within the gender spectrum?

Romantic Attachment

4. In what ways did your relationship with your father effect your romantic relationships?
5. Describe some of the lessons you feel your father taught you about relationships.
6. In what ways or methods did your father teach you these relational lessons?

Self-Concept

4. In what ways do you feel your father's presence in the home effects the way in which you see yourself? As an African American?
5. How did your father effect your emotional, intellectual, and spiritual/moral development?
6. How did these values develop your character?

Future Parenting Styles

3. How did your father's parenting style help shape your parenting style?
4. In what ways did your father's involvement in your life affect your personal involvement with your own children?

APPENDIX E

RECRUITMENT LETTER

Recruiting Letter of Approval

This letter is meant to inform this site concerning the research project doctoral candidate Kristopher DarDar and request permission to recruit potential participants to interview from your site.

My name is Kristopher DarDar. I am a doctoral candidate of Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas. I am at the conclusion of my doctoral work (Doctor of Philosophy in Family Studies) and am working rigorously on my dissertation. My dissertation seeks to better understand the effects of the involved presence African American fathers on their adult children. There are many mainstream statistics concerning the negative effects of the displacement and absence of fathers on their children—-drug additions, high rates of school dropouts, poverty, prone to violence, and more of the like. This research project differs in that I seek to interview African American adults who indeed had their biological father present during their formative years, and how that involved presence affects them presently.

I am requesting your approval to allow me to recruit participants (African American adults) from your site for my research project. I would like to pass out and/or hang flyers around your site to recruit and share information concerning the nature of this study and my contact information if potential participants are interested. If agreed, I will administer via paper or email a simple demographic questionnaire (see attachment) to the entire populace. Following the survey, a few people who meet the criteria will be selected to participate via Zoom or FaceTime (to lessen face to face issues during this international pandemic of COVID-19) following their agreement printed in an informed consent form.

Lastly, the participants will be given a token of appreciation for their time and contribution to the project.

If your site has any additional questions, please contact me via email at kdardar@twu.edu or call me 214-250-6098. Your site's support in this effort will draw me one step closer to the completion of this degree, the stories of great men who chose to parent and involve themselves in the lives of their children, and my dream to change the world.

Yours truly,

Kristopher K. DarDar, Sr. TWU Doctoral Candidate

I, on behalf of Greater Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, have read and understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my site's participation is voluntary and that my site is free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form.

Greater Friendship Missionary Baptist Church voluntarily agrees to take part in this study as a participant recruitment site.

Site Coordinator's Signature _____ Date 2-11-21

Researcher's Signature _____

Date 2/11/2021

CONSENT

I, on behalf of THE RUSSELL RD CHURCH OF CHRIST, have read and understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my site's participation is voluntary and that my site is free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. RUSSELL RD CoC voluntarily agrees to take part in this study as a participant recruitment site.

Site Coordinator's Signature John A. Dansby Date 1/18/21

Researcher's Signature Christopher K. [illegible] Date 1/18/2021

APPENDIX F

INFORMED CONSENT

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY (TWU)
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title: The Effects of Involved Presence of African American Fathers on their Adult Children

Principal Investigator: Kristopher DarDar, Sr
kdardar@twu.edu
214-250-6098
Faculty Advisor: Abraham Hwang Ph.D. CFLE
shwang@twu.edu
940—898— 3155

Summary and Key Information about the Study

With all the adversities daily besetting the African American family, including the absence, displacement, and disengagement of the "father role," I seek to explore a more positive viewpoint of the African American family dynamic— seeking to explore and investigate the lived experiences of African American adult children who self—report the involved presence of their father during childhood through a phenomenological approach. Four major domains will be explored for African American fathers' effect: (1) gender role development, (2) romantic attachment, (3) self—concept, and (4) family development/involvement. With this information, I wish to add to the body of knowledge the lived experiences of such families and add positive outcomes and elements to the literature concerning African American families, fathers and men in particular.

This interview will be audio recorded, and we will use a code name to protect your confidentiality. The total time commitment for this study will be about one hour and 30 minutes. Following the completion of the study you will enter a raffle to win a $25 gift card for your participation. The potential risks of this study include potential loss of confidentiality and emotional discomfort. We will discuss these risks and the rest of the study procedures in greater detail below.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you are interested in learning more about this study, please review this consent form carefully and take your time deciding whether or not you want to participate. Please feel free to ask the researcher any questions you have about the study at any time.

Description of Procedures

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to spend one hour of your time in a face-to-face interview with the researcher. An additional time of approximately 20 minutes may be needed to verify information after the interview. The researcher will ask you questions about your relationship with your biological father and the effects that

relationship has had on your in four major areas: (1) gender role development, (2) romantic attachment, (3) self-concept, and (4) future parenting styles. You and the researcher will decide together on which virtual platform the interview will take place on and when the interview will happen. You and the researcher will decide on a code name for you to use during the interview. The interview will be audio recorded and then written down so that the researcher can be accurate when studying what you have said. In order to be a participant in this study, you must be at least 18 years of age or older, African American, and have had your biological father presence during your childhood.

Potential Risks

The researcher will ask you questions about how your relationship with your biological father has affected your life in several areas. A possible risk in this study is discomfort with these questions you are asked. If you become tired or upset, you may take breaks as needed. You may also stop answering questions at any time and end the interview. If you feel you need to talk to a professional about your discomfort, the researcher has provided you with a list of resources.

Another risk in this study is loss of confidentiality. Confidentiality will be protected to the extent that is allowed by law. The interview will be held at a private location that you and the researcher have agreed upon. A code name, not your real name, will be used during the interview. No one but the researcher will know your real name.

_____
Initials

The audio recording and the written interview will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office. Only the researcher, his advisor, and the person who writes down the interview will hear the audio recording or read the written interview. The audio recording and the written interview will be destroyed within three years after the study is finished. The signed consent form will be stored separately from all collected information and will be destroyed three years after the study is closed. The results of the study may be reported in scientific magazines or journals but your name or any other identifying information will not be included. There is a potential risk of loss of confidentiality in all email, downloading, electronic meetings and internet transactions.

The researcher will remove all of your personal or identifiable information (e.g. your name, date of birth, contact information) from the audio recordings and/or any study information. After all identifiable information is removed, your audio recordings and/or any personal information collected for this study may be used for future research or be given to another researcher for future research without additional informed consent.

If you would like to participate in the current study but not allow your de—identified data

to be used for future research, please initial here_____.

Participation and Benefits

Your involvement in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time. Following the completion of the study you will entered into a raffle to receive a $100 gift card for your participation. If you would like to know the results of this study we will email or mail them to you.

Questions Regarding the Study

You will be given a copy of this signed and dated consent form to keep. If you have any questions about the research study, you should ask the researchers; their contact information is at the top of this form. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research or the way this study has been conducted, you may contact the TWU Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 940—898—3378 or via e—mail at IRB@twu.edu.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

*If you would like to know the results of this study tell us where you want them to be

sent:

Email:_____

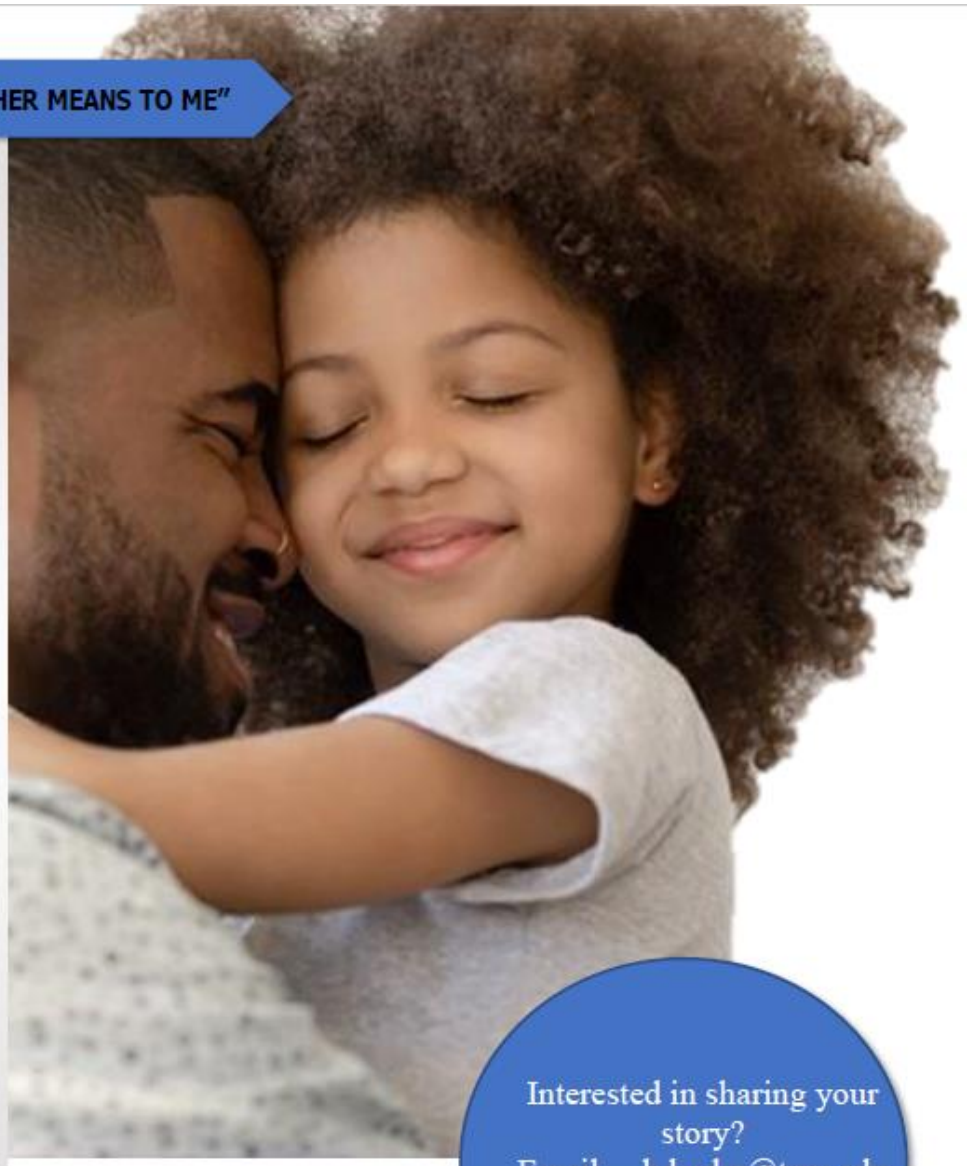
or
Address:_____

APPENDIX G

RECRUITMENT FLYER

"WHAT MY BLACK FATHER MEANS TO ME"

We want to hear your VOICES about what growing up with your father means to you for a study at Texas Woman's University. With these adversities daily besetting the African American family, including in many instances the displacement and disengagement of the "father role," this research seeks to explore the lived experiences of African American adult children who self—report the involved presence of their father during childhood. Four major areas will be explored for African American fathers' effect: (1) gender role development, (2) romantic attachment, (3) self—concept, and (4) future parenting styles.



Interested in sharing your story?
Email— kdardar@twu.edu
Phone: 214-250-6098

SHARE YOUR STORY