

BLACK PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR
CHILDREN'S SCHOOLING DURING MIDDLE CHILDHOOD
WITHIN THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the ten Black parents on the island of St. John in the U.S.

Virgin Islands who allowed me inside their lives and their children's lives. I could not

have finished my dissertation without you all! Thank you!

I also dedicate this dissertation to my ancestors who came before me for their struggles,

sufferings, and survivals, which they endured during the trans-Atlantic slave trade,

Europe, and American slave societies. I cannot thank each of you enough for the

sacrifices made for me to be able to stand today.

To my parents, my mom who birth me and my dad whose love planted me, I dedicate this

dissertation to you. To my three children I birthed: Calis, Callah, and Cush, for standing

in support of me through the years with one love, honesty, and goodness. For those

children, adults, and others I teach, and those I have yet to teach, I say thank you.

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In the name of the Almighty Jah Ras Tafari, Haile Selassie the First and Empress Menen, crowned King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah on November 2, 1930, elect of Himself and Earth's rightful ruler, who has given the writer-me, mercies, blesses, and permission to accomplish this research. One Love of Jah Ras Tafari grants forgiveness and love to my dearest parents, Calis and Gloria, and me, and gave compassion for them as they brought me up when I was a child. I would like to express my great appreciation to Dr. Nerissa Gillum, my dissertation Chair, for her valuable guidance, motivation, and advice throughout the research writing process. I

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ABSTRACT

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BLACK PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILDREN'S SCHOOLING DURING MIDDLE CHILDHOOD WITHIN THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

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The purpose of this qualitative study was to phenomenologically explore Black parents' perceptions of involvement in their children's schooling within middle childhood in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Billingsley's Black family model was used to guide this study. The two research questions were (1) How do Black parents with children in middle childhood in the U.S. Virgin Islands perceive involvement in their children's schooling? and, (2) What ways have the experience of Hurricane Irma and/or Hurricane Maria influenced involvement in children's schooling among parents of children in middle childhood within the U.S. Virgin Islands?

Ten Black parents were interviewed using a semi-structured meeting guide. Interviews were audiotaped, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed to determine themes. For the first research question, the data yielded one major theme: parents take an active role in their children's schooling. This theme had three sub-themes: helping with homework, attending school events, and volunteering at the school. For the second research question, the data yielded three major themes: parent involvement was focused on their children's academic learning, their child's social needs, and their child's family's basic needs. The results of the study were compared to existing literature and conclusions were drawn.

Study strengths and limitations and recommendations for future research and for policy and practice are also presented.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Parent involvement in children's education is known to positively improve student outcomes (Epstein, 1995; Hornby, 2011; Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013). There is increasing evidence of the continuous benefits and worth of parent involvement in their children's education during middle childhood in the mainland United States (Sheldon, 2007; Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013). Academic success and positive classroom behavior can increase with parental involvement (Sheldon, 2007; Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013). On the contrary, lack of parent involvement in their children's education has been linked to school failure, negative behaviors in the classroom, and school-drop out (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2014; Hornby, 2011). Fantuzzo, McWayne, Perry, and Childs (2004) and Fantuzzo, Perry, and Childs (2006) found that students failing to thrive academically were less likely to graduate from high school. Parent involvement during middle childhood may help to prevent these problems and create a more positive and productive educational journey while ultimately achieving success in school and life (Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013). Parent involvement in children's education may also help to reduce school dropout and increase academic skills (Epstein, 1995; Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013). A priority of parent involvement is to ensure that future generations of children are given the support they need in order to be successful in school and in life.

According to the latest estimated data from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook, the territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands, which include St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. John, and Water Island has an estimated population count of 106, 235 in 2010 (CIA, 2016). According to the CIA, estimated data on the ethnic breakdown of this population consists of 76% Black, 15.6 White, 1.4% Asian, 4.9% other, 2.1% mixed, and 17.4% self-identify as Latino (CIA, 2016).

For families living in this geographic region, research on parent involvement in their children's education appears to be lacking. For Caribbean nations, particularly in Jamaica, research on parent involvement has mainly focused on educational personnel's interactions with parents as well as observations of school and classroom procedures in order to better facilitate a bi-directional relationship (Kinkead-Clark, 2014; 2015; 2017). Organizations such as the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands (CFVI) have created the Virgin Islands (V.I.) Kids Count data on families and found that the act of engaging families in the education of their children is a top priority for the foundation because it fosters a way of improving positive student outcomes (CFVI, 2015). During the 2015–2016 school year, third grade students in the public school scored below standard for reading, and students in grades 7 to 12 showed an increase in school dropouts from 4.3% to 4.7%. In the school year 2016–2017, children entering kindergarten were 6 months to over a year behind developmental age-expectations in language and comprehension skills (CFVI, 2019). Parent rooms are meeting places at the schools for parents to participate in parenting workshops and find resources to help them support their children. These parent rooms, sometimes called Parent Universities, have

been established at some schools in the U.S. Virgin Islands to lend support to parents and echo the research that parental involvement in children's education is a main factor in their academic and overall success in school, home, and in the community.

A rationale for conducting this study is to give more information to stakeholders within the U.S. territories and throughout the non-U.S. territories within the Caribbean about how to support parents in their involvement in their children's education. Research inclusive of parent involvement after a hurricane disaster is also missing from the literature. This research would also provide stakeholders with information to support parents and facilitate their recovery when it comes to involvement in their children's education.

Hurricanes in the Caribbean, particularly in Grenada, have been researched in terms of structural and economic recovery however, there is little to no research specifically on the involvement of parents in their children's education after a hurricane (Gomez, Atallah, Bidaisee, Patel, & Amuleru-Marshall, 2009). There are few Caribbean studies (e.g., Gomez et al., 2009) that have focused on the intersection of hurricane disasters and families. Research on hurricanes that occurred in the US, such as Hurricane Katrina in 2005, focused on a myriad of topics closely relating to parent involvement, including, short-term impact of a major disaster on children and building resilience in these children after a disaster (Madrid, Grant, Reilly, & Redlener, 2006) and stress and support in family relationships after Hurricane Katrina (Reid & Reczek, 2011). Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria impacted parents and children in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and their recovery efforts appear to be unknown as it relates to involvement in

children's education. During the first week of September 2017, two category five hurricanes impacted the U.S. Virgin Islands and left some public schools closed or in need of repair (CFVI, 2019; Federal Emergency Management Administration, 2017). Two months later, the public schools reopened and students continued their education. Considering that parent involvement can be instrumental in student success, research focused on family involvement activities during this type of crisis, which may be useful in helping to support parents during their children's schooling.

Statement of the Problem

According to Clark, Durbin, Hicks, Iacono, and McGue (2017), the time of middle childhood is a period of specific development, which includes changes specifically related to cognitive, behavioral, and social-emotional development. During middle childhood, children may face academic challenges (Hill & Tyson, 2009), and their success is not automatic (Clark et al., 2017). This stage of life may be especially critical to children's educational development; therefore, support from parents may be crucial to their educational outcomes (Clark et al., 2017; Hill & Tyson, 2009). Some students in elementary schools in the U.S. Virgin Islands have not done well in the areas of math and reading. According to the Virgin Islands Territorial Assessment of Learning (VITAL) 2013–2014 Report Card, about 43% of public school third graders tested below proficiency levels for reading (CFVI, 2019). During the 2015–2016 school year, 85% of all public school students were not reading at grade level. According to the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands (CFVI, 2019), the lack of involvement among parents

and families in the U.S. Virgin Islands may be one of the indicators in the decreasing number of elementary students reading below grade level.

Research on parents' perceptions is lacking in its inclusion of Caribbean families, particularly families in the U.S. territory of the Virgin Islands, especially after a catastrophic natural disaster such as a hurricane. The research in the Caribbean has focused on parenting following a disaster (Gomez et al., 2009), socio-economic (Hackbarth, Pavkov, Wetchler, & Flannery, 2012; Hafstad, Haavind, & Jensen, 2011), structural community disaster in northeastern Caribbean (Smith & Rhiney, 2016), and familial stress recovery issues (Felix, Kaniasty, You, & Canino, 2016; Lai, Beaulieu, Ogokeh, Self-Brown, & Kelley, 2015). Problems that may occur in relation to parent involvement in their children's education after a hurricane have not been examined fully in the research. Research on parent-child relationship quality is specific to exposure to hurricane disasters (Felix et al., 2016). According to Felix et al. (2016), lack of parent involvement in their children's education may lead to hindering their children's academic performance.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of studying families in the U.S. Virgin Islands is to close the gap in existing research on parent involvement in children's education within the U.S. Virgin Islands. This research allowed parents an opportunity to voice their experiences and inform educators, school districts, and policymakers about how to better serve them as they navigate their children's educational journey during middle childhood as well as after a hurricane disaster. Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria impacted the U.S. Virgin

Islands, particularly children's schooling due to the devastation of these hurricanes' impact on the educational infrastructure. Parents are the first teachers of their children and their primary socializing agents; therefore this knowledge regarding parent involvement and their involvement during a crisis may better equip stakeholders with the tools necessary to empower parents.

Theoretical Perspective

Parent involvement in their children's education will be explained through the lens of Billingsley's model on the Black family. Billingsley (1974) gave a framework of examining the major influences of children's development within the Black family, which impacts the way they grow and learn. Billingsley's model on the Black family includes four levels, which are part of the social reality in which all individuals function. These include the individual, the family, the community and the larger society. Billingsley informs that the Black family, the Black community, and the wider community can help support Black child development. The wider community includes eight systems: economic system, educational system, health system, communications system, religious system, legal system, neighborhood and housing system, and the recreational system. According to Billingsley (1974), "Each of these systems and their various components must be viewed in dynamic interrelationship with each other" (p. 73). This model of the Black family views the Black child on the first level, the Black family on the second level, and the Black community on the third level with the child existing not in isolation, rather as part of the life of the family.

For this research, the Black family and the educational system within Billingsley's model were used to help explain the topic of parent involvement during middle childhood within the Black family, particularly in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The occurrences of Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria were explored to learn about their relationship to parents' involvement in their children's education.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to explore parents' perceptions of involvement in their children's schooling. The first research question was used to first define parent involvement by exploring parents' perceptions of their own involvement in their children's schooling while the second research question was used to find out what that involvement looked like after a natural disaster:

1. How do Black parents with children in middle childhood in the U.S. Virgin Islands perceive involvement in their children's schooling?
2. What ways have the experience of Hurricane Irma and/or Hurricane Maria influenced involvement in children's schooling among parents of children in middle childhood within the U.S. Virgin Islands?

Definition of Terms

The terms used in this study are defined as follows:

1. Hurricane Irma: a category five hurricane that occurred September 5, 2017 (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], 2017).
2. Hurricane Maria: a category five hurricane that occurred September 12, 2017 (FEMA, 2017).
3. Middle childhood: time when children are ages 7–12 years and usually in grades 2–7 within the U.S. grading system (Blume & Rosario-Perez, 2016; Clark et al., 2017).
4. Parent: an individual who is either a biological parent, adoptive parent, or an individual who has primary care of a child. The individual is to be native born of the U.S. Virgin Islands.
5. Parent involvement: parent involvement as an active participation among parents with their children's school as well as their participation at home and in the community with their children (Epstein, 1995).
6. Perceptions: a way of attaining awareness or understanding or interpreting something (Perception, n.d.).
7. Public education: the federally based school system from Pre-K to High School.
8. U.S. Territory of the Virgin Islands: islands in the Caribbean that are territories of the United States; these islands are St. Thomas, St. Croix, St. John, and Water Island (CIA, 2016).

Assumptions

This study was based on the following assumptions:

1. Participants were willing to share and be honest about their perceptions of parent involvement in their children's education at home, at school, and in the community.
2. Participants had a common shared experience about hurricanes.

Delimitations

Delimitations of this study:

1. This study occurred on only one island in the U.S. Virgin Islands.
2. This study included Black parents of children within middle childhood who attend one public school between the grades of 2–7.

Role of the Researcher

A reason for exploring parent involvement among parents living in the U.S. Virgin Islands is that I believe that the importance of parents having an invested role in the development of their children will support their children's well-being. Another reason is that I was born and raised in the U.S. Virgin Islands. I am a single mother of three young adult children, a certified family life educator, a former certified elementary teacher in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and a doctoral candidate. These experiences have influenced my interest in parent involvement as it relates specifically to parents in the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Caribbean. My experience is relevant to the study of parental involvement because I have worked with parents and family members by teaching their children and providing quarterly parent information nights to inform parents of how to support their children's learning at home and in school.

Summary

Children during middle childhood within the U.S. Virgin Islands are facing struggles in reading and math (CFVI, 2019). Parents of these children are faced with challenges when it comes to involvement in their children's schooling in the U.S. Virgin Islands during middle childhood. This qualitative study was to explore Black parents' perceptions of their involvement in the schooling of their children during middle childhood and who are in grades 2–7 within the U.S. Virgin Islands; along with investigation of their involvement after two category five hurricanes affected the islands. The importance of parental involvement as an indicator of positive student outcomes, especially during middle childhood (Clark et al., 2017) deems it necessary to explore how these parents define their involvement and how they are involved after a hurricane. Billingsley's model was used as a lens to understand this research as it relates to Black families in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Epstein (1985) explored the future of research on parent involvement as a time of making decisions, while thinking about the background parenting schemas, all of which present potential change in the structure of families as well as the future of technology in the process of parent involvement. The research on the perceptions of U.S. Virgin Islands parents, in general, is left out of the research. For this reason, the purpose of this research is to obtain U.S. Virgin Islands parents' perceptions of involvement in their children's schooling, specifically during middle childhood and particularly after a hurricane. This study will focus on understanding this dimension of family life. Billingsley's theoretical concepts of the family and educational system will be used to help learn about parent involvement during middle childhood after a hurricane. First, the family and educational system will be discussed—parent involvement in their children's education in neighboring Caribbean island nations (Billingsley, 1974). Next, the occurrence of natural disasters will be discussed in relation to parent involvement.

The Family and Educational System:

Caribbean Parents' Involvement in Their Children's Education

According to Billingsley (1974), Black children are influenced by several factors. Factors that can influence these children are their families and the wider community. Lopez, Caspe, and McWilliams (2016) agreed that the family is a primary socializing agent within the lives of children. Parent-child interactions within the educational system of

public schools, as well as at home and the peer group influence the developing individual. These interactions influence the development of children, specifically during middle childhood when children are becoming more autonomous, independent, and trustworthy (Berk, 1989). Review of the literature yielded two themes: parents' value of education and positive parenting.

Parents' Value of Education

One of the themes found in the literature on parent involvement is parents' value of education. Parents and family members who value education transfer that to their children and vice versa, which is described as parental influence occurring directly and indirectly (Burke, Kuczynski, & Perren, 2017). This transfer must occur within proximity, which is defined as the "energy between the developing human being and the persons, objects, and symbols in the immediate environment" (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000, p. 118). An example of this transfer is when parents are aware of their own educational beliefs and benefits to their children by valuing education with direct support helping with homework, attending a PTA meeting, or volunteering on a school field trip. Burke et al. (2017) conducted a study with 30 Jamaican mothers (average age of 40 years) about their relationships with their children. The mothers had an average of 2.5 children, and their ages ranged from 8 to 12 years old. Burke et al. reported that the parents valued education. Mothers were found to take their children's educational success seriously by showing closeness between themselves and their children and the context of these interactions. Mothers described experiencing emotions of pride, empathy, and shared joy when their children succeeded in the competitive context of the Jamaican

education system. According to Burke et al., competitive context is defined in terms of parents' perceptions of their children's educational journey as where achievement in school is seen as success in life.

Kinhead-Clark (2014) conducted a qualitative case study with an ethnographic perspective in the Caribbean island nation of Jamaica. The kindergarten participants included one female and two male students along with their parents/guardians to determine an understanding of the roles of family and culture when it comes to involvement in literacy development as a social practice. Each student participant was accompanied by two parents for a total of six parents/guardians included in this study. The participants' cultural background was listed as Jamaican, Honduran, and Cuban, respectively. One of the participants' native languages was Spanish while the remaining two participants listed their native language as English. Two of the participants were from lower income backgrounds with one being from upper-middle income. The results of this study found that parent involvement in literacy development is primarily done at home with specific practices, and parents revealed that they were aware of their role in framing their child's academic success. These practices included reading to their child at home. This study was a result of a larger study and used a myriad of ethnographic methods to gather data on parents, which found that parents value education.

Cook and Jennings (2016) was another study that had a focus on the parents' value of education. Their study was about learning from parents and their children who were in 10th grade. Although this study focused on adolescents, inclusion of this study was worthwhile because of the lack of research about Caribbean parents' involvement in

their children's education. Cook and Jennings used Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, specifically the microsystem. A goal of the study was to learn whether there were differences in beliefs among parents about their value of education, which is defined as important and seen as something positive. The implication that education results in good things was specifically based on factors of education level, income level, employment status, and the school type attended by the children. A total of 238 parents and 368 students were part of this study. Average age of the students in this study was 16 years. The results of this study found that age and employment status were not a factor in parents' value of education. Results also revealed parents have a need to see their children do better than they did and to achieve a successful career. The limitation of this study is that there was no instrument to measure the intrinsic value of education.

Positive Parenting

Positive parenting practices were another theme in the research when it comes to parent involvement in children's public school education among Caribbean families (Abdirahman, Bah, Sheathe, & Jacobsen, 2012). Positive parenting comes in many forms. For the purpose of the literature, positive parenting practices can influence children's literacy, which may positively impact children's learning in school. Overall success in school and life is not limited to positive parent involvement in school; rather, positive parenting at home is also essential. Positive parenting practices seem to be a recurring theme in the literature.

Griffith and Grolnick (2014) conducted a survey with ($N = 88$) sixth grade students who had an approximate mean age of 11.82 years and attended a secondary

school in the Caribbean island nation of Barbados. They investigated students' perceptions about parental structure, parental autonomy support, and parental control in relation to perceived child control, child depression, child competence, child academic self-regulation, and child academic engagement. Findings revealed that parental control was negatively linked to child academic engagement. In contrast, higher levels of parental structure were related to higher levels of child academic engagement, child competence, and child control. Participants reported moderate levels of parental structure levels of autonomy support reported high levels of engagement and autonomy support as being something that they perceived that their parents demonstrated. In other words, more than half of the participants believed that their parents' rules and control of them were reasonable, which is explained as tolerable or manageable. Besides this research looking at students, there is research looking at parents, which reveals the value they place on the schooling of their children.

Abdirahman et al. (2012) conducted a study and found positive parenting through parents' support of their children's peer victimization in Caribbean countries like the Cayman Islands, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago. Abdirahman et al. used information from the 2007 Global School-based Student Health Survey (GSHS) that involved 6,780 students in middle school ages 13 to 15 years old from low income and middle-income middle schools on these four islands. Although this study focused on middle school students, it was worthwhile to include it because of the lack of research about Caribbean parents' involvement in their children's education. A finding of this study was that students who thought their parents understood and

monitored their activities, such as after-school clubs and peer group gatherings, reported less issues with bullying.

Parental involvement can play an important role in many factors of children's lives (Baker, Wise, Kelley, & Skiba, 2016). The growth of children, both academically and developmentally, happens within the wider system of education, of which the family is impacted, particularly with the event of a natural disaster. Natural disasters in relation to parent involvement are further discussed.

The Family and Educational System:

Natural Disasters in Relation to Parent Involvement

The role of family systems includes the role of caregiving in the adjustment of post-adversity following a natural disaster; particularly the education of the child, and the role of caregivers in children's lives can be instrumental, especially for Black families (Billingsley, 1974; Gil-Rivas & Kilmer, 2013). A missing piece of the literature involves investigation of families within the Caribbean, particularly in the U.S. Virgin Islands and how they handle involvement in their children's education. I explored the literature about parent involvement in children's schooling after a natural disaster and the impact on their involvement among families in the US and in the Caribbean. More research has been conducted in the US, specifically about Hurricane Katrina, which impacted families in New Orleans (e.g., Goldman et al., 2014). Natural disasters have adversely impacted children and families in the US and the Caribbean. Families in the US impacted by Hurricane Katrina have reported symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder, which is

similar to reports of Caribbean families following a natural disaster (Felix, You, Vernberg, & Canino, 2013; Hackbarth et al., 2012).

Felix et al. (2013) explored the aftermath of a natural disaster on the Caribbean island of Puerto Rico, which is a territory of the US. This study used a sample of children ages 4–17 years old along with their parents with a total of 1,886 parent–child dyads successfully interviewed. This study was done in two waves of interviews. The overall goal of this study was to explore the characteristics of the family environment, health, and hurricane exposure. Felix et al. (2013) found that hurricane exposure was negatively related to parents’ relationship quality for older children.

Gomez et al. (2009) conducted observations, household surveys, in-depth interviews, and focus groups with 75 households on the Caribbean island nation of Grenada. The overall goal of this study was to assess the obstacles still remaining post Hurricane Ivan, which hit the island in 2004. This study found that 85% of the residents lived in a single-family home type dwelling, which was occupied by multiple families. This result revealed that these multiple families dwelled in close proximity to each other therefore providing a support system amidst the ongoing recovery efforts, all of which could influence the parent-child relationship with reported lack of resources.

Hackbarth et al. (2012) surveyed 645 participants, of which a total of 452 participants responded for this study. This study was conducted around Mississippi and New Orleans in order to explore the role of the family resiliency in the overall coping process after a natural disaster. Results showed a statistically significant negative correlation between resource loss and family coping. Researchers observed the

relationship between family resiliency in terms of overall family coping and other variables such as hope, family hardiness, spirituality/religiosity, loss of resources, and other demographic characteristics that may influence an individuals' perceptions of their families' ability to effectively cope after surviving Hurricane Katrina.

Summary

This review of the literature involved investigation of Caribbean parents' involvement in their children's education natural disasters in relation to parent involvement. This review helps to learn about existing research on families' engagement in their children's education among Caribbean families and about the influence of natural disasters. A goal of this study is to fill the gaps in the current research on family engagement in children's education, especially when it comes to the U.S. Virgin Islands. The perceptions of parents about their involvement in their children's schooling and their role as primary caretakers during and after a natural disaster can influence the way in which children learn and grow.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

A primary goal of this study was to learn how Black parents of children ages 7 to 12 years old in grades 2 to 7 perceive involvement in their children's schooling and how a natural disaster may impact this involvement as stated in Chapter I. This study allowed these 10 Black parents to share their perceptions of their lived experiences. Data were collected using semi-structured in-person interviews, audiotaped, transcribed, and analyzed for themes. I documented cultural language differences among the U.S. Virgin Islanders, who have variations in dialect and the meaning of word phrases. Following is discussion of qualitative research, protection of participants, study participants, data collection procedures and analyses, and summary.

Qualitative Research

According to Marshall and Rossman (2016), qualitative research design is explained as the collection of data in various forms such as interviews and surveys in order to explore the lived experiences of participants relevant to the topic being studied. The meaning of qualitative research involves learning about the lived experiences of individuals on a specific subject with questions that elicit responses pertaining to a specific topic. The purpose of this research design is to elicit rich, thick descriptions of parents' perceptions of involvement in their child's schooling. Learning about the perceptions of parents as it relates to their involvement and how it is defined for parents

in order to study the social phenomena of parent involvement among children during middle childhood. Qualitative research collects stories of participants, which Marshall and Rossman (2016) explain gives qualitative research its roots of inquiry. This inquiry into the perceptions of parents of public school students in the U.S. Virgin Islands was qualitatively designed to find out how parents define parent involvement.

Phenomenology

Marshall and Rossman (2016) defined phenomenology as seeking to “explore, describe, and analyze the meaning of lived experiences” (p. 17). This research was conducted using a phenomenology approach. According to Marshall and Rossman (2016), phenomenology is a method used in qualitative research in which experienced events by individuals are explored. Interviews, observations, focus groups, and diary examinations are examples of ways to collect data. This exploration elicits rich, thick descriptions of a specific topic or issue based on participants' lived experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Marshall and Rossman (2016) explained the focus of phenomenology as exploring their lived experiences of participants', specifically their perceptions on a specific issue. The specific focus of this research was to share participants' stories of their experiences when it comes to involvement in their children's public schooling, specifically how they define their involvement. Phenomenology is relevant to this research because of the importance of finding out how parents perceive their involvement based on their lived experiences as parents of public school students in elementary and/or middle school, which is appropriate for this research.

Bracketing

Bracketing is a way for researchers to help separate themselves from their research so they can enhance the authenticity of their data (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). This can be done by acknowledging the researcher as an instrument as it relates to how the researcher may be connected to the research, specifically any similarities and commonalities with the participants' thus enabling a richer engagement with the data (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Anneli, Kiikkala, and Astedt-Kurki (2015) defined bracketing as inclusive the awareness of the researchers' personal experiences, perspectives, and biases which must be set-aside in order for participants' lived experiences to be presented accurately. These actions can occur during the entire research process. When using qualitative methods, the researchers must be aware of their personal biases and opinions that might impact the research process. A literature review on bracketing by Tufford and Newman (2010) indicated examples of bracketing such as writing memos, interviewing outside sources, and reflective journaling. In this study, I used reflective journaling.

Triangulation

Triangulation is defined as a multi-modal way of ensuring that the research is properly collected, analyzed, and/or interpreted (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Marshall and Rossman reported that triangulation is a strategic choice to give the study the ability to be duplicated elsewhere. For these reasons, triangulation is a strategy, which gives the researcher the ability to present data that is trustworthy (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). For this research, analyst triangulation was used. Analyst triangulation is defined as the use of

two individuals to review the data, which provides multiple ways of seeing the data (Barusch, Gringeri, & George, 2011). In this study, a research assistant, my research advisor, and I analyzed the data along with member checking.

Researcher's Perspective

Pezalla, Pettigrew, and Miller-Day (2012) defined the researcher as an instrument who engages in the research process. Part of this qualitative design included acknowledgement of the researcher as an instrument in the research, which involves the researcher's emotions, passions, and biases (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I am from the U.S. Virgin Islands where this research took place. I am professionally and personally interested in adding to a limited body of literature and knowledge on parent involvement among Black parents in the U.S. Virgin Islands. This research is relevant to my life in terms of being a parent of public school students as well as coming from a paternal family of teachers, principals, and school superintendents. As an instrument of the research, I conducted bracketing as a process of self-discovery. Thoughts, emotions, and behaviors were documented in a journal throughout my research process. Reflective journaling is defined as the process of taking notes about biases and other observations of participants' and their responses (Tufford & Newman, 2010).

Protection of Human Rights/Institutional Review Board

Before conducting this study, I submitted an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application to Texas Woman's University IRB for the purpose of safeguarding the research so it is conducted ethically, without harm to the study participants', and with the consent of each participant (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I completed required human

subjects training. For the purpose of this research, an application was submitted at the expedited review level as this research involved minimal risks and did not have a vulnerable population.

Participants

The participants' were 10 Black parents of at least one child who lived with them during the entire school year prior to the interview. These parents were 18 years old and older and had children who were ages 7 to 12 years and were in grades 2 through 7 in a public elementary and middle school in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Also, their children were to have lived with them for the entire school year, and they were to have lived with their children in the U.S. Virgin Islands during and after Hurricane Irma or Hurricane Maria that occurred in September 2017. Participants' were asked to discuss only one child. Both convenience sampling and snowball sampling were used to recruit participants'.

Convenience sampling is defined as the recruitment of individuals who are easily accessible (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Snowballing sampling is a process in which participants' in the study identify other people who can be a part of the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Procedure

Recruitment Procedure

Ten Black parents were recruited through recruitment flyers (see Appendix A) from the U.S. Virgin Islands. An approval letter (see Appendix B) was obtained from the principal to distribute flyers during the beginning of the school year at the parent orientation meetings, at Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings, and during school drop off and pick up of students. The recruitment flyer (see Appendix A) was used; it included a description of the study, participant criteria, and my contact information. For recruitment at the school, I and/or a parent distributed these flyers. I hand delivered flyers to family and friends. Two weeks after the initial recruitment, flyers were distributed to my family and friends; I delivered another set of recruitment flyers (see Appendix A). Then a week later after the follow-up, another recruitment flyer (see Appendix A) was distributed to my family and friends. During the recruitment process, snowballing was primarily used.

Interested persons contacted me via telephone or text. When contacted via text, I communicated using the text communications script (see Appendix C) with them via text asking for an appropriate time to discuss the research study criteria. I communicated with interested persons via telephone using a telephone script (see Appendix D) to verify whether they met study criteria. Throughout the telephone calls, I responded to interested persons' questions (see Appendix D). For persons who were still interested in participating in the study, we selected a meeting day, time, and location. At least two days before the meeting, participants' received a meeting reminder via telephone or text

message using the reminder script (see Appendix E) with the scheduled time, date, and place of the interview. Meetings occurred in a room with closed doors at the local public school and one of the local churches during the beginning of Spring Semester 2020.

Data Collection Procedures

For the meeting with participants', a meeting guide was used (see Appendix H) and I brought an audio recorder, pens, pencils, paper, consent forms (see Appendix F) and family resource documents (see Appendix I) that include family involvement resources and a hurricane preparation and relief guide.

At the beginning of the meeting, I described the study again giving the participants' the consent forms (see Appendix F) to read and I provided them with family resource documents (see Appendix I) that may be useful for them to gain information. They were informed that participation was voluntary and that they could stop at any time. Throughout the entire meeting, I responded to participants' questions about the study. Persons who were still interested in participating in the study were asked to sign two copies of the consent form (see Appendix F) and I gave them one copy of their signed consent forms. This took approximately 10–15 minutes.

Participants' were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix G), which took approximately 10 minutes. During this time, code names were assigned to participants' and their child whom they selected to focus on for the study.

Participants' were asked to participate in a semi-structured interview based on the meeting guide (see Appendix H), which took approximately 25–30 minutes. Also, they were asked if their interview could be audiotaped and all participants' agreed to have

their interviews audiotaped. In addition, I took notes about the cultural language and methodological concerns.

After the interview, participants' were asked to participate in member checking (see Appendix J). It took approximately 10 minutes to describe member checking and answer participants' questions about member checking. After each meeting, I did reflective journaling.

The total time of the meetings ranged from approximately one to two hours. Participants' (with the use of code names) were entered into a drawing to receive a \$25 VISA gift card. The procedure of the drawing was done by entering code names into a bowl. One name was picked by the researcher from a bowl upon completion of all the interviews. The gift card was sent to the participant via U.S. mail.

Data Collection Tools

Participants' completed a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix G) and a semi-structured interview with the meeting guide (see Appendix H), which were developed by me. The demographic questionnaire contained items of age, gender, racial or ethnic identification, marital status, education level, and employment status. The interview questions (see Table 1) were developed based upon scholarly literature focused on parent involvement within the Caribbean (Kinkead-Clark, 2017) and on natural disasters focused in the Caribbean and the US (Felix et al., 2013; Gil-Rivas & Kilmer, 2013). In addition, the questions were constructed based on my experience as a certified elementary teacher with the public school in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The data collection tools gave me the ability to represent the phenomenon of parent involvement through the

lived experiences of parents as it related to the involvement in their children's schooling as well as their involvement in their children's schooling after a natural disaster.

Table 1

Interview Questions

Research Question	Interview Question
1. How do parents with children in middle childhood in the U.S. Virgin Islands perceive involvement in? their children's schooling?	<p>1. When you hear the words 'parental involvement,' what comes to your mind? --Would you tell me more about that?</p> <p>2. What kind of school activities do you do with (child's code name)'s at home? --Would you tell me more about that?</p> <p>3. What kind of school activities do you do with (child's code name) at school? --Would you tell me more about that?</p> <p>4. What kind of school activities do you do with (child's code name) in the community, such as the public library or community center? --Would you tell me more about that?</p> <p>5. What would you change about doing school activities with (child's code name)? --Would you tell me more about that?</p> <p>6. Is there any other information you would like to share about your activities with (child's name)'s schooling? --Would you tell me more about that?</p>

Research Question

2. What ways have Hurricane Irma and/or Hurricane Maria influenced involvement in children's schooling among parents of children in middle childhood within the U.S. Virgin Islands?

Interview Question

1. So, you said you were there for Hurricane(s) (Name of hurricane[s]). How did the hurricane(s) affect you doing school activities with (child's code name) at the school? --Would you tell me more about that?
 2. How did the hurricane(s) affect (child's code name)'s school learning? --Would you tell me more about that?
 3. What school activities did you do at home with (child's name) while the public school was closed after Hurricane Irma and/or Hurricane Maria? --Would you tell me more about that?
 4. How were your activities with (child's name)'s schooling after Hurricane Irma and/or Hurricane Maria similar to your activities with (child's name)'s schooling before Hurricane Irma and/or Hurricane Maria? --Would you tell me more about that?
 5. How were your activities with (child's name)'s schooling after Hurricane Irma and/or Hurricane Maria different from your activities with (child's name)'s schooling before Hurricane Irma and/or Hurricane Maria? --Would you tell me more about that?
 6. Is there any other information you would like to share about your activities with (child's name)'s schooling after Hurricane Irma and/or Hurricane Maria? --Would you tell me more about that?
-

Data Analyses

Qualitative analysis of data covered the analysis of similarities and differences, coding and categorizing, and constant comparison (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Initially, I listened to the audio recordings in its entirety, and then the second time I listened to the audio recordings I transcribed the interviews. The transcribed data were organized according to the two research questions. For first cycle coding, for each interview data, I engaged in descriptive coding which involved taking chunks of answers and giving them meaning in one word or phrase (Saldaña, 2013). This was done by thoroughly reading the information, identifying similar words and phrases, and summarizing these commonalities. Coding is an essential part of qualitative research (Saldaña, 2013). The transition to second cycle coding was pattern coding that involves looking for themes or patterns within the first cycle of coding (Saldaña, 2013). All interviews were organized collectively. Pattern coding is about finding relationships, rules, and explanations in the data (Saldaña, 2013). This was done to make sense of the data and create organization of the data. Referencing the research questions identified themes.

I used analyst triangulation as a strategy to help achieve trustworthiness of data. Along with my analyzing the data, a research assistant and participants' reviewed the data. The research assistant is a doctoral student with knowledge and skills for analyzing qualitative data. The research assistant was given the transcribed data to conduct descriptive coding and pattern coding. After the research assistant and I analyzed the data separately, we then met regarding our respective results. Similarities and differences were

discussed. For differences, we provided evidence to support our respective results and continued discussion until a consensus was reached. A draft of the results was determined.

My process for reviewing the data included guidance from my research advisor. Our meetings provided a structure of finding themes and allowing the data to speak for itself. Member checking was also employed to ensure that the participants' answers are what the participants' intended. Interview transcript and draft of study results were sent to seven participants' who indicated they wanted to participate in member checking. They were asked to write on the transcript any inaccuracies of their responses and comments for my review. In addition, they were asked to review and provide feedback about the draft results. Transcripts and draft results were sent via email. Participants' were given two weeks to return their transcripts and the draft results via email. A total number of three participants' returned feedback about their transcripts and draft results. Both participants' agreed with the transcription of their respective interviews and of the draft of the study results.

My research advisor and I decided final themes. The findings were documented and presented in the final chapters of this research on Black parents perceptions of involvement in their children's schooling.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore Black parent perceptions of involvement in their children's public schooling within the U.S. Virgin Islands and to explore the influence of hurricanes on their parent involvement. A phenomenological approach was used to study data from at least 10 Black parents with children 7 to 12 years old who are in middle childhood and are in second through seventh grade. Convenience and snowball sampling methods were used to recruit participants'. Participants' completed a demographic survey and participated in face-to-face interviews. Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed, and data was analyzed for themes. Analyst triangulation was used to enhance trustworthiness. Throughout the research process, I bracketed personal experiences as a means of helping to minimize personal biases that could influence the research process.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of the data collected from 10 Black parents (biological parents, grandparents, and legal guardians) of children in middle childhood who were in grades 2 to 7 at a public school in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to phenomenologically explore these parents' perceptions of involvement in their children's schooling and to learn about this involvement after Hurricanes Irma and/or Hurricane Maria. Black parents' involvement in their children's schooling was explored via the lens of Billingsley's model on the Black family. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed, and transcripts were analyzed to discover themes and subthemes.

Description of the Participants

The demographic questionnaire was created by the researcher using current literature (Kinkead-Clark, 2014; 2015; 2017). Examples of the demographic questionnaire fields of inquiry were race/ethnicity, age, marital status, education, employment, time frame living with focal child, relationship to focal child, and age of focal child and storm presence.

Table 2 displays the demographic data of the sample. Table 3 displays the description of the participants'. The 10 participants' ranged in age from 36 years to 59 years ($M = 46.1$, $SD = 8.58$); 60% ($n = 6$) were women, 40% ($n = 4$) were men. The marital status of the participants' was 50% ($n = 5$) married; 30% ($n = 3$) single, never

married; 10% ($n = 1$) separated; and 10% ($n = 1$) single, not living with a partner. All participants identified as Black/African American. Nine (90%) of the participants' were employed full-time, and one (10%) retired. The ages of children ranged from 7 years to 12 years ($M = 9.8$, $SD = 1.87$). There were seven (70%) biological parents, one (10%) legal guardian, and two (20%) grandparents. All of the parents and the focal children were on St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands during and after both Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Black Parents' Demographic Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	<i>N</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Parents' Ages		10		100	46.1	8.58	36-59
Marital Status		10					
	Single, not living with partner		3	30%			
	Single, living with a partner						
	Single, never married		1	10%			
	Married						
	Divorced		1	10%			
	Separated						
			5	50%			
			0	0%			
			1	10%			
Gender		10					
	Female		6	60%			
	Male		4	40%			

Education	10		
No H.S. diploma	0	0%	
H.S. diploma	4	40%	
Technical school	0	10%	
Associate's Degree	1	10%	
Some college, but no degree			
Associate Degree	4	40%	
Master's degree or higher			
	1	10%	
	1	1%	
Employment	10		
Fulltime	9	90%	
Part-time	0	0%	
Retired	1	10%	
Relationship to focal child	10		
Biological parent	7	70%	
Foster parent	0	0%	
Adoptive parent	0	0%	
Legal guardian	1	10%	
Relative primarily cares for child	0	0%	
Grandparent			
Sibling of child			
Aunt of child	2	20%	
Uncle of child	0	0%	

			0	0%			
			0	0%			
Timeframe Living with		10					
Focal child	Less than half the school year		0	0%			
	Half the school year		0	0%			
	Entire school year		10	10%			
Focal child's age		10			9.8	1.87	7-12

Table 3

Description of each participant

Participant	Relation to focal child	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Education	Employment
1	Grandparent	56	Male	Single, not living with a partner	Some college	Full time
2	Biological	59	Male	Married	High school diploma	Full time
3	Grandparent	57	Female	Single, never married	High school diploma	Retired
4	Biological	52	Male	Married	High school diploma	Full time

5	Biological	37	Female	Married, living separately	Associate's degree	Full time
6	Biological	39	Female	Single, not living with partner	Some college/No college degree	Full time
7	Biological	45	Female	Single, not living with partner	Some college/No college degree	Full time
8	Legal Guardian	42	Male	Married	High school diploma	Full time
9	Biological	38	Female	Single, not living with partner	Some college/No college degree	Full time
10	Biological	36	Female	Married	Master's degree	Full time

Description of Themes

Billingsley (1974) explained that the Black child is at the center surrounded by the Black family and the Black community. The wider society surrounds them all and includes eight systems; economic, educational, health, religious, communication, legal, housing, and recreational. The educational system, of which this research is focused, particularly public education, was guided by two research questions. The first research question was created in order to find out what parents perceived as parent involvement and what it looks like for them. The second research question was asked in order to explore parents' perceptions of involvement after a natural disaster, specifically after the two hurricanes that happened in September 2017. After each question, in Table 4, thematic results are identified and discussed in order to answer both research questions.

1. How do Black parents with children in middle childhood in the U.S.

Virgin Islands perceive involvement in their children's schooling? This question was constructed to learn of parents' perceptions of involvement in their children's schooling and to specifically explore what parent involvement looked like for these parents. The data yielded one major theme: parents take an active role in their children's schooling. This theme had three sub-themes: helping with homework, attending school events, and volunteering at the school.

2. What ways has the experience of Hurricane Irma and/or Hurricane Maria influenced involvement in children's schooling among parents of children in middle childhood within the U.S. Virgin Islands? The main goal of this question was to learn how parent involvement in their children's schooling was influenced

by Hurricane's Irma and/or Hurricane Maria. According to Billingsley, the educational system is included in the wider society, which is inclusive of all the other systems (Billingsley, 1974). This data yielded three major themes: parent involvement was focused on their child's academic needs, parent involvement was focused on their child's social needs, and parent involvement was focused on their family's basic needs.

Table 4

Themes

Research Question	Themes	Sub-Themes
1. How do Black parents with children in middle childhood in the U.S. Virgin Islands perceive involvement in their children's schooling?	Parents' take active role in their children's schooling	Helping with Homework Attending School Events Volunteering at the School
2. What ways has the experience of Hurricane Irma and/or Hurricane Maria influenced involvement in children's schooling among parents of children in middle childhood within the U.S. Virgin Islands?	Parent involvement was focused on their child's academic needs Parent involvement was focused on their child's social needs Parent involvement was focused on their family's basic needs	

Parents' Perceptions of Involvement in Their Children's Schooling

The first research question was answered by one theme, which evolved from analyzing the data. This theme was that parents take an active role in their children's

schooling. Three sub-themes were also found. The data revealed that parents' perceptions of involvement in their child's schooling was about interacting with their child to support their education which was provided at home and/or being present at their child's school.

Parents Take an Active Role in their Children's Schooling

The data revealed that parents' perceived their children's schooling as very important by taking an active role in their children's schooling. Three sub-themes were found that included participants' who helped with their children's homework, attended their child's school events, and volunteered at their children's school.

Helping with Homework

Sixty percent ($n = 6$) of parents indicated that they helped with homework. Types of homework included math or reading homework. One parent indicated that even though she helps her grandchild with his homework, helping could be difficult because of the use of phones. Another parent indicated that her son knows when to pull out his homework without her having to ask him. Some parents in this study took an active role when it comes to helping with homework.

"I am helping her at home and she's doing well because of that" (Participant 6).

"So. Most times we go over homework together and then activities outside of school. I try to do stuff that involves school, yes" (Participant 9).

"Helping with homework, we do homework, we read, we do projects" (Participant 10).

"He knows to pull out his homework and take out his planner so I can go over his planner to make sure he has everything" (Participant 7).

“I help with homework and projects” (Participant 4).

“Help assist with homework his homework. Sometimes that’s a little difficult with them with these phone. Yea. The phone I think that these phones we want the kids to be technical you know in this day and age and I think that having access to these phones is kind of taking away from the kids you know learning ability you know cause they want it for more playing games instead of actually doing work so that’s where I feel like you know that needs to be limited, at home. Some of them have them at school you know” (Participant 3).

Attending School Events

Sixty percent ($n = 6$) of parents indicated that they attended events at the school. Examples included visiting the school to meet the teacher or attend a parent teacher association meeting.

“Full participation of anything that child is doing whether out of school or in school” (Participant 5).

Well actually she plays basketball she doing basketball for the first time and she’s doing good you know what I mean, so you know I try like I say whatever she wants to do she does so you know, I attend her games [school games] and I ain’t missing none” (Participant 8).

“Visiting the school, volunteering at the school and being aware of what your child is doing at school” (Participant 10).

“I have to go and check on her in the school to make sure her grades are staying up” (Participant 2).

“We do the PTA, meet the teacher stuff like that” (Participant 4).

“I think of myself coming to school often to check on my child speaking with the teacher about their behavior towards work towards their peers” (Participant 6).

Volunteering at School

Thirty percent ($n = 3$) of parents volunteered at their child’s school. Volunteering included going to their child’s school to read to their child’s class or attending field trips or providing resources to the school such as paper and pencils.

“Volunteering at school so going to the child’s class to maybe read, or going on field trips, providing resources to the school” (Participant 10).

“I can actually volunteer in the school or participate with any activities that the teacher may have for parents to participate in field trips or helping out in the classroom” (Participant 6).

“Whatever field trips I volunteer for I never have a problem volunteering you know if he’s going somewhere” (Participant 9).

Hurricanes’ Influence on Parental Involvement

Within Their Child’s Schooling

For the second research question, data yielded three themes: parent involvement was focused on their child’s academic needs, parent involvement was focused on their child’s social needs, and parent involvement was focused on family’s basic needs. The data revealed that after the storm(s), parents’ involvement was not only focused on their children’s schooling. A reason was that after the storm the school was destroyed. Parents also focused on their child’s social needs and their family’s basic needs. For the purpose

of this study, academic needs are defined as a focus on learning the basic subjects in school such as reading and math. A proportion of parents did focus on academics, but they also engaged in the aspects about learning about the island's environment and rebuilding, which were non-academic.

Parent Involvement was Focused on their Child's Academic Needs

The hurricanes of 2017 brought destruction as well as created an ongoing need for resources for students. The school was destroyed and a temporary school was built called modules, which were placed on the only existing space for sports and recreation—the ball field (Virgin Islands Department of Education, 2018). Parents indicated that limited resources were available at the school for students before and after the storms, which made it hard for parents and their children to continue learning and developing thus leading to some parents to teach their children at home. The data revealed that participants' found ways to continue schooling their children at home through homeschooling. The public school was on split sessions, which means that regular school hours were limited for students.

The regular stuff. Reading Lots and lots and lots of reading. She reads very well she comprehends very well, math on the other hand was a little issue due to the fact that they are learning this new math type deal which doesn't make sense to us because how do you change one plus one equals two? There are only a couple ways to write it one plus one equals two and not four, five, and six. But this new kind of math and multiplication and division to us is a longer way of doing it and once you know the basics you can do anything. Basic multiplication tables and

each child should be taught that from at home that they can do anything. In my line of work I do a lot of estimating and a lot of geometry and trigonometry shooting from the hip and if I had to sit down and think about it it has to come naturally it has to be ingrained in you that you can estimate something and be pretty close if not on point so this thing they teaching them is something that is a little different for us to comprehend and we strive to teach them the old way which we learned which is learn your multiplication table and that is a base for everything for everything I mean math don't lie it just doesn't lie if it doesn't add it that means that something is wrong somewhere (Participant 4).

“There wasn't much activity there to begin with other than getting them to school and because there wasn't no school that was something that we had to fill that void at home and there wasn't a home so they were in St. Thomas while we were here on St. John” (Participant 4).

“We had to do split sessions and all that and so some of the kids at school were getting back but mine own we would do split sessions with them and I would go home with them and I would try to educate them and keep them going you know” (Participant 8).

You know getting into read always you know pick up a book and read We had some books that were given to us from the government “And I can Read Book Club” that they would give out for the kids during the summer and so they would get some books and we would have them pick up at least one and read you know that was a task in itself but basically that's what was the same as the reading of

books getting them to pick up a book and read. Ah the school was damaged it was real hard and depressing moment for everybody children adults everyone in the community because everyone was basically trying to survive and provide for families so school activities was something that was difficult at the time you know there wasn't anything going on as far as education everything was on standstill schools were destroyed and so parents had to try to figure out you going to suck it up or put your child in a private school or ship your child off island you know but me as the grandmother, you know I didn't do much like I say my child she took the kids she went away with the kids for a while and then she came back into the school system (Participant 3).

So okay, because of the hurricanes they had to put the modulars or the modules to improvise as a school, which is the modules are clean and everything is nice the classroom are dressed up as best as the teachers can get them and so my thing is they just need assistance the teachers need assistance in the classroom because there is too many kids to one teacher and all the children are not getting the adequate education they need daily on a daily basis they need assistance that I am going to emphasize that they need assistance teachers and the government needs to reapply the program that they had with those are interested in education that you work at the school full time but you can still go to college they need to put back in that program they don't have it at this time and so they need to put it back in because all the children my child is doing well thank God [participant knocks on the table] because I am helping her at home and she's doing well because of

that and but those that are not getting the extra help at home this is where the concern is because those kids they are falling in the cracks their grades are not well I would teach them about the different bushes and fruit trees on the island and so it was more like interacting we get to go to the beach a lot take their mind off the hurricane and what happen. We did a lot of like camping stuff. We roasted some kabobs, we did some vegetables and stuff, we roasted them outside, we did some planting, we planted some bush tea and some food (Participant 6).

Since the storm the sporting activities it don't have much going on with the Sprauve School [the local school on [island mentioned by participant] goes from K-8. [There is not a public high school on the island] The modules are on the field right now. We read a lot I read a lot to him and I also from books that I ordered with the writing I started him on stuff like that so when he first started school Yeah I had him doing two hours in the morning like for two hours in the morning there was one book I had I would just have him do like four pages. Read to him because he was still learning to read and stuff so just little things because one we didn't have power for a while so when night came it was bathe brush you teeth and go to bed didn't have no TV phones weren't working couldn't watch no movies because the internet was in and out all the time. So during the day we just use to I would go to work sometimes I leave him home with mommy and I just tell her just give him some pages to do. Yeah because after a while he started to get restless and he would be doing his own little stuff like trying draw and write so I figure I could give him something to keep his mind busy. Because He really

was starting to get restless like you know I mean he didn't really have nothing to play because where we were it was just like a small two bedroom space three of us was in one room my brother was in the other and it just didn't have nothing to do instead of sitting there every day watching the wall. Well, I had some kind of function because I came to work but he just had him and grandma you know what can I do what can we do. So reading and those pages really helped (Participant 9).

Parent Involvement was Focused on their Child's Social Needs

The social needs of children included conversations with their children about the hurricanes and playing board and card games. Other parents socialized with their children by taking them outside into nature and teaching them about the local plants and other island facts that may not be taught in the schools.

Trying to get out as quickly as possible so nothing in relation to school was even at the time of the hurricane or getting ready for it there was nothing going on As a whole. In the community we would have discussions about um different trees and different medicinal things that I would see and use and things that were taught to me by my grandmother so we would a lot of my emphasis I focus on Moranga [a local herb] and the quality so we talk about Moranga we talk about all the local fruits um that are here that we eat and what their used for we talk about a lot of the local drinks and how they're made and so we would talk about the Maubi bark we would talk about you know let me see what else the ginger beer and stuff like that. Conversations that I have done and seen in my growing up here so they

could kind of relate and maybe follow suite if they choose to I don't every force them um but you know I like to tell them about life experiences so they know you know if this is what I want to do at least I know about it (Participant 5).

"I didn't have much access to things because being that I had lost my home with most of the things inside of it there was no Internet access there was no power and so I don't think we did pretty much anything. No school activities at all until October 17 when they were enrolled back in school" (Participant 5).

"No because they couldn't [there were no school activities] well we played games I try to keep the kids keep the kids occupied we played games cause we bought a heap of games and we played UNO we played TROUBLE you know we do a lot of stuff I sit down and educate them on hurricanes you know what hurricanes are all about I try to educate them as much as I can" (Participant 8).

"The activities they just became more interesting life became more interesting after the storm it was a wake up call like Oh My God like we did well we survived the storm so before it was like yea okay let's go and plant some bush tea yea aint all that you know like was a fun activity but after the storm when we go plant the bush tea it was like I want to plant and look what I growing" (Participant 6).

It's really sad. It's really sad. Even to that was limited because you know we had a curfew the curfew mostly was from 9am in the morning to sunset sometimes sunset means 6 o'clock it could mean 5:30 and you know it wasn't the environment at that time for the children to be outside so there was very little for you to do at home because you know your home is just confined to a small area so

it was more like reading—you know the same thing we talk about earlier with the plumbing and electrical and stuff like that just to keep them active to keep their mind flowing you know take them off of what their seeing around at times it depends on where I'm going take him with me so he could actually see what transpired during the storm throughout the island so he could see (Participant 1).

Parent Involvement was Focused on their Family's Basic Needs

A focus on family's basic needs included discussion about rebuilding, transportation, and electrical outages. Parents tended to family responsibilities and demonstrated their resiliency.

It was a hard time we really didn't have time to focus on school at the time cause we had damages and we were trying to repair and rebuild and we're still in that stage till now. School activities were something that was difficult at the time you know there wasn't anything going on as far as education everything was on standstill schools were destroyed (Participant 3).

Transportation wise it was different because then we couldn't go places like we wanted to you know before we would go take a drive go to the beach or you know go visit families so he could have people to play with that's the thing he's the only child on my side that and nobody else is here I just use to go places like go to the playground it wasn't no playground no more everything was destroyed you couldn't go do certain things before the storm everything was nice you use to go out to whatever little activities with him you know but then after the storm it

really didn't have much that he could do because they were all recovery so everybody was trying to recover trying to regroup to fix stuff (Participant 9).

"After the storm, a lot of things change we didn't have power for a long period of time a lot of things change. I think it's time for [Island] to get its own generator because when the power mess up all the way on the other island the line mess up here on this island" (Participant 2).

"There was nothing else here to do nothing else here to do like I said the tennis court the nets were down the fence was down it really it was like you hostage so everybody was just scrambling to get out-- just scrambling to get out you know but you know we are a resilient people" (Participant 1).

Researcher's Reflections

I felt surprised that many participants' were still traumatized by the 2017 Hurricanes of Irma and Maria. I thought that time would have healed the wounds inflicted by these natural disasters; however, that was not the case. Most of the parents interviewed shared their impact of the storms on their families, specifically their children. Parents were actively taking a role in their children's schooling by helping with homework, attending school events, and volunteering at the school. This made me very emotional as parents shared their perceptions of involvement in their children's schooling. According to the results of this study, resources for parents with students in public school were without resources after the storm; however, I know the island is mainly supported by tourism dollars and I wish that some of those dollars could have

been redirected to support a parent natural disaster and hurricane relief fund for future needs.

Summary

This chapter presented the themes that evolved from data collected from 10 Black parents with children ages 7 to 12 years old in the only public school on the island of St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands. For “How do Black parents with children in middle childhood in the U.S. Virgin Islands perceive involvement in their children’s schooling,” the one theme was that parents take an active role in their child’s schooling with three sub-themes of helping with homework, attending school events, and volunteering at the school. Themes of parent involvement was limited in their children’s academic learning and of parent involvement was focused on their children’s academic learning were the results for “What ways has the experience of Hurricane Irma and/or Hurricane Maria influenced involvement in children’s schooling among parents of children in middle childhood within the U.S. Virgin Islands?”

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this qualitative study was to conduct a phenomenological exploration of Black parents' perceptions of involvement in their children's schooling during middle childhood and to learn how their involvement was influenced by Hurricane Irma and/or Hurricane Maria. The family and the educational systems of Billingsley's model of the Black family were used to help explain parent involvement in their children's education. The study had two research questions.

1. How do Black parents with children in middle childhood in the U.S. Virgin Islands perceive involvement in their children's schooling?
2. What ways have the experience of Hurricane Irma and/or Hurricane Maria influenced involvement in children's schooling among parents of children in middle childhood within the U.S. Virgin Islands?

A total of 10 Black parents participated in a one-on-one interview with the researcher. Each parent completed a demographic questionnaire. Interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed verbatim, coded, and analyzed to discover themes. This chapter begins with a discussion of parents' demographic information being compared and contrasted with participants' of previously conducted research. The chapter continues with a discussion of the themes presented in Chapter 4 in relations to the research presented within the literature review. Other components are discussed, which include strengths and limitations of this study, implications, and future research.

Overview of Results

Family Characteristics

The definition of parents for this study was an individual who was either a biological parent, adoptive parent, or an individual who had primary care of a child. In this study, grandparents were participants'. The percentage of grandparents (20%, $n = 2$) was similar to the percentage of grandparents (10%, $n = 1$) who participated in Roopnarine, Krishnakumar, Narine, Logie, and Lape's (2014) study of over 1,000 families within the Caribbean island of Trinidad and Tobago. A difference in that study to this current study was that all the participants' were mothers; whereas, in the current study 60% of the parents were mothers and the rest were grandparents and fathers of children.

The average age of the parents in this study was 42 years with a range of 36 years to 59 years. A total of 293 Afro-Caribbean parents in Calzada's (2015) study had an average age of approximately 35 years in which their average age was younger than the average age of the participants' in this current study. Average age of the focal children in this study was 9.8 years, which was older than the average age of children ($M = 4.2$ years) in Roopnarine et al.'s (2014) study and younger than the mean age ($M = 11.8$ years) of children in Griffith and Grolnick's (2014) study.

For educational level, all of the parents in this study had at least a high school level of education; whereas, in Roopnarine et al.'s (2014) study 55% ($n = 711$) of families had at least a high school level of education. In regard to higher levels of education, only 10% ($n = 1$) of the parents in this study had bachelor's degree; whereas,

51% ($n = 711$) of parents of students in Griffith and Grolnick's (2014) study had a bachelor's degree.

In the current study, 50% ($n = 5$) of the parents were married in contrast to participants' in Roopnarine et al.'s (2014) study with 37% ($n = 149$) married. Ninety percent ($n = 9$) of participants' in this current study were employed full time. This result was different from the employment status in Burke et al.'s (2017) study in which 62% ($n = 19$) of the Jamaican parents were employed full-time. Other studies did not have reports of participants' employment status.

Family and Educational System:

Caribbean Parents' Involvement in Their Children's Education

Parents Play an Active Role in their Child's Schooling

For the first research question of "How do parents with children in middle childhood within the U.S. Virgin Islands perceive involvement in their children's schooling?", the data yielded one theme: parents play an active role in their children's schooling along with three sub-themes: helping with homework, attending school events, and volunteering at school. The data revealed that parents' perceptions of what parent involvement looked like for them was based on them being actively involved with their child in various ways. The data also showed that children's education was important to parents as they reported that they helped their child at home with homework or they were present for their child at school events; all can provide opportunities for parents to build relationships with their child's teacher and school while continuing the academic learning at home. Also, a few parents said that they volunteered at their child's school by

attending field trips, reading to their child's class, or providing classroom supplies and resources; these actions can support students and teachers for positive student academic learning and success. Cook and Jennings (2016) reported Caribbean parents' value of education for their children's future successful careers and that is only obtained through education, which is what the current study suggested in terms of parents actively being involved in their children's schooling by helping with homework, attending school events, and volunteering at school, all of which represent parents value of education through active involvement. According to Griffith and Grolnick (2014), Caribbean parents provide structure for their children, and parents who are supportive may result in positive child outcomes. The similarities and differences in the literature review to the current study is limited to non-U.S. territories as it relates to research on Caribbean parents and their involvement with their children's schooling.

Helping with Homework

There is little research focused on Caribbean parents helping their children with their homework. One of those studies is Burke et al. (2017) in which 27% of parents reported taking part in helping with homework whereas this current study revealed that 60% ($n = 6$) of parents reported that they helped their children with homework. Burke et al. reported on mother-child relationships as it relates to children ages 8 to 12 within the Caribbean island of Jamaica and showed how parents value education, which is similar to what some parents reported as wanting their children to do their homework. Helping with homework can show that parents place an important emphasis on education, and they value its outcome for their children to be successful.

Attending School Events

Parents in the current study reported attending school events. Attending school events for parents in the current study included going to their children's sports games. Fifty percent of the parents reported that they attended their child's school events, which can provide the child with positive support similar to what Griffith and Grolnick (2014) found as it relates to parental control and structure. Calzada et al. (2015) is one of the few studies that focused on school-based activities of Caribbean parents. Specifically, these Afro-Caribbean immigrant parents lived in the United States, and according to their self-reports, they had a high level of school-based involvement. Examples of school-based involvement were the parent going to the school to talk to the teacher and the parent visiting the school for a special event. These types of activities were similar to the activities that parents in this current study reported as involvement within their child's school such as speaking with the teacher about their child's behavior and performance and attending parent teacher association meetings.

Volunteering at School

According to my review of the literature there were not any studies that focused on volunteering at the school among Caribbean parents. This current study brings in that dimension of involvement and showed that 30% of parents reported on volunteering at school events, which included attending field trips, reading to their child's class, and providing resources to the school to support teachers and students. Parents volunteering at their child's school can provide structure to children.

Family and Educational System:

Natural Disasters in Relation to Parent Involvement

The second research question asked, “What ways has the experience of Hurricane Irma and/or Hurricane Maria influenced involvement in children’s schooling among parents of children in middle childhood within the U.S. Virgin Islands?” The two themes were that parents' involvement was limited in their child’s academic learning and parents’ involvement was focused on their children’s academic learning. There appears to be a lack of research on Caribbean parents involvement in their children’s schooling after a hurricane. Hackbarth et al. (2012) who examined hurricane impacts in the U.S. found how family resiliency is a coping process after a natural disaster. The parents in this current study showed resilience in different ways. Due to the hurricane(s), the school was compromised and therefore closed several months after the storm; however, temporary school modules were placed on the adjacent open ball field, which was previously used for recreation sports activities for school sports games and games in the community. Instead of focusing on their child’s academic learning, parents focused on activities such as rebuilding their home life, having conversations about hurricanes, playing board games, storytelling, or planting tea bush. Another way that parents in the current study were resilient was by taking upon themselves to teach their children at home about reading and/or math.

Strengths

There were several strengths of this study. This study added to a limited body of literature on Black parents' perceptions of involvement in their children's schooling during middle childhood within the U.S. Virgin Islands for the field of family studies. The study provided an opportunity for these parents to share their experiences of involvement and influence on this involvement after a natural disaster. Multiple parents expressed appreciation for an opportunity to talk about their perceptions of parent involvement before the storms and after the storms of 2017, specifically of survival and sadness along with their desire to see some support from their local school districts and government officials. The participants' in this study discussed dimensions that have received little attention in prior literature, specifically within a territory of the US as well as the influence of a hurricane's natural disaster on parent involvement. Due to my familiarity with the island's people, parents may have felt comfortable sharing their stories with me. Another strength was my former role as an elementary public school teacher in the U.S. Virgin Islands while studying in the US.

According to my review of the literature, studies of parents in the U.S. Virgin Islands appear to be limited in existence. This study has accomplished the following in expanding knowledge about Black parents within the U.S. Virgin Islands:

1. Gave parents in the U.S. Virgin Islands a long awaited opportunity for their voices to be heard.
2. Provided a platform for parents in the U.S. Virgin Islands to express their perceptions of parent involvement before and after Hurricane Irma and Maria of 2017.

3. Collected information that school officials within the U.S. Virgin Islands can use in the plights of natural disasters and parent involvement at home and school.

4. Gathered data that family scientists can use to educate policy makers and families about parent involvement in children's schooling within the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Limitations

Along with the strengths of the study, limitations also existed. There are three major islands within the U.S. Virgin islands, and this study was limited to the island of St. John in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The 10 Black participants' were drawn from only one island within the U.S. Virgin Islands; therefore, these results will be limited in relevance to families with similar backgrounds within that island. Another limitation was that data were obtained from only one data source, which was the parent. Children can be another source from which to learn about parent involvement. Also, only an interview was used to gather data from the parents. Other data collection tools such as parents' journaling or daily logging of their activities with their children could have provided other ways to learn about parents' experiences.

Recommendations

Implications for Policy and Practice

This research highlights the importance of parent perceptions of their involvement in their children's schooling and their involvement after a natural disaster.

The findings from this research can be useful to family science professionals and others working with parents and children within public schools. Based on the results of this current research, following are recommendations for policy and practice:

1. Participants ‘spoke explicitly about how they play an active role in their child’s schooling and how their children continued learning at home after the storms of 2017. Schools can institute a Parent Involvement Specialist or Family Engagement Specialist who can assist parents in educating their children when schools are closed because of a crisis such as a natural disaster, and then parents have to teach their children from home. Parents can participate in a needs assessment to learn of resources that would be of value to them. School leaders and teacher training education can include parent involvement strategies that can be shared with school leaders and teachers to help them support their parents and families in and outside their classrooms.

2. Schools can create a special initiative to establish Parents and Family Rooms as a place where Parents and Families can learn more about helping their children with homework, volunteering at the school, or other learning opportunities they can do with their child or for themselves. Epstein (1997) reported that one strategy for promoting volunteerism within the schools is through the establishment of a “Parent room or family center for volunteer work, meetings, resources for families” (p. 8). Schools can create a special family engagement initiative to reach out to the parents and families of children using this room for parents at the school. Schools can create space for families to gather with established Parents and Family Rooms, family resource rooms, in order to meet and socialize with other parents as well as participate in parenting workshops. This Parents and Family Rooms within schools can be adopted and supported by the local PTA.

3. Schools can implement a Parent Hurricane and Natural Disaster Fund to support parents’ involvement in their children’s academic learning because the results

showed that parents' involvement was not only focused on their child's academic needs but also their child's social needs and family's needs. This disaster could provide U.S. Virgin Islands' families with essential resources that could support child and family's needs when it comes to social and academic development at home as well as at school after a hurricane or natural disaster. Essential resources include a family survival educational kit that is equipped with essential hurricane information and academic learning tools. This disaster fund can be funded through a Parent Hurricane and Natural Disaster tax on local and tourist related sales and services.

Future Research

This study has added to the limited body of literature on Black parent perceptions about involvement in their children's schooling in the U.S. Virgin Islands. However, more research would broaden the field and better inform professionals who may work with these parents in the U.S. Virgin Islands. This study could be replicated to include participants' from the other U.S. Virgin Islands. Future studies could be expanded to include parents of different ethnicities within the U.S. Virgin Islands, such as Hispanic parents. In my study, nine of the 10 participants' were mothers and so gaining fathers' perspectives could be included in future research, which could specifically give fathers from the U.S. Virgin Islands a voice to share their perceptions of their involvement in their children's schooling. Also, data can be gathered from children during their middle childhood years to learn of their definition of parent involvement and their perceptions of their parents' involvement in their schooling.

Researcher's Reflection

The results of this study are reflective of my own life as it relates to helping my children during their middle childhood with homework, volunteering at their school, and attending their school events. As my children got older, involvement in their schooling was challenging. As a Black single parent, it was a challenge to be involved with my children's schooling during their middle childhood years; however, working and attending college outside the home became necessary for the present and to secure the future. As a working parent, I returned to college during their middle childhood years. I also taught the same age group of the participants' children, which allowed me to learn how they learn and how their parents play a role in that learning, all of which are reasons why I pursued this research study.

I am grateful to the parents in this study who gave of their time and shared their experiences. The parents opened up and shared very personal parts of their lives. At the end of the interviews, I routinely expressed my gratitude and appreciation to them. Most of the parents expressed appreciation to me for conducting this study. A majority of the parents indicated they were delighted to share their stories and have their opinions and experiences about the storm documented. I am overjoyed to be a part of such an amazing group of parents as I have been a parent of public school students at this school.

A reflection of this study, based on my own experience of growing up and going to public school in the U.S. Virgin Islands is that I know that the island residents pay the most taxes and get the least when it comes to public education. I am aware that the island is filled with billion dollar villas that attract tourists every year, however, there is no

public high school on the island for the island residents who cannot afford the private high school. According to the results of this study, resources for parents with students in public school were without resources after the storm, however, I know the island is supported by tourism dollars of which a percentage could be directed to a parent natural disaster and hurricane relief fund for future purposes.

I learned and affirmed several things about myself via the dissertation process and specifically the data collection process. I learned that I am an advocate for all parents who are seeking to give the best schooling to their children by actively being involved in helping with homework, attending school events, and volunteering at their child's school. Several parents told me that they were glad to finally have someone who would listen to their survival stories of the storms of 2017 and the impact on their families, especially their children when it came to schooling and survival. Because of this current research, the next steps is to continue researching parent involvement and family engagement within the entire insular Caribbean, which is according to López-Marrero, Yamane, Hearstisill, and Villanueva Colón (2012), "In the case of the insular Caribbean, logically, the Greater Antilles occupy a larger extent than the Lesser Antilles and the small islands in the northern Caribbean" (p. 17). The outcome of this research to me professionally is to continue learning about Caribbean families' perceptions of their involvement in their children's schooling. I would like to learn more about how family members define parent involvement and what that looks like for them at home, at school, and in the community. I would also like to learn more about and what that looks like for them at home, at school, and in the community. I would also like to learn more about their involvement after a

natural disaster and how that experience influences their involvement in their child's schooling and how that experience influences their involvement in their child's schooling.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative study was to phenomenologically explore Black parents' perceptions of involvement in their children's schooling during middle childhood within the U.S. Virgin Islands and after the hurricanes of 2017. Billingsley's Black family theory was used as a lens through which these parents' perceptions could be seen, and a phenomenological approach allowed for an understanding of parents' unique perceptions of parent involvement in their children's schooling. The chapter included the overview of the study and provided a discussion of the three themes and three sub-themes that arose from the data analysis. The chapter also included strengths, limitations, implications for policy and practice, and future research.

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Appendix A
Recruitment Flyer

Are you a Black parent of a child in 2–7 grade public school on the island of St. John?
Would you like to share your experiences about your involvement in your child's schooling and how the storms of 2017 impacted your involvement?

This study is entitled:
**BLACK PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILDREN'S
SCHOOLING DURING MIDDLE CHILDHOOD WITHIN THE U.S. VIRGIN
ISLANDS**

Researcher: Carla M. Sewer, A.A., B.S., M.S., CFLE-p., 940-222-9336,

csewer@twu.edu

Research Advisor: Nerissa LeBlanc Gillum, Ph.D., 940-898-2696, NGillum@twu.edu

Participants' must:

- Be a Black parent at least 18 years of age,
- Have a student in public school residing on the island of St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands ages 7 to 12 who is in the second to seventh grade,
- Have a child who is living with them for the entire school year from August 2019 to June 2020, and,
- Had lived with their child in the U.S. Virgin Islands during and after Hurricane Irma or Hurricane Maria that occurred in September 2017.

Your participation will result in:

- Contribution to research on parent involvement in the Caribbean and the impact of a natural disaster on children's schooling
- Receiving a copy of the findings, if requested at the end of the study
- Receiving a chance to be entered into a drawing to receive one \$25 VISA gift card

Informed Consent Statement: Before participating in this study you will be provided with a consent form and the procedures and any potential risk will be discussed. Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

Participation is 100% voluntary
Contact Carla Sewer at 940-222-9336 by calling or texting if you are interested in participating in the study.

Appendix B

Principal's Letter of Support

Julius E. Sprauve School

15-18 Enighed, P.O. Box 719
St. John, VI. 00831-0719



Marion Lynch-Esannason
Principal

Jeune B. Provost
Assistant Principal

Tel: (340) 776-6336 • Fax: (340) 693-8136

June 20, 2019

Dear Ms. Sewer,

You have permission to distribute recruitment Flyers for your dissertation research at Julius E. Sprauve School during all parent orientations, PTA meetings, drop-off and pick-up at the school during the 2019-2020 school year.

Let me know when you have questions or comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marion Lynch-Esannason". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marion Lynch-Esannason
Principal

Appendix C

Text Communication Script

Text Communication Script

Text response when a potential participant contacts researcher,

“Thank you for contacting me about this study. Please text me your available days and times that you will be able to talk to see whether you meet the research criteria by telephone.”

Appendix D

Telephone Call Script

Telephone Call Script

I will use this script when an interested individual calls me and when I call an interested individual in response to a text message.

“Greetings, my name is Carla Sewer. Glad to hear from you. And thank you for responding to my request to participate in this study. I am a doctoral student in Family Studies at Texas Woman's University (TWU) where I am completing this research project as part of my doctoral degree in family studies.

“The purpose of this qualitative study will be to explore parents’ perceptions of involvement in their children’s education and to learn about how hurricanes, particularly the most recent Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria of 2017, impacts their involvement, which can help better support parents with children during middle childhood within public school.

“Before people become involved in the study, I would like to know whether they meet the criteria to participate. The following questions will help me determine this. Keep in mind that I will keep all the information, which can identify you, as confidential, I receive from you by phone, including your name and other information.

1. Are you a Black parent of a child in public school on the island of St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands?
2. Does your child live with you during this school year?
3. Is your child 7 to 12 years old?
4. Is your child in grade 2nd to 7th?
5. Were both you and your child on the island of St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands during and after a hurricane, specifically after Hurricane Irma or Hurricane Maria?

If the participant is not eligible, then I will say the following:

“Thank you for your interest in this study, however you do not meet one or more of the criteria to participate in this study. I will not have the opportunity to interview you. I appreciate your contacting me. Do you know anyone that you believe would be interested in the study who would meet the above criteria?”

If participant is eligible, then I will say the following:

“Thank you! Based on what you have provided in your answers, you are eligible to participate in this study. I will interview you at one of two possible locations most convenient for you. Location options would be either at the Julius E. Sprauve School or a local church on the island of St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands. Locations were selected for privacy. The meeting will last around 120 minutes. When we meet, I’ll have consent forms for you to sign, collect some background information, and conduct your interview. I would like to audiotape your interview so that I’ll be I am accurately describing your experiences.

“I’ll use a code name to protect your confidentiality. My major professor at Texas Woman's University and I will be the only people to know your name. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw or remove yourself from the study at any time without a problem or consequence to you. In other words, you may remove yourself from the study at any time without question. Participation will in no way impact your relationship with the school and/or church where the interview is conducted.

“Okay. Do you have any questions for me so far? *(The researcher will answer all questions)*. After answering your questions and sharing this information with you, are you still interested in being part of this study?

If the potential participant says “No” to participation, then I will say:

“Thank you for taking the time to talk with me. Do you know anyone who might be willing to be part of this study and would meet the eligibility requirements I questioned you about, please let them know to contact me?”

If the potential participant says, “Yes” to participation, then I will say:

“Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. When would be a good day and time for you to meet and where would be most convenient for you, at the school or a church? For a meeting reminder, would you prefer that I call you or send you a text message? I will call you or send you a text at least two days before the meeting as a reminder of the dates and times (Appendix E). Thank you for your time. I look forward to meeting with you on the date, time, and place we agreed upon.”

Appendix E

Phone and Text Meeting Reminder Script

Phone and Text Meeting Reminder Script

Confirmation text and phone message after scheduling the interview.

“Thank you for being part of this study. Remember we are scheduled to meet at (location), on (date) at (time). Thank you. Carla.”

Appendix F
Consent Form

Consent Form

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

Title: **Black Parent Perceptions of Involvement in their Children's Schooling During Middle Childhood Within the U.S. Virgin Islands**

Principal Investigator: Carla M. Sewer, MS..... csewer@twu.edu 940/222-9336

Faculty Advisor: Nerissa LeBlanc Gillum, PhD.....NGillum@twu.edu 940/898-2696

Summary and Key Information about the Study

Participants are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Carla M. Sewer, a doctoral student at Texas Woman's University, as a part of her dissertation. The purpose of this research is to determine how Black parents of public school students on the island of St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands perceive involvement in their child's schooling, specifically in 2nd through 7th grades age 7 to 12 years old. Participants have been invited to participate in this study because you are Black parent of a child in grades 2nd through 7th age 7 to 12 years old. Participants will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire and participate in a face-to-face interview regarding your experiences. This interview will be audio recorded, and researcher will use code names for both the participant and the participant's child to help protect your confidentiality. Total time of the meeting will be approximately two hours. If participant engages in member checking, then approximate total time will be two hours and 45 minutes. Following the completion of the study participant code name will be entered into a drawing to receive one \$25 VISA gift card. The greatest risks of this study include potential loss of time, confidentiality, and emotional discomfort. Researcher will discuss these risks and the rest of the study procedures in greater detail below.

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

Description of Procedures

As a participant in this study, the total time of the meeting will be approximately two hours. If participant also engage in member checking, then approximate total time will be two hours and 45 minutes. The researcher will ask participant questions about their involvement in their child's schooling and participant's experience before and after a hurricane, specifically Hurricane Irma and Maria of 2017 as it relates to involvement in your child's schooling. Participant and the researcher will decide together on a public location, either the Julius E. Sprauve School or a local church, and the time and day the interview will happen. Participant and the researcher will decide on code names for participant and participant's child for researcher 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 participant have said. In order to be a participant in this study, participants must be at least 18 years of age or older and currently be a Black

parent of a child in public school on the island of St. John, U.S. Virgin islands in grades 2nd through 7th and between the ages of 7 and 12 years old.

Potential Risks

The researcher will ask participant questions about involvement in their child's schooling and experience with hurricanes, specifically Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria while living on St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands with participant's family and participant's friends. A possible risk in this study is emotional discomfort with these questions participants are asked. If participants become tired or upset then breaks may be taken as needed. Participants may also stop answering questions at any time and end the interview. If participants feel a need to talk to a professional about emotional discomfort, the researcher has provided 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 the participant and the researcher have agreed upon. A code name, not participant's real name, will be used during the interview. No one but the researcher and the faculty advisor will know participant's real name.

Data will be kept behind two locked drawers; participant name will be separated from data.

The audio recording and the written interview will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home. Only the researcher and her advisor 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 and presented at professional meetings but participant's 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.

Participant audio recording and/or any personal information collected for this study will not be used or distributed for future research even after the researchers remove participant personal or identifiable information (e.g. participant name, date of birth, contact information).

Loss of time and fatigue. Participant may take breaks at any time or withdraw from the study without questions or penalty. Participants have the option to stop answering questions at any time. Participant will lose approximately 120 hours of time for this study.

Loss of Anonymity. Participants' identifying information will be stored in drawers of locked file cabinet in the researcher's home. Computer data files and questionnaires will have code names to replace participants' names so that participant names will not be needed on them. Anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

Coercion. Participation or non-participation will not affect participants' standing at the Julius E. Sprauve School. Participation is voluntary. Participants have the option to stop answering questions and/or stop participating in the study at any time. The researchers will try to prevent any problems that could happen because of this research. Participant should let the researchers know at once if there is a problem and they will try to help the participant. However, TWU does not provide medical services or financial assistance for injuries that might happen because participant is taking part in this research.

Participation and Benefits

Participant involvement in this study is completely voluntary and participant may withdraw from the study at any time. Following the completion of the study, participant code name will be entered into a drawing to receive one \$25 VISA gift card. If participant would like to know the results of this study we will email or mail them to participant. *

Questions Regarding the Study

Participant will be given a copy of this signed and dated consent form to keep. If participant have any questions about the research study participant should ask the researchers; participant's contact information is at the top of this form. If participant have questions about rights as a participant in this research or the way this study has been conducted, participants 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 Mailing

Address: _____

Appendix G
Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic Questionnaire

Participant Code Name _____

Date of Interview _____

1. _____ Age

2. What is your sex/gender?

_____ Male _____ Female _____ Other (Identify As: _____)

3. Marital Status (Check only one):

_____ Single, not living with a partner

_____ Single, living with a partner

_____ Single, Never Married

_____ Married

_____ Divorced

_____ Widowed

_____ Separated

_____ Other (please describe: _____)

4. Racial/ethnic identification.

_____ Asian American or Pacific Islander

_____ Black or African American

_____ White/Caucasian

_____ Puerto Rican (Hispanic)

_____ Dominican (Hispanic)

_____ American Indian or Native American

_____ Multiracial or Bi-Racial (Two or more races)

_____ East Indian (Caribbean)

_____ Other

5. What is your education level?

_____ No high school diploma

_____ High school graduate (GED or diploma)

_____ Technical School

_____ Associate's Degree

_____ Bachelor's Degree

_____ Master's Degree or Higher

_____ Some college but no college degree

_____ Other

6. Employment Status

_____ Full time (40 hours or more per week)

_____ Part time (less than 40 hours per week)

_____ Not employed (Not seeking employment)

_____ Unemployed (seeking employment)

7. Code names and ages of your children?

Code Name: Age:

Code Name: Age:

Code Name: Age:

Code Name: Age:

Code Name: Age:

8. Of these children, which one would you like to be the focus of the interview to discuss about your perceptions of involvement in your child's education?

Code Name: Age:

9. How long does this child live with you during the school year?

_____ less than half the school year

_____ half the school year

_____ entire school year

10. Please check the statement that best describes your relationship with this child. Select only one.

_____ I am the biological parent of this child.

_____ I am the foster parent of this child.

_____ I am the adoptive parent of this child.

_____ I am the legal guardian of this child.

_____ I am a relative who primarily cares for this child.

_____ Grandparent of child

_____ Sibling of child

_____ Aunt of child

_____ Uncle of child

_____ Other

11. Were both you and your child (the child being discussed) on St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands both during and after the following storms? Please select:

_____ Hurricane Irma in 2017

_____ Hurricane Maria in 2017

_____ both Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria in 2017

_____ Neither Hurricane Irma nor Hurricane Maria in 2017

_____ Other Storm (Please Name of the Storm you are referencing)

Appendix H
The Meeting Guide

THE MEETING GUIDE

Participant's Code Name _____ Date of Meeting _____

"Thank you for saying yes to being part of my study." (Pause) "The purpose of this qualitative study is to find out the perceptions of Black parents when it comes to involvement in their children's public schooling. Please keep in mind that your participation in this study is completely voluntary, which means that you can withdraw or stop this interview at any time without penalty. At this time, do you have any questions before we begin? (Pause)

As part of this study, participants have to read and agree to participate by signing this consent form (Give consent form to participant to read). Take your time and read over the consent form. We can go over the form when necessary and whenever you have questions or concerns please feel free to let me know. (Pause)

"Do you have any questions about the study and the consent form?" (Pause; Researcher will respond to participant's questions).

If the participant has questions, the researcher will answer them.

"Are you still interested in participating in the study?"

If "Yes," Thank you for being willing to participate in this study. Would you sign the consent form. For the consent form, if you notice, there is a space at the bottom of the consent form that asks for your email and mailing address if you would like a summary of the study results, please indicate which one you would prefer. Please initial on each page and sign and date the last page. I will email or mail you a copy of the results of the study. Also, here is a resource document containing information about services.

(Researcher will give a copy of the signed consent form to the participant and keep one for herself)

If "No," "If you know anyone who would be interested in this study would you please give them the recruitment flyer (Give participants a recruitment flyer). Please know that you are not required to give this flyer to others.—*[This aforementioned statement will be said only if additional participants are wanted for study]*. Thank you for your time."

"Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this study. Please know that you can stop this process at any time. This is a demographic questionnaire asking you about you and your child. You may put more than one child on this form; however, you will put one child as the focal child who you will refer to throughout the interview.

"This demographic questionnaire is about you and your child.

“Please use a code name for you and your child(ren) in the demographic questionnaire. The code names will also be used during the interview.”

“What is the code name for you that you would like for us to use? What is the code name that you would like to use for your child whom you chose to be the focus of the interview?”

(If parents do not select code names for themselves and their children, then the researcher will choose the code names for the demographic questionnaire and interview.)

“Do you have any questions about the demographic questionnaire?” If the participant has questions, they will be answered by the researcher.

The researcher will then obtain the demographic questionnaire from the parent.

Next, the researcher will begin with the interview.

“Now, we will have the interview. Is it okay if I audio record our interview to make sure it is accurate?” (Pause).

If no, then researcher will hand write interviewee’s responses.

If the participant does not have any questions, I will begin the interview.

“You can take many breaks as you need. I’m turning on the audio recorder now.”
(Recorder now on)

“Okay. Let’s begin. I will start asking you questions. Would you speak freely and openly. Keep in mind that you can elaborate as much as you feel comfortable. Also, keep in mind that whenever there is anything that you feel is unclear, please let me know and I will clarify the questions. Also, whenever you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, please feel free to let me know.”

Whenever the participant has questions, the researcher will answer them.

Remember, for this interview, we will focus on the child that you selected in your demographic questionnaire (Researcher will say code name and age of focal child). Note: Throughout the interview, the Researcher will say code name of focal child to remind parents of focal child for the interview.

RQ 1 questions

1. When you hear the words ‘parental involvement,’ what comes to your mind?
--Would you tell me more about that?

2. What kind of school activities do you do with (child’s code name)’s at home?
--Would you tell me more about that?

[If no, then the following question will be asked] Why are you not involved with (child's code name)'s schooling at home?

--Would you tell me more about that?

3. What kind of school activities do you do with (child's code name) at school?

--Would you tell me more about that?

[If yes, then the following question will be asked] How are you involved with (child's code name)'s schooling at school?

--Would you tell me more about that?

[If no, then the following question will be asked] Why are you not involved with (child's code name)'s schooling at school?

--Would you tell me more about that?

4. What kind of school activities do you do with (child's code name) in the community, such as the public library or community center?

--Would you tell me more about that?

[If yes, then the following question will be asked] What are ways that you are involved with (child's code name)'s schooling in the community, such as the public library?

--Would you tell me more about that?

[If no, then the following question will be asked] Why are you not involved with (child's code name)'s schooling in the community, such as the public library?

--Would you tell me more about that?

5. What would you change about doing school activities with (child's code name)?

--Would you tell me more about that?

6. Is there any other information you would like to share about your activities with (child's name)'s schooling?

--Would you tell me more about that?

RQ 2 questions

1. So, you said you were there for Hurricane(s) _____. (Name of hurricane[s]). How did the hurricane(s) affect you doing school activities with (child's code name) at the school?

--Would you tell me more about that?

2. How did the hurricane(s) affect (child's code name)'s school learning?

--Would you tell me more about that?

3. What school activities did you do at home with (child's name) while the public school was closed after Hurricane Irma and/or Hurricane Maria?

--Would you tell me more about that?

4. How were your activities with (child's name)'s schooling after Hurricane Irma and/or Hurricane Maria similar to your activities with (child's name)'s schooling before Hurricane Irma and/or Hurricane Maria?

--Would you tell me more about that?

5. How were your activities with (child's name)'s schooling after Hurricane Irma and/or Hurricane Maria different from your activities with (child's name)'s schooling before Hurricane Irma and/or Hurricane Maria?

--Would you tell me more about that?

6. Is there any other information you would like to share about your activities with (child's name)'s schooling after Hurricane Irma and/or Hurricane Maria?

--Would you tell me more about that?

"We are finished with the interview now. Do you have any other comments or questions before we end?" *[I will answer participants' questions].*

"If you asked for the summary results, a copy will be sent to the address you provided. Your code name will be entered into a drawing to receive a \$25 VISA gift card. Names will be randomly selected from a bowl and the winner will receive a text message announcing them as the winner. Thank you so much for your time and for the information you've given."

"Would you be willing to read your interview answers at a later date and the draft results and give feedback?"

"It will take about 45 minutes."

If the participant says "No,"

"I appreciate your support of this research study, and thank you again for sharing your experiences with me."

If the participant says "Yes,"

"I will contact you by phone or text when your interview answers are transcribed and draft results are ready for you to review. I appreciate your support of this research study and thank you again for sharing your experiences with me."

Appendix I
Family Resource Document

Family Resource Document

Hurricane Preparedness and Relief Resources

Website: <http://www.childcareaware.org/state/u-s-virgin-islands/>

Disaster Distress Helpline: If you or someone you know has been affected by a disaster and needs immediate assistance, please call or text for information, support, and counseling. You will be connected to the nearest crisis center. It's Free. It's Confidential. Call toll-free 800-985-5990 / Text TalkWithUs to 66746 / TTY for Deaf/Hearing Impaired: 800-846-8517

Parent Involvement Resources

Virgin Islands Public Library System

<http://www.virginislandspubliclibraries.org/>

Virgin Islands Department of Education

1834 Kongens Gade, St. Thomas, VI 00802

Phone: 340-774-0100 / Curriculum Center: 340-775-2250 / Mon – Fri: 8AM – 5PM

National Education Agency/Parent Teacher Association Parent Guides. A series of 10 parent guides were developed to give parents and caregivers some tips to help their children with a variety of subjects and school transition experiences.

www.nea.org/parents/parent-guides.html

Taking A Closer Look: A Guide to Online Resources on Family Involvement. Family Involvement Network of Educators (FINE), Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP), 2005

www.finenetwork.org

Communities in Schools has connected community resources with schools to help students succeed in school and in life. During its 30-year history, the organization has coordinated the delivery of resources into schools in a way that is responsive, cost-efficient and results-oriented.

www.cisnet.org

Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships (John Hopkins University) conducts and disseminates research, programs, and policy analyses that produce new and useful knowledge and practices that help parents, educators, and members of communities work together to improve schools, strengthen families, and enhance student learning and development.

www.csos.jhu.edu

PTO Today (Helping Parent Leaders Make Schools Great)

[https://www.ptotoday.com/parent-](https://www.ptotoday.com/parent-involvement?gclid=Cj0KCQjw19DIBRCsARIsAOnfReiSfX3bk2oCn1yvmW5XcU1qD)

[involvement?gclid=Cj0KCQjw19DIBRCsARIsAOnfReiSfX3bk2oCn1yvmW5XcU1qD](https://www.ptotoday.com/parent-involvement?gclid=Cj0KCQjw19DIBRCsARIsAOnfReiSfX3bk2oCn1yvmW5XcU1qD)
[Cpg6PQfjYn6vFR_XzTmMGLyiuO-azcaAh7QEALw_wcB](https://www.ptotoday.com/parent-involvement?gclid=Cj0KCQjw19DIBRCsARIsAOnfReiSfX3bk2oCn1yvmW5XcU1qD)

Appendix J

Member Check Request

Member Check Request Script (Email or Mail)

Thank you for your participation in my dissertation study on Black parents' perceptions of involvement in their child's schooling before and after a hurricane.

Attached is your transcribed interview and the draft results of the study. Please be aware that code names were used to keep your information confidential. Please read the transcript to check that your answers are what you shared during the interview and that my interpretation of your answers meets with your satisfaction. Also, please review the draft of the results and provide feedback. Please feel free to correct the information directly on the transcript and the draft results and return your corrections to me through mail or email.