Exploring the Influence of Multigenerational Transmission Process among Nonresidential African American Fathers

Andrea J. Wilson

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Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Lynn University

Exploring the Influence of Multigenerational Transmission Process among
Nonresidential African American Fathers

By
A'ndrea J. Wilson

Lynn University
2009
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:6, New International Version). I wasn’t strong enough, smart enough, patient enough, courageous enough, but You (God) stepped in and made the impossible possible in my life. Thank you, Lord, for Your faithfulness, for being with me always, and for giving me everything that I needed to finish this race.

To my mom, Kathleen Wilson, you have always been my biggest fan. Thank you for your unconditional love and support, even when you didn’t understand my choices. I appreciate everything you have ever done for me, especially the things you never got credit for. Congratulations on your own academic achievement! I am so proud of you!

To my Dissertation Chair, Dr. Judith Adelson, I share this victory with you. This has been a long, hard journey, and you could have given up on me, but you didn’t. I sincerely thank you for your commitment. You were the best person for the position and you have done an excellent job. To my Dissertation Committee, Drs. William Leary and Angie McDonald, I appreciate your participation throughout this process. Thank you for your patience, wisdom, support, and insight. To Dr. Patrick Hartwick, thanks for not kicking me out when my stay at Lynn started to become lengthy, and thank you for telling me exactly what I needed to know: “I am the CEO of my dissertation”—life changing words. To Teddy Davis, I truly appreciate all the long phone conversations and constant emails, making sure I would cross the finish line. I will miss you too!

Although this was an academic endeavor, the love and support of my friends and family were essential to my success. To my Lynn Road-Dogs, Laura and Robin Jones, I
will never forget our paths crossing during the Crisis course. Definitely a paradigm shift! I thank God for the two of you because I have needed your friendship more that you’ll ever know. You two are amazing women and I wish you both blessings in all of your future endeavors. To Kesha Wilson Lee, thank you for providing a place of sanctuary for me when I desperately needed it. It is so good to know that there is someone in my life that I can be completely authentic around. I hope you realize how beautiful and special you are. To Darius Harmon, thank you for sharing such a monumental experience with me, my dissertation defense. Your presence proves to me that you are one of the good guys, deserving of my love and friendship. Don’t be afraid of yourself; with me by your side, failure is not an option. Just close your eyes and dream...

I have way too many friends and family members to list you all without leaving someone out, so I won’t try. But to all of my supporters, thank you. I have needed every positive word, every hug, and every phone conversation because it’s the little things that add up to the big successes in life, the intangible things that remain when the glitz and glamour has faded away.

To the administration at Berean Christian Church in Atlanta, thank you for your assistance during my data collection. Special thanks to Pastor Kerwin B. Lee, Pastor Kevin Lee, Minister Reginald Dye, and Jo Thomas. And finally, a big thanks to the wonderful men who participated in my study. I was given an opportunity to meet and hear the life stories of 20 amazing African American men. I hope that my final write up of this study is truly reflective of your experiences and builds a bridge to solutions for your father involvement concerns. Continue loving your children, press toward the mark, and keep the faith.
ABSTRACT

With a disproportionate percentage of black children growing up in fatherless homes in the U.S. and an increasing concern over the state of fatherhood nationally, investigation of fathering in the African American community is essential. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of nonresidential African American fathers and how their parenting beliefs and behaviors have been transmitted to them from their fathers and grandfathers. The theoretical framework of the study included the Responsible Fathering Conceptual Model and Family Systems Theory. Through qualitative, exploratory research methodology, the perceptions of African American fathers who do not reside in the same home as their children were investigated using in-depth interviews. A sample size of 20 participants was selected using purposeful, maximum variation sampling procedures, with variations in educational and income levels. Participants were interviewed using preselected questions in a semi-structured interview, and interviews typically lasted between 1-2 hours.

Data collected during this study included demographic profile questionnaires, audio-taped interviews and transcriptions of interviews, and investigator written memos and notes. Using the grounded theory approach, the data was analyzed through techniques such as line-by-line analysis, interpreting data “chunks,” open, axial and selective coding, and constantly comparing individual and collective participants’ responses.

Results indicate that respondents often obtain fathering beliefs and behaviors from father figures “by example.” The term “by example” was frequently used by participants to communicate the process of observing the behaviors and value systems of their father
figures and mimicking similar behaviors and values to their children. Participants' nonresidential status many times interfered with their ability to demonstrate fathering behaviors to their children on a daily basis. Future research should continue to investigate the concept of “by example” as well as repeat the study at the national level using a larger sample size to increase the trustworthiness and understanding of the findings. Future studies should also further investigate hypothesized concepts that did not have enough supporting evidence or were not the focus of this study including the residuals of slavery, legal issues and the deadbeat dad stereotype, and the impact of the first African American president of the U.S.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction and Background to the Problem

In 2001, the Bush Administration released a plan for budgeting governmental funds towards American priorities. Included in the details of this “blueprint” was a strategy to strengthen families through increasing father involvement known as the Responsible Fatherhood Initiative. The Responsible Fatherhood Initiative included the allotment of federal funds through grants to aid programs created to improve relationships with fathers and their families and communities. The 2002 budget provided over $60 million in grant funds that were to be used for fatherhood promotion programs (Bush, 2001).

According to the Bush Administration, it is believed that a child’s outcomes such as risk for criminal behavior, poverty, and substance use are directly influenced by the level of father involvement (Bush, 2001). Research suggests that increased father involvement is related to positive child outcomes, while lack of father involvement is related to poorer child well-being (Amato & Rivera, 1999; Dick & Bronson, 2005; Sigle-Rushton & McLanahan, 2002). The Bush administration was concerned about the 25 million children growing up in homes without fathers (Bush, 2001). However, the Bush administration is not the only governmental agency attempting to improve father involvement. The Illinois General Assembly is currently in legislation for the Responsible Fatherhood Act of 2007 or SB0773; this bill would help promote father participation in families through public education and program development (Illinois General Assembly, n.d.).
It is reported that in the U.S., 45.4% of Black homes are headed by single women in comparison to 13.7% of homes being led by single White females (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). “African Americans have lower rates of marriage and marital stability than all other ethnic groups” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d., ¶ 1). Based on statistics such as these, the status and contribution of the nonresidential father is a major concern for the African American community. Even President Barack Obama identifies the importance of confronting the issue of African American males as nonresidential fathers. Obama (2007) states, “…failure of our policies to recognize black men as husbands, fathers, sons and role models is being acknowledged, and we need a new ethic of compassion to break the cycle of educational failure, unemployment, absentee fatherhood, incarceration, and recidivism” (p. 11).

If we are aware of the evidence that demonstrates the potential impact that fathers have on their children and we are also conscious of the large number of African American children growing up in homes where their fathers are not present, the next question becomes, how do we ensure that African American, nonresidential fathers have the parenting skills and resources necessary to aid them in positively influencing their children? Answering this question begins with an epistemological understanding of how men transmit their parenting beliefs and behaviors. Assessing African American men’s family of origin may offer insight into parenting skills and attitudes. An in-depth look at how parenting roles are modeled to men during their adolescence and integrated into their own parenting style and attitudes could lead to the research and policies needed to improve family conditions. As Cabrera et al. (2000) state, “…there is little research on how role models, the informal assignment of household tasks and responsibilities, the
articulation of ideas and values by adults, or formal instruction shape what fatherhood means to boys as they move towards adulthood” (p. 131).

Family systems theorists argue that beliefs and behaviors of an individual are often gained from immediate and extended family members. Multigenerational Transmission Process (MTP), a concept created by Murray Bowen, examines the relationship between individual behavior and familial behavior, focusing on a family’s tendency to transmit behavior across generations (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Using the MTP concept and the Responsible Fathering Conceptual Model (Doherty, Kousneski, & Erickson, 1998) to frame this study, the experiences of nonresidential African American fathers were investigated to gain greater comprehension of perceptions of parenting and how these attitudes were obtained.

**Purpose**

Through the analysis of current research and the exploration of the experiences of nonresidential African American fathers, this project aimed to better understand the cultural phenomenon of nonresidential parenting as it relates to intergenerational processes. Four objectives directed the course of this research. The purpose of this study was to: 1) Understand how parenting beliefs and behaviors are transmitted from generation to generation in the African American community among nonresidential fathers, 2) investigate this population’s experiences related to parenting, 3) explore how perceptions regarding ethnic challenges impact the fathering role, and 4) develop a theoretical understanding regarding the relationship between multigenerational transmission and nonresidential African American fathers derived conceptually from the
collected data. These study objectives were met through the use of a qualitative design method using purposeful, maximum variation sample.

**Definition of Terms**

Major concepts of this study included *Multigenerational Transmission Process*, *Father Involvement/Responsible Fathering*, *Racism*, *Institutional Racism/Silent Racism*, and *Discrimination*. Focal demographic characteristics of this research consisted of *African Americans* and *Nonresidential Fathers*. Theoretical and operational definitions are provided for each of these main concepts.

**Multigenerational Transmission Process (MTP)**

*Theoretical Definition*

*Multigenerational Transmission Process* is a concept in Family Systems Theory that suggests that behaviors and beliefs can be transmitted within a family over multiple generations. Dysfunction in an individual is often a reflection of family dysfunction and familial functioning will most likely mirror individual functioning. This process is believed to occur over multiple generations within families (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

*Operational Definition*

Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2000) report in their definition of *Multigenerational Transmission Process* that children maybe vulnerable to their parents’ emotional patterns. *Intergenerational Transmission* of fathering skills is described by Shears, Summers, Boller, and Barclay-McLaughlin (2006) as fathers gaining parenting skills from their family. The terms *Multigenerational Transmission Process* and *Intergenerational*
Transmission are often used to describe the same concept initially derived from Bowen’s Family Systems Theory and both were used in this study to describe the phenomenon of the passing of beliefs and behaviors with a family across generations (Johnson & Nelson, 1998).

African American

Theoretical Definition

Latif and Latif (1994) describe African Americans as African descendants who were taken from their homelands and brought to the United States as slaves. The term African American has also been expanded to include all those of U.S. nationality who have African ancestry.

Operational Definition

Grover (2003) describes the traditional definition of African Americans as those U.S. citizens who are descendents of African slaves brought to the country during the slave trade. The terms African Americans and Blacks are commonly used interchangeably. In this study, African Americans were be limited to those who define themselves as African American and not “other Black” such as Caribbean, Africans, or European Blacks.

Nonresidential Father

Theoretical Definition

A nonresidential father is described by Hofferth (2003) as a biological father who does not reside in the same home as his child as a result of divorce, unsuccessful
cohabitation, or a non-marital relationship. Hofferth (2003) also suggests that a nonresidential father may or may not retain custody rights and privileges.

**Operational Definition**

King, Harris, and Heard (2004) define a nonresidential father as a father who does not reside with his child and is therefore less able to provide his child with economic, parental, and community resources.

**Father Involvement/Responsible Fathering**

**Theoretical Definition**

King (2003) assessed father involvement using the following eight measures: relationship quality, future relationship expectations, relationship effort, contact obligation, negative life with children, emotional support, unpaid assistance, and financial assistance. Relationship quality refers to the father’s perception of his overall relationship with his children while future relationship expectations refers to his expectations about the relationship between him and his child 10 years into the future. King (2003) defines the measure of relationship effort as “the amount of thought and effort the father puts into his relationships with children” (p. 386). Contact obligation is related to how much the father feels obligated to call, write or visit his adult children. Both items related to whether or not the father feels his family life with his children has been more negative than most people’s and if the father feels ashamed and embarrassed at times because of problems his children have caused him are combined to define the measure of negative life with children (King, 2003).
Emotional support refers to the number of hours per month a father provides emotional support (i.e. nurturing and giving advice) to his children. Unpaid assistance is defined as the number of hours per month that is spent offering nonmonetary assistance (i.e. transportation and childcare) to adult children and grandchildren. Finally, financial assistance is related to the average monthly contribution a father or his family living with him provided to adult children or grandchildren (King, 2003).

**Operational Definition**

Hofferth (2003) defines *father involvement* as the level or amount of responsibility that a father accepts for his children which encompasses managing the wellbeing of his children.

*Responsible fathering* derived from Levine and Pitt (As cited in Doherty, Kouneski & Erickson, 1998) includes the following aspects: 1) A man who waits to make a baby until he is completely prepared to support the child, 2) A man who establishes legal paternity of his child, 3) A man who shares with the mother of the child continuous care (mental and physical) for child, and 4) A man who shares with mother of the child continuous financial support of the child.

**Racism/Individual Racism**

**Theoretical Definition**

*Racism or Individual Racism* is described as an individual’s belief in the superiority of one race over another, rooted in prejudice (Anderson & Collins, 1998). Tatum (1997) defines racism as prejudice plus power suggesting that in order to be racist
the "superior" race must be able to withhold opportunity or resources from an "inferior" race.

**Operational Definition**

In this study, racism is defined using Tatum's definition, labeling African Americans as a race in the U.S. that is systematically at a disadvantage. Copenhaver-Johnson (2006) uses Tatum's definition of racism to describe this concept in her research on talking with children about race.

**Institutional Racism/Silent Racism**

**Theoretical Definition**

Anderson and Collins (1998) describe *Institutional Racism* as race-related power and privilege that is "systematic" and "rooted in society's structure" (p. 71). In her research, Trepagnier (2006) defines *Silent Racism* as racial inequality built into society, expressed through stereotypical images and paternalistic assumptions.

**Operational Definition**

Killian and Hardy (1998) discuss individual racism as the behavior of one or an insignificant number of people, but institutional racism as social systems or structures. Racism is often incorrectly defined as only prejudice which neglects to recognize the serious negative impact of more subtle forms of racism (Killian & Hardy, 1998).
**Discrimination**

**Theoretical Definition**

Yinger (1998) uses a legal definition of discrimination in the discussion of discrimination in consumer markets. Discrimination occurs when members of a protected class are treated unfavorably based solely on their membership to that class (Yinger, 1998).

**Operational Definition**

Trepagnier (2006) defines racial discrimination in the U.S. as “behavior that treats black Americans and other races unfairly compared to white Americans” (p.1).

**Assumptions**

This study was based upon the following assumptions:

1. Attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs are transmitted within family systems.
2. Subjects provided truthful demographic information and responses.
3. African American, nonresidential fathers were interested in sharing their perceptions and experiences with the researcher.
4. Nonresidential African American fathers participate at some level (financially, emotionally, or physically) in the lives of their children.
5. African Americans have experienced challenges as a result of their racial/ethnic background.
Justification

It is estimated that almost 50% of children the U.S. will at some time in their lives experience not living in the same home as their father (King, Harris, & Heard, 2004). For African American children, this statistic is higher (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). Research suggests that negative repercussions may be connected to the absence of fathers in the home (Sigle-Rushton & McLanahan, 2002). Movements such as the Responsible Fatherhood Initiative of the Bush Administration and SB0773 of the Illinois General Assembly that promote fatherhood through the directing of program funding, express the urgency and criticalness of initiating research in area of contemporary fatherhood behaviors (Bush, 2001; Illinois General Assembly, n.d.). Investigating the experiences of African American fathers that do not reside in the home with their children is essential to the rebuilding of these families. Furthermore, assessing and understanding parenting attitudes by this population is significant in facilitating the demonstration of responsible fathering behaviors. As Marc Morial (2007), the President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Urban League reports, “The absence of the black man in the black family will only lead to greater poverty for our community as a whole. It helps exacerbate the disparities already existing between minorities and whites in the United States” (p. 15).

This study was both workable and practical. The study was conducted in a metropolitan city with a large African American population making the obtainment of adequate sample feasible. Sample solicitation occurred in locations where high numbers of the target population frequent. It was anticipated that due to societal negative stigmas, this population was likely to be inclined to discuss their perceptions and experiences in hopes of obtaining greater understanding and tolerance.
Research on the topic of fatherhood is important as our society continues to seek methods of improving family quality and greater participation and responsibility from fathers. Personal challenges and a lack of resources can create barriers to father involvement (Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson, 1998). In reference to these barriers, Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth, and Lamb (2000) report that men’s ability to “effectively negotiate their roles as fathers will depend on how we (researchers, policy makers, practitioners) integrate our resources to institute policies and programs that aim at helping families help themselves” (p.133). Studying the perceptions of nonresidential African American fathers in relationship to the influence of their families of origin and race-related experiences may lead to the creation of programs most appropriate for this group.

Delimitations and Scope

Delimitations of the study included: 1) data collection limited to participants meeting eligibility requirements in Atlanta, Georgia, 2) the use of qualitative study methods that inhibit generalization, 3) the use of a small sample size to obtain a deeper and more complete understanding of participant’s responses, and 4) the study being limited to English-speaking, African American fathers, age 21 or older, who have a child under 18 who does not reside with them. The scope of this study included the influence of familial father figures attitudes on current fathers’ beliefs and behaviors, perception about the father’s role in the family, and the unique experiences of nonresidential African American fathers. This research did not include a detailed discussion of residential father involvement or the experiences of other ethnicities or cultures. This topic also did not
explore any specific age or gender of children impacted by father involvement. The topic instead sought to generate a new theory regarding the development of parenting behaviors and beliefs among nonresidential African American fathers.

Chapter I provided an introduction of the study and the purposes of this research. It also contained theoretical and operational definitions for major concepts that were reviewed in the study. Finally, study justification, delimitation, and scope were discussed.

Chapter II reviews current theoretical and empirical literature related to the study. Based on gaps in the literature and empirical findings, the research question is presented. Chapter III describes the methodology that was used to answer the research question. Research design, population, sampling procedures, the data collection and data analysis processes, ethical considerations, and the evaluation of methods are reviewed in this chapter. Chapter IV includes the study’s results and Chapter V provides a discussion of the study’s findings along with implications and recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, RESEARCH QUESTIONS, AND HYPOTHESES

Review of the Literature

Multigenerational Transmission Process

*Family Systems Theory*

In 1966, Murray Bowen published six concepts that are known as the original concepts of Family Systems Theory (FST). These concepts included: differentiation of self, triangles, nuclear family emotional process, family projection process, multigenerational transmission process, and sibling position. In the 1970’s two additional concepts were added to the theory: emotional cutoff and societal emotional process. In 1988, Bowen along with his colleague Michael Kerr, published a book titled, *Family Evaluation*. This text added to the present knowledge regarding the conceptualization of family theory, and the use of the concepts in assessing family dynamics (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

Murray Bowen was essential in the development of FST. This was demonstrated during his clinical involvement in a five-year project at the National Institute of Mental Health. The project involved clinical observations of communication patterns with individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia and their respective families. Bowen’s observations of these families’ communication and relationship patterns led him to the following observations: the mother and schizophrenic child were overly involved with each other and this process or relationship extended to the entire family. The over-
involvement or enmeshed family system referred to family members or the mother-child relationship, not having clear boundaries and members constantly reacting to the behaviors or words of each other. He determined that a family was an emotionally interdependent unit and the members functioned in reciprocal relationship to each other. After the project ended in 1959, Bowen continued to build his theory, noticing that this family relationship process was not only in dysfunctional families, but in all families. He believed that the family process could be placed on a continuum; from increased to decreased dependency and reactivity to one another. In addition, Bowen observed that the families' position and autonomy depended on their level of emotional functioning (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2000) have explained FTS the theory as a transgenerational approach to family therapy. The authors explained, as described by Bowen that the motivating force behind human behavior is the “push and pull” of family members, seeking a balance between togetherness and distance. Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2000) describe Bowen and Kerr’s (1988) eight concepts of Family Systems Theory. The first concept, differentiation of self, is defined as the degree to which one is able to separate their feelings from their cognitive functions, that is, not let their emotions drive their behavior. Triangles represent the three-way emotional interactions of family members. When people triangulate, they bring a third person into a two-person interaction to deal with the stress of the interaction. The nuclear family emotional system refers to the marital dyad and their offspring’s family level of differentiation, or ability to handle stress and tension. It is thought that people are likely to choose spouses of similar levels of differentiation as themselves. If two poorly differentiated people create a family,
that family is likely to be more unstable and have a difficult time managing anxiety, resulting in the use of methods such as fighting and distancing (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2000).

Family projection process is the notion that parents transmit their low level of differentiation onto their children. Emotional cutoff refers to how family members manage their emotional connections to each other. It describes the process that children from these families experience as they attempt to develop autonomy in the context of family relationships. The concept of multigenerational transmission process describes the transmission of emotions throughout many generations of the family. Sibling position refers to the influence of birth order on functioning. Finally, societal regression is the idea that society, similar to a dysfunctional family, goes through struggles of opposing forces of undifferentiation and individuation (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2000).

Theoretically and clinically, family systems theory is driven by two basic goals: reduction of anxiety with symptom relief, and increasing family members’ level of differentiation in an effort to improve their ability to adapt to life’s challenges (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2000). To apply this theory to practice, Bowen constructed a family genogram to aid in the process of understanding and examining the relationships among family members. Hines and Boyd-Franklin (1996) describe a genogram as a method of gathering information about the functions of various family members and their relationship patterns and themes. The genogram model is originally developed by Monica McGoldrick and Randy Gerson. Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2000) report that a genogram can be created using symbols such as: a square representing males or circle representing women, to illustrate family members ages, sibling position, marital status,
and deaths, which may reveal significant multigenerational relationship patterns among family members.

Family systems theory adds value to society, as it describes the multigenerational family relationship processes, and how the interpretation and expression of developmental struggles may contribute to the common concept of the dysfunctional family system. It is an approach often used in family therapy by psychologists and therapists. The concept of multigenerational transmission process suggests that parent’s emotional issues can be passed down within a family over several generations. Kerr and Bowen (1988) describe the relationship between individual functioning and family functioning across generations as the following:

If a multigenerational family diagram that includes data for assessment of functioning of each family member (and of each nuclear family unit) is examined as a whole, marked differences in the functioning of individuals (and in the average level of functioning of nuclear family units) are seen to be linked to trends in functioning that develop over a number of generations. A family member whose functioning is unstable in most aspects is not spawned by a nuclear family whose average level of functioning is stable in most aspects. Nor is a nuclear family whose average level of functioning is unstable in most aspects spawned by nuclear families in the preceding generation whose average levels of functioning where stable in most aspects. People may function somewhat higher or somewhat lower than the average level of functioning of the nuclear family in which they grew up, but quantum jumps in functioning (up or down) are uncommon). In other words, very unstable functioning in one family member is
usually associated with unstable functioning of other family members in the existing and preceding few generations. (p. 222)

Multigenerational transmission process or *intergenerational transmission* explains how one’s psychological and behavioral status can be profoundly impacted by not only the members of one’s immediate family, but also one’s extended family members and ancestors (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Based on Bowen’s theory, behavioral patterns are expected to be found as family lineage is investigated. Using the perspective of MTP, the proposed study seeks to understand how parenting attitude, values, and behavior are transmitted among nonresidential African American fathers and the subsequent experiences of this population.

*Intergenerational Transmission*

Shears, Summers, Boller, and Barclay-McLaughlin (2006) conducted a qualitative study to explore the influence of intergenerational transmission on fathering roles within low-income families. Sixteen fathers from the Early Head Start program were selected to complete in-depth interviews about their perceptions of being a father. All but one of the participants were considered “low income,” with an average monthly income of $932. The sample included two Latino fathers and 14 European American fathers. No African American fathers participated in this study.

The study uses grounded theory methodology which includes conducting qualitative research in efforts to find new and emerging theories. Six interviewing questions were generated to guide the interview, however only the responses from two of the questions are used in the actual report of the study. These two questions are, “What
does being a ‘good father’ mean to you?’ and “Talk about your experiences with your own father” (Shears et al., 2006, p. 263). The interviews were conducted by different researchers, all of them undergoing the same training of interviewing techniques and participating in project-wide conference calls for the purpose of discussing and revising probing questions. Using triangulation, each of the 16 interview transcripts were read and analyzed sequentially by all research team members and using constant comparison techniques. Emerging themes were selected from transcripts of the interviews which were categorized to inform the model for the study (Shears et al., 2006).

Results included themes identified as the importance of “being there” for their children, fathers playing traditional roles such as a protector, provider, teacher, and authority figure, and participation in more contemporary fathering roles such as care giving, being a part of a two-parent family, and playing with their children. Researchers also report that fathers’ responses indicate that their fathers’ parenting behaviors did have an impact on their attitudes about fathering. Study limitations include small sample size preventing generalization, lack of diversity among sample, and variation in the interviewing skills of some of the interviewers. The researchers anticipate that by the project’s end, over 800 men will be interviewed, providing greater credibility (Shears et al., 2006). In agreement with Shears et al. (2006) Chen and Kaplan (2001), Teachman (2002), and Brook, Whiteman, and Zheng (2002), support the concept of intergenerational transmission, providing evidence that parental behaviors and attitudes have an influence on the beliefs and behaviors of their offspring.

Chen and Kaplan (2001) examined the affects of intergenerational transmission on constructive parenting. Constructive parenting, also known as authoritative parenting,
is a parental style that is considered supportive to the child. Parents demonstrating the constructive parenting style were expected to exhibit and transmit to their adolescent children psychosocial attributes including a healthy psychological state, ability to positively relate interpersonally, willingness to participate in social activities, and role-specific modeling skills. Using a three-wave, longitudinal study, including 2,338 subjects, the researchers investigated if experiencing good parenting techniques as an adolescent positively impacts an individual’s future parenting behaviors. Results confirmed constructive parenting being transmitted across generations.

Teachman (2002) studied childhood living arrangements and the impact of Intergenerational Transmission of divorce. Secondary data from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth consisting of a female-only sample of 4,947 subjects was used. Teachman (2002) found an increase of divorce risks and marital disruption for women who as children lived separately from both parents or were born out of wedlock.

Brook, Whiteman, and Zheng (2002) conducted a study, examining toddler problematic behavior as an effect of intergenerational transmission. A sample of 254 toddlers, one of their parents, and their one of their grandmothers were interviewed using scales. Findings confirm intergenerational transmission and demonstrate a predictive relationship between toddler behaviors and parental/grand parenting factors including parent personality, marital harmony, drug use, parent-grandparent relationship, and parent-toddler relationship.
Responsible Fathering

Father Involvement and Child Outcomes

Amato and Rivera (1999) conducted a study to test the association between father involvement and children’s outcomes. The study titled, Paternal Involvement and Children’s Behavior Problems, used data from the National Survey of Families and Household (NSFH). They used a non-experimental, causal-comparative, cross-sectional design. The sample included 994 couples with at least one child between the ages of 5 to 18. The literature review for the study was very limited and contained very few empirical studies to support the research. The authors defined their dependent, independent, and controlled variables. Empirical studies examining child outcomes, adolescent’s ratings of paternal nurturance, children’s ratings of paternal acceptance, and paternal engagement were reviewed, leading to conflict in the literature about the effect of paternal involvement on mother identified behavioral problems of the child. The authors reported that empirical evidence is weak in reference to demonstrating a positive relationship between father involvement and child behaviors. Amato and Rivera (1999) stated that past studies have failed to examine the quality of the mother-child relationship as well as use multiple sources of information on father’s behavior and child outcomes. This resulted in the authors investigating paternal involvement and how it influenced offspring behavior among White, Black, and Latino fathers to provide evidence cross-cultural regarding father involvement and child behaviors.

Amato and Rivera (1999) used data from the 1987-1988 NSFH that included a subset of 994 couples from the original 13,017 sample. There was a reported 74%
response rate from the main respondent and an 83% response rate from spouses. They reported using a structural equation model which was appropriate for this study due to the large sample size. Structural equation modeling is often used when a study explores latent constructs or abstract variables that are psychological in nature and more difficult to measure. Structural equation modeling permits an individual latent construct to be linked with multiple measures through the process of modeling measurement error (Rigdon, n.d.). Using this method, the authors were able to examine the relationship between father involvement and child outcomes.

The authors identified the independent variable as paternal involvement, the dependent variable as the mother's reports of behavioral problems among children, and the control variables as parental age, parental education, family size, and stepfather status. The results indicated there is a link between father involvement and behavior of their children. Findings supported the hypothesis of positive father involvement being negatively associated with behavior problems of children.

Amato and Rivera's (1999) literature contribution included the finding of a negative relationship between the number of behavioral problems exhibited by children and paternal involvement, indicating the results provided evidence of a link between higher reports of father involvement activities and lower reports of child behavior problems. The authors have also contributed to the literature through their inclusion of stepfather factors. The authors reported that current research is limited on stepfather factors and their study adds empirical evidence regarding this area of inquiry. They discussed several limitations of their study, which include: not being able to investigate father interaction with individual children, not being able to establish the causal order due
to the data being collected at the same time, and mother bias about her involvement and children’s behavior. The authors reported future studies should include data on a focal child and include a longitudinal design and multiple sources.

Kissman’s (1997) review of literature on non-custodial fatherhood findings are consistent with Amato and Rivera’s (1999) and Dick and Bronson’s (2005) study on adult men’s self-esteem. Kissman (1997) reports empirical studies have found relationships between father presence and child well-being, including higher academic achievement, self-esteem, social competence, boy’s development of initiative and industry, and girl’s delay of sexual activity. Dick and Bronson (2005) found that boys living with their fathers during formative years were positively associated with high self-esteem as an adult. In relation to Amato and Rivera’s study, Wical and Doherty (2005) conducted a study using questionnaires, videotaping, and daily diaries to examine the reliability of father reports concerning their involvement with their children. Results indicate that fathers’ self-reports were similar to those of the mother concerning his level of participation with the child. These finding support the results of Amato and Rivera’s (1999) study by suggesting that self reporting data from the sample of mothers and fathers is likely to be valid.

Internal validity for Amato and Rivera’s (1999) study was strengthened by the use of hypothesis testing of propositions in child development theory, the reliability and validity of seven measures of variables resulting in a high level of data quality, data analysis, and clearly defined procedures allowing replication. The study had the potential for greater external validity due to using a national sample; however, study limitations included the inability to generalize to the public due to disproportionate sample sizes.
across ethnicities. Future studies should include a longitudinal study with a survey better created to measure variable in the study.

**Responsible Fathering Conceptual Model**

Doherty, Kouneski, and Erickson (1998) suggest a conceptual model for understanding the various factors and constructs that have an impact on the father-child bond. They identify the extensive empirical literature on father involvement, but report limited published theories to guide the study of father involvement. Many of the studies on the topic of father involvement have been derived using theories not directly constructed for the research of father involvement. The authors developed their concept from one of the most commonly used theories on fatherhood, Lamb and Pleck’s 1985 Four-Factor Model of father involvement. This theory states that father involvement is based on motivation, skills/self-confidence, social support, and institutional practices.

Doherty et al.’s. (1998) conceptual model is composed of five main concepts: father factors, mother factors, coparental factors, child factors, and contextual factors. The model is arranged in a triangle shape, with the father, mother and child at the end points of the triangle. The father, mother, and child factors are placed next to each family member respectively. Coparental factors are placed between the mother and father side of the triangle, and contextual factors are placed between the father and child side of the triangle. Doherty et al. (1998) suggest that each factor directly or indirectly affects the level of involvement the father has with the child. The authors also provide an operational definition of responsible fathering. Their definition is derived from Levine and Pitt (1998) which includes the following aspects: 1) A man who waits to make a baby
until he is completely prepared to support the child, 2) A man who establishes legal paternity of his child, 3) A man who shares with the mother of the child continuous care (mental and physical) for child, and 4) A man who shares with mother of the child continuous financial support of the child.

Doherty et al.’s (1998) research adds to our current knowledge base and may facilitate future empirical studies on father involvement. This study describes fathering as a basic social construction and a role that cannot be defined outside of the family context. Their model is useful in considering the multivaried aspects that may influence the level of participation among fathers and their children. It demonstrates the various elements that impact fathering on a daily basis. The model helps create an understanding of how fatherhood may be a different experience for each individual father, depending on the influences of the five major concepts. These concepts are interrelated in this multidimensional model. Due to the authors’ ability to provide clarity to these five concepts, this model could be beneficial to other disciplines such as: psychology, social work, education, and sociology.

Doherty et al. (1998) suggest the need for more theoretical research on this topic to enhance their construct. The visual model and description of the five concepts are helpful in clarifying the various influences and how each factor can have an effect on the father-child bond. They include discussion on legal paternity, absence versus present fathers, and how financial support such as child support payments impacts the father-child bond. Their work raises more questions and challenges present concerns suggesting the need for more research to improve this model. A weakness of this theory is that the
authors do not provide many of their own ideas of how this model can be used in future research.

Summers, Boller, and Raikes (2004) discuss the responsible fathering conceptual model in their qualitative study of low-income fathers’ perceptions of the support they receive or feel would be useful in assisting them with their fathering duties. They interviewed 575 men assessing the barriers they experience in fathering and what types of support fathers have or they desire to have. The sample included fathers from Hispanic (30.2%), African American (24.8%), White (42.4%), and other (2.7%) populations. The results of the study supported the idea that the five concepts of the responsible fathering model impact father’s perceptions of their role and involvement with their children. The fathers in the study reported that issues such as time, money, work, spousal support, and community support affected their bond with their child.

Walker and McGraw (2000) critically reviewed the conceptual framework cited in Doherty et al. (1998) and reported that the model lacked empirical support, and statements made by the original authors were at times exaggerated. They criticize Doherty et al. for restricting their study to biological, heterosexual fathers. Walker and McGraw state that research demonstrates that children’s needs could be met with or without father involvement and that the gender of a parent may not be significant. The authors believe that Doherty et al. exaggerated the idea of mothers’ playing a gatekeeper role and present mothers in a negative fashion as hindering father involvement. Instead, Walker and McGraw discuss the definition of maternal gatekeeping as involving housework and childcare. They suggest that gatekeeping is an idea that has been formed
to help understand lower levels of father involvement due to women enjoying and finding housework and childcare easier to do than men.

Walker and McGraw (2000), in their analysis, report that financial support from fathers is the best provision fathers can offer their children and the authors feel that Doherty et al. (1998) minimize this aspect of fatherhood. They disagree with Doherty's statement concerning fathers' perceptions of mothers misusing child support funds and report that it is more of a difference in opinion between how fathers and mothers feel that the money should be allocated in meeting child needs. They believe the authors place too much faith in marriage as a predictor of better child outcomes. The authors report there is not sufficient literature to support the idea that nonresidential father involvement positively affects children. Finally, Walker and McGraw state that Doherty et al. stress fathers suffering from negative social forces, such as racism, but do not consider that mothers suffer from these same forces.

Doherty, Kouneski, and Erickson (2000) offer a formal response to the criticisms of Walker and McGraw (2000). They report that the focus of their model was to highlight the factors that influence father involvement. They denounce the accusation that they believe that only heterosexual couples can successfully raise children. The authors state that they reserve the right to focus only on biological fathers and referred readers to literature on gay fathers.

Doherty et al. (2000) concur with Walker and McGraw (2000) regarding their discussion of maternal gatekeeping. In Doherty et al.'s initial study they used the word "many" in reference to mothers' ambivalent behavior. The authors report they could have used a better term than many, such as some, to describe the issue's frequency and
addressed father’s resistance as well. Although the authors give Walker and McGraw credit for their criticism of maternal gatekeeping, they disagree with the notion that financial support is a father’s greatest contribution to his offspring. Doherty et al. warn scholars about the negative implications of this idea and feel it may create justification for fathers to pay child support and disengage from other forms of activity. The authors feel it was unfair for Walker and McGraw to use their statement about mothers’ misuse of funds out of its proper context. Their original statement discussed past literature that reported fathers’ views of why they are not compliant with child support. Finally, they stand firm on their belief that literature supports the concept that involved fathers having a positive effect on child outcomes (Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson, 2000).

Despite Walker and McGraw’s (2000) disagreement with the proposed conceptual model by Doherty et al. (1998) the responsible fathering model still offers an informed perspective of the multiple aspects that impact the level of activism and participation among fathers. In contradiction to Walker and McGraw’s criticisms, empirical literature by Doherty et al. as well as other empirical findings on the topic, suggests that father involvement does influence child outcomes (Cabrera et al., 2000; Dick & Bronson, 2005) and that maternal gatekeeping may be a barrier to father involvement (Baum, 2004; De Luccie, 1994; Hamer, 1998; Hoffman & Moon, 1999). Empirical findings suggest that other forms of paternal support, such as quality time, are as beneficial to child outcomes as financial support (Laakso & Adams, 2006; Peart, Pungello, Campbell, & Richey, 2006). There is also evidence that fathers may experience negative social forces that directly affects their ability to parent (Hamer, 1998; Krissman, 1997).
More recently, the Bush Administration used Doherty, Kouneski, and Erickson's (1998) concept as the foundation of their Responsible Fatherhood Initiative. The researchers expanded their conceptual framework to include programmatic recommendations based on their initial model. One of their recommendations is that fathering programs should consider how the father’s family of origin including his parents and other relatives, potentially influences fathering skills and efforts (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d). Within the responsible fathering model, this notion corresponds with the father sub-factor of father’s relationship with his father influencing the father-child bond (Doherty et al., 1998).

**Traditional and Contemporary Fathering Roles**

Historically, the role of the father has been mainly attributed to patriarchal and traditional social norms such as the breadwinner. In addition to being the sole provider, fathers were expected to direct the family in terms of morals and values, as well as role model masculine gender traits. More recently, this idea of fatherhood has been challenged by the increase of mothers participating in the provision of financial resources, as well as the admittance that traditional fathering roles were defined and limited to ideals from Caucasian, middle class sources (Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb, 2000).

Duncan (2000) suggests that the progression of the father role in the family has been somewhat of a cyclic pattern. In pre-industrial times, the father was highly involved with childrearing, teaching offspring how to work, allowing sons to work alongside of him, and also teaching both academic and spiritual lessons. During industrialization, the father left the home to work and transitioned into playing more of the breadwinner role.
Work outside of the home caused the father to emotionally detach from the family. Currently, fatherhood appears to mimic pre-industrial times where fathers continue to be the breadwinner, but also participate in domestic duties (Duncan, 2000).

Evans and Fogarty (1999) suggest that common fathering roles can be grouped into five categories: The Five P’s. The Five P’s include participator/problem solver, playmate, principled guide, provider, and preparer. As the participator/problem solver, the father takes on a helping role in relation to being a role model and teaching the child decision making skills. The role of playmate involves the father engaging in physical play with his child. Being the principled guide is connected to the father providing correction and praise to the child and through this process teaching the child lessons regarding consequences and rewards. In the provider role, the father offers both emotional and material resources to meet his child’s needs. Finally, the role of preparer is related to the father teaching his child “life lessons” or preparing the child for what to expect in the real world.

Duncan (2000) suggests that a father’s involvement with his children makes a great difference in their lives and that there are multiple ways that fathers can engage in family life and childrearing. Participation recommendations include fathers becoming involved in early childhood development, embracing the role of a playmate, and modeling nurturing and economic behaviors. Duncan (2000) proposes that fathers are fit to play the nurturing role in the lives of their children. He states that, “Fathers are as capable as mothers of caretaking, demonstrating competence, and being sensitive to a child’s needs” (Duncan, 2000, p. 2).
Thompson (1994) observes that the role of a father may potentially face multiple barriers in the context of divorcing couples. These obstacles, including custody standard, visitation policies, child support issues, and other economic arrangements, may create disruption to the father-child bond. In addition, the father may struggle with the adjustment and role clarity. Thompson (1994) states that “contemporary portrayals of fatherhood... continue to empathize their economic support obligations and their alleged disinterest in-and inadequacy for-child care. It is in this context of conflicting and largely denigrating cultural images that men seek to redefine fatherhood for themselves…” (p. 230).

Nonresidential Fathering and African Americans

Residential Status and Child Outcomes

Marsiglio et al. (2000) found 38 studies published between the years 1990-2000 that examined the relationship between nonresidential fathers and child outcomes. Out of the 38, 24 included frequency of contact data and only 42% of those found a significant correlation between the level of contact and child outcomes. However, nine studies were found that showed a relationship between authoritative parenting styles of nonresidential fathers and positive child outcomes. They conclude that parenting style of nonresidential fathers and how they interact with their children is a better predictor of child outcomes than amount of time spent.

Mandara, Murray, and Joyner (2005) conducted a study to investigate if fathers’ absence impacted gender role development among African American adolescents. They
discuss the common theory in the African American community that “Mothers love their sons and raise their daughters” (Mandara et al., 2005, p. 210). The meaning of this statement is that African American mothers tend to be more permissive and not as tough on their sons while being more demanding of their daughters and pushing them to be independent (Mandara, Murray, & Joyner, 2005). Morrow (2003) ascribes this phenomenon to the mental genocide that occurred during slavery. According to Morrow (2003) the Willie Lynch Letters were written and sent to slave owners which taught them how to train slaves to be permanently weak and submissive to their masters. Gender roles were purposely broken and reversed in order to keep mental control over slaves for many generations. In reference to this process Morrow (2003) adopts the following statements from the Willie Lynch Letters:

We have reversed the relationships. In her natural uncivilized state she would have a strong dependency on the uncivilized nigger male, and she would have a limited protective tendency towards her independent male offspring and would raise the family offspring to be dependent like her. Nature had provided for this type of balance. We reversed her nature by burning and pulling one civilized nigger apart and bull whipping the other to the point of death—all in her presence. By her being left alone, unprotected, with the male image destroyed, the ordeal caused her to move from her psychological dependent state to a frozen independent state. In this frozen psychological state of independence she will raise her male and female offspring in reversed roles. For fear of the young male’s life, she will psychologically train him to be mentally weak and dependent, but
physically strong. Because she has become psychologically independent, she will train her female offspring psychologically independent. (p. 49)

Morrow (2003) reports this same mentality continues to cause confusion and disorder within the black family. Mandara et al. (2005) suggests that father-presence in the home may aid in restoring more traditional gender roles.

Given this theory about maternal behaviors among Blacks, Mandara et al. (2005) hypothesized that boys from father-absent homes would have lower perceptions of current and ideal masculinity than would boys from father-present homes, girls from father-absent homes would have lower perceptions of current and ideal femininity than would girls from father-present homes, and father-present adolescents would be more traditional in their role development than father-absent adolescents. To test their hypotheses, the researchers sampled 106, 15-year old African American youth from Southern California and their parents. Of this sample 25 boys and 27 girls were father-absent while 25 boys and 29 girls were father-present. Sample was obtained by using a list of African American students from four school districts in Southern California who met study criteria. Participants received a small monetary gift for taking several assessments including the Family Environmental Scale (FES), the Multi-Dimensional Self-Esteem Inventory (MDSEI), and the Adjective Q-Sort adapted from the Self-Descriptive Q-Set that was given to them by a team of undergraduate and graduate African American research assistants. Assessments were conducted at a time and location convenient to the participants (Mandara et al., 2005).

Data was analyzed using a 2x2 multivariate analysis of covariance using marital status and gender. Self-esteem, income, and the three variables from the FES were used
as covariates. Dependent variables included ideal masculinity and femininity. Results agreed with the hypothesis that boys from father-absent homes had lower perceptions about current masculinity than father-present boys, but did not agree with the hypothesis that they would also have lower perceptions of ideal masculinity. Opposing their hypothesis, neither group differed in current or ideal femininity.

In relation to the girls, results also agree with their hypothesis that father-absent girls had lower perceptions of their ideal femininity than father-present girls, but opposed the hypothesis by demonstrating no significant difference in current femininity. However, father-absent girls were found to have higher perceptions of masculinity than father-present girls. There were no differences between the two in reference to ideal masculinity. Results also support the final hypothesis that father-present adolescents have more traditional gender role perceptions than adolescents from father-absent homes (Mandara et al., 2005).

Limitations to the study include other mediating variables that were not accounted for, the small sample size, the sample only being taken in Southern California, and questions concerning the usefulness of using marital status as a measure. One of the possible mediating factors highlighted that could have affected results is the influence of extended kin networks. The authors admit that father-absent adolescents may spend time with other male relative who have aided in their gender role development. In understanding the African American community, assessing the impact of extended family is suggested (Mandara et al., 2005)
Leite and McKenry (2006) conducted a study about African American father involvement after separation or divorce. Their study also collected data from the NSFH, utilizing a non-experimental, causal comparative, cross-sectional design of 119 men who did not live with their juvenile children. Leite and McKenry’s literature review was thorough and current in discussing a theory about role transition from custodial to non-custodial fathering. Empirical studies of nonresidential father status and ethnicity’s impact on involvement were examined and the authors found limited research on the experience of African American nonresidential fathers who have transitioned into this status through divorce or separation. In their study, Leite and McKenry’s challenged the conceptualized Model of Role Transition developed in 1979 by Burr, Leigh, Day, and Constantine (as cited in Leite & McKenry, 2006) to better understand the experience of roles transition among African American fathers.

Variables measured included the level of father involvement, roles satisfaction, importance ascribed to the father roles, institutional roles clarity, co-parental conflict, and geographical distance as suggested by Burr’s et al. Model of Role Transition. Leite and McKenry (2006) report using polyserial correlations, analyzing these correlations by using the asymptotic covariance matrix. They report non-significant chi-square statistics for all three involvement indicators (face-to-face visits, telephone/letter contact, and participation in decision making), suggesting a strong model-to-data fit. Leite and McKenry (2006) used the asymptotic covariance matrix to analyze the data because it “...provides a mechanism for understanding the large sample behaviors of estimators that are not continuously measured or normally distributed” (p.12).
Findings supported the hypothesis of low father involvement being related to conflict with mothers, geographic distance from children and lack of clarity about the father role. The authors' report that the findings suggest that African American fathers may be more likely to be involved with their children when they experience less conflict with the mother of their children and when the father role is more salient for them. The strength of the study as reported by Leite and McKenry (2006) is the support of the model in the prediction of individual involvement variables. Limitations reported by the authors are the use of secondary data leading to constrained and possibly inappropriate survey items for variables, variability of survey items, and sample size issues. Future study suggestions include longitudinal study of these variables, the complex relationships among the variables, and the level to which other structural barriers impact the quality of the nonresident father’s role and involvement.

Leite and McKenry’s (2006) findings are consistent with Hamer’s (1997) study of fatherless Black children and Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth, and Lamb’s (2000) literature review. Hamer (1997) found that Black, non-custodial father’s viewed fatherhood differently than traditional ideas of fatherhood; spending time, providing emotional support, and providing discipline as the three most important functions of a father. Cabrera et al. (2000) report that there are inconsistencies in past literature about what responsible fathering actually consists of and lack of clarity of the father role.

Internal validity of Leite and McKenry’s (2006) study was increased with the use of hypothesis testing of propositions in the model of role transition theory, the reliability and validity of six measures of variables resulting in a high level of data quality, data analysis, and clearly defined procedures allowing replication. The study’s external
validity was strengthened with the use of a national survey, making it more generalizable. Limitations in the study include the use of secondary data and the possible variability that is found within some of the survey items. An example given of variability issues is an item that measures contact between father and child with one of the choices being a range of one to three times of month. The authors feel that this item and its choices do not provide adequate assessment of regularity and quality of contact. Leite and McKenry (2006) report that further efforts should explore the complexity among variable relationships. Future studies should also aim at studying the same variables in a longitudinal study and more research in the areas of father role enactment and the attitudes and behaviors of nonresidential fathers.

Hamer and Marchioro (2002) conducted a study about the circumstances that influence African American fathers to become custodial parents. They used a non-experimental, descriptive design, interviewing 24 African American, low-income, full-time fathers. Hamer and Marchioro’s literature review was brief. The theoretical framework for the study is Urie Brofenbrenner’s 1979 ecological approach which is a framework for understanding African American fathers’ experiences. Empirical studies of role adaptation and men’s ability to adequately care for their children were examined, leading to the major gap and conflict in the literature about the experience of low-income, Black fathers transitioning from part-time to full-time fathering. Hamer and Marchioro’s study examines the perspectives of African American men in their adjustment from non-custodial parenting to custodial fatherhood as well as the circumstances that resulted in the choice to become full-time parents.
The sample consisted of 24 working-class, low-income, Black fathers who were the full-time caregiver of at least one child under age 18, and did not live with the mother of the child. Interviews were conducted with the sample that ranged from 1.5 to 3 hours in length. Of the interviews, 18 were face-to-face interviews, while 6 of them were telephone interviews. Data collection procedures were clearly described; however IRB study approval was not discussed. Hamer and Marchioro (2002) found that all of the fathers reported obtaining custody due to mother’s expressed lack of interest to parent, child being removed from home due to neglect or abuse, or a child who actively sought to live with the father. The authors also found that making the role transition was affected by the father’s lack of confidence in parenting skills, their economic status, and acclamation from single-hood to single parenting. Fathers also reported having negative experiences within their attempts to obtain public assistance and the legal system. Finally, the fathers reported having little or no support from the child’s mother, including emotional and financial support. Limitations reported by the authors are the results not being able to fully capture the complexity and diversity among Blacks and not being able to view the long term implications of paternal primary caregiving. They suggested future studies contain longitudinal analysis of full-time fathering and further examination of the needs of primary paternal caregivers.

Hamer and Marchioro’s (2002) findings are consistent with Coles’ (2001) study on the parenting roles and goals of single, Black, full-time fathers and Coles (2003) study on the factors that influence the decision to parent among Black, single, custodial fathers. Coles (2001) discusses the importance of identifying the roles and goals of full-time fathers. In 2003, Coles found that employment, secure housing and father’s age to be
associated with Black father’s ability to take on the responsibility of full-time custody. Sample for Hamer and Marchioro’s study was not gained through randomization and only consists of a small number of participants from the Midwest region of the U.S., preventing the study from being generalized to the public. The review of theoretical literature and empirical literature was brief and did not strongly support the study. Limitations of the study include the small sample size and recruitment of the sample that included men who desired to obtain custody of their children rather than being asked to take custody. Future studies should contain a larger, national sample, and attempt to gain a higher level of trustworthiness.

**Perceptions of Nonresidential African American Fathers**

Hamer (1998) conducted a study about the factors that African American fathers report inhibit and enhance their involvement with their children. Hamer used a non-experimental, descriptive design, of thirty-eight Black American non-custodial fathers between the ages 19 and 46. Hamer’s literature review was concise but lacked identifying theories about fatherhood. Empirical studies of barriers to father involvement, ethnicity’s impact on involvement, and mother’s expectations of fathers were examined. Hamer (1998) reports the existing literature do not adequately highlight the unique experience of African American fathers and what they believe prevents their involvement with their children. To better understand this population, Hamer interviewed Black fathers on their perceptions of what inhibits and enhances their involvement in efforts to better understand what fathers believe helps and hinders their participation in child-rearing.
Hamer (1998) recruited her sample of 38 respondents by utilizing advertisements in newspapers, newsletters, and bulletin boards, as well as face-to-face recruitment by the author. Hamer (1998) used qualitative methods, conducting interviews that were from 45 minutes to 2 hours in length and included both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Data collection procedures were clearly described, and IRB approval was not discussed.

Findings suggest that the three common factors that impact father involvement are the father’s relationship with the mother of his child, the lack of time, and the proximity or physical distance from the child. Hamer’s interpretation of these findings is that the relationship of the father with the child’s mother can be categorized in three ways: friendly, intimate, and antagonistic relationships. Lack of time also was linked to employment issues. Lack of time and proximity affected child involvement if the father had children from two or more relationships. Hamer concluded that antagonistic relationships with the mother, lack of time, and greater distances from child were reported as barriers to Black fathers being more involved with their children. Strengths of the study reported by Hamer are its support for past research that suggest that mothers can act as gatekeepers, preventing fathers from being involved with their children.

Hamer’s (1998) findings are consistent with King, Harris, and Heard’s (2004) study of racial and ethnic diversity in nonresident father involvement, Allen and Hawkins’ (1999) study on maternal gatekeeping, and Hoffman and Moon’s (1999) study on women’s support for father involvement with children. King et al. (2004) found that racial/ethnic differences exist for many aspects of non-custodial father involvement. Allen and Hawkins (1999) found that maternal gatekeeping consisted of standards and responsibilities (the idea that the mother is basically responsible for family work),
differentiated family roles (mothers’ expectations and beliefs about the allocation of family work), and maternal identity confirmation dimensions, and could lead to fathering limitations and fewer opportunities to participate in family work. Hoffman and Moon (1999) found that nontraditional gender role attitudes, positive ratings of trust in relationships, and low hostility towards men contributed to women being more supportive of father involvement in the lives of their children.

Hamer’s (1998) study used a small sample that was recruited through non-randomization methods, preventing findings from being generalized into the population. Possible limitations to the study include the sample size and recruitment. Future studies should include a larger population recruited through more random methods.

Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth, and Lamb (2000) provide an appropriate assessment of the role of fatherhood in relation to ethnic and cultural differences:

Perhaps now more than ever we appreciate the diversity of fathers, including cultural and ethnic variations in the meaning of fatherhood, roles of fathers, and their influences on children. No single definition of “successful fatherhood” and no ideal “father roles” can claim universal acceptance or empirical support. Rather, fathers’ expectations about what they should do, what they actually do, and their effects on children must be viewed within the contexts of family, community, culture, and current history. These ethnic and culturally diverse conceptions of fatherhood have differential effects on children’s outcomes and might work through different pathways. Such research is critical for program design and implementation (p.133).
Ethnic Challenges of African American Males

African Americans in the U.S. as a group have historical and ongoing experiences with racism and discrimination (Latif & Latif, 1994). Continued struggles with inequality have resulted in African American males experiencing disproportionately worse conditions in America than white males. The 2007 Equality Index by the National Urban League reports that black males earn $12,374 annually less than their white counterparts, the unemployment rate for black males is more than twice that of whites, black males have the highest death rate of any group, jail sentences for black males were longer than for white males in all crime categories, and black males are more than three times as likely to be imprisoned once arrested (Thompson & Parker, 2007). Overall, black males were found to be underperforming in all major categories (Morial, 2007). Morial (2007) states:

This state of underachievement, with its devastating and far reaching ramifications, is the most serious economic and civil rights challenge we face today. It’s a problem with a major rippling effect. Not only does it impact individual black men. It also hurts their families and communities. It’s a problem for everyone in this nation (p. 13).

Gordon, Gordon and Nembhard (1994) conducted an extensive literature review in an effort to become knowledgeable regarding current research available on black males. They categorized their findings into four types of research: demographic and statistical issues, psychosocial issues, political/economic issues, and educational issues. Their literature analysis of psychosocial issues related to black males resulted in the
finding of research frequently focused on how this population responds to inequality, discrimination, and poverty in the United States. Gordon et al. (1994) highlight studies related to the discriminatory behavior and structural inequalities of the U.S economic system, as well as those associated with coping techniques that Black men may use to deal with racial stereotyping and institutional racism.

Cross (1998) examines the psychological functioning of Blacks as it relates to the legacy of slavery. The author discusses stories of violence and injustice against Blacks during various times in U.S. history. With hope, Cross suggested that although slavery has been a traumatic experience for Blacks, the Black community was able to create coping techniques to assure survival during their distressing circumstances. Various Black identities were generated which includes four stages/types (assimilative, ambivalent, militant, and internalizing). In Stage 1 (assimilative), Cross (1998) reports one’s identity is based on something other than race due to denial or self-hatred. In Stage 2 (ambivalent), the person encounters an event that makes them more aware of race and feels confused and not “Black enough.” In Stage 3 (militant), one is saturated in high energy with military themes in relation to their cultural awareness. Finally, in Stage 4 (internalization) one’s identity becomes comfortable and internalized. Cross (1998) notes that some people do not move forward and not everyone ends up with an internalized identity. Some may become stuck in transition or caught-up in everyday dysfunctions. Depending on one’s stage their view of the world and racism will vary and understanding Black identity stages may assist in comprehending reactions to social and personal issues.

Doherty et al. (1998) suggest that not only do family factors impact the father-child bond, but also contextual or external factors. Among the list of these potential
external sub-factors are ethnic challenges or how one’s ethnicity and that group’s social or cultural issues influence the definition and role of a father. Within the African American community, ethnic challenges such as individual and institutional racism, as well as discrimination and identity development have the propensity to impact a father’s attitude or behavior in regards to his child.

Understanding how contextual factors influence father involvement is important in the creation of resources to enhance participation. Assessing fathers from the viewpoint of cultural differences may shed light on ways to assist these subgroups. Marsiglio, Amato, Day and Lamb (2000) offer direction for future research in the area of fathering after completing an extensive literature review of findings from the 1990s. In relation to the idea of exploring fatherhood from the perspective of diversity they recommend the following:

These efforts must be complemented by initiatives to develop a richer portrait of how men, women, and children from different cultural and social backgrounds view aspects of fatherhood. What types of distinctive cultural (e.g. social class, race, community) and organizational (work place, Promise Keepers’ movement, fathers’ rights groups) contexts contribute to the definition and evaluation of good or responsible fathering? In what ways and to what extent are men’s visions of fathering and their actual paternal behaviors affected by their exposure to these cultural forces? How are various forms of father involvement fostered or impeded by external factors? Efforts to address these and related questions must be informed by recent attempts to broaden the way father involvement and paternal influence are conceptualized. (p. 1185)
Synopsis of the Literature

The purpose of this literature review was to understand multigenerational transmission process, examine the role of the non-custodial father, explore the impact of ethnicity on fatherhood, and to identify areas of future study. Literature for this topic has been organized to allow understanding of theoretical and empirical studies that confirm the importance of the topic and highlight the experiences of nonresidential African American fathers. Two major theories have been identified to assist in the understanding and conceptualization of fatherhood and family development. Empirical studies were presented to outline fathering roles, transitional experiences in living arrangements, ethnic challenges, and parenting experiences of nonresidential African American fathers. The theoretical and empirical literature will now be discussed and findings will be highlighted.

Multigenerational transmission or intergenerational transmission suggests that families can influence the behaviors and attitudes of its members. Empirical research supports this idea, making it an important factor to explore when dealing with family dynamics. Understanding how family members affect each other including family of origin could offer new insight regarding methods to rebuild individuals as well as families (Brook, et al., 2002; Chen & Kaplan 2001; Kerr & Bowen, 1988; Shears et al, 2006; Teachman, 2002)

Responsible fathering has recently received national attention. Governmental and societal agencies are becoming more concerned about the status of the family and the importance of father-presence, as father-absent homes have significantly increased.
Policy makers are committed to creating programs that will enhance father involvement and understand that research in this area is vital to creating adequate programming (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.).

The literature suggests that many factors can work independently or interdependently to influence the level of father participation with his child. Factors such as the father’s relationship with his father, his relationship with the mother of his child, ethnic challenges, and the father’s understanding of his role can impact father involvement (Doherty et al., 1998). Even within the father-mother relationship, a factor such as the level of self-differentiation can indirectly affect the father-child bond (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Doherty et al. (1998) understood this idea and created a visual model to help guide future empirical studies. Bowen, the “father” of Family Systems Therapy, also understood this concept when he began using genograms in therapy sessions to gain a better outlook on family relationships (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2000). Comprehension of this theme can be used in guiding therapists in working with non-custodial fathers, divorced, and estranged families. This theme also can be used by policy makers and institutions who desire to create constructs to deal with father involvement issues.

Theoretical literature also suggests that individual behavior can be a result of family relationships within the family’s interactional system. Doherty et al. (1998) construct a triangular representation of the family system and member’s interactions with each other. This triangle is related to Bowen’s concept of triangulation; the idea that a third family member can be pulled into the interaction of two members (Kerr & Bowen,
1988). Theoretically, a theme of family interaction affecting individual behavior, or in this context the father’s behavior, begins to emerge.

Empirical literature suggests that child’s outcomes are influenced by the level of father involvement. Empirical studies have resulted in evidence that increased father involvement is related to positive child outcomes, while lack of father involvement is related to poorer child well-being. These included studies such as Amato and Rivera’s (1999) findings showing a link between paternal involvement and child’s behavior and Dick and Bronson’s (2005) study which also demonstrates evidence of fathers’ relationship with children affecting child outcomes. In a critical analysis, Marsiglio et al. (2000) found evidence that parenting style of nonresidential fathers may have a significant impact on positive child outcomes. Among African Americans, Mandara et al. (2005) found that father-presence influenced gender role development among adolescents.

The role of the father has evolved and adjusted to meet family’s and society’s needs. Although historically fathers were primarily expected to economically support the family and provide leadership, today fathers may be more active in child-rearing and nurturing roles that were previously expected from the mother (Duncan, 2000; Evans & Fogary, 1999; Marsiglio et al, 2000, Shears et al., 2006). However, with changes in living arrangements from divorce and failed dating relationships, father participation faces barriers from a society that favors traditional economic fathering roles over more emotionally-based fathering responsibilities (Thompson, 1994).

The lack of clarity of the father role or the process of adjusting to the non-custodial parent role influences the level of father involvement. Leite and McKenry
(2006) found that higher levels of father involvement occurred when the father role was more salient. Hamer (1998) found that black fathers identified spending time, emotional support, and providing discipline as the important roles of fatherhood which contrasts with traditional fathering ideas. Cabrera et al. (2000) provided support that there are varying definitions of responsible fathering. Leite and McKenzie (2006) analyze the adjustment that fathers experience due to divorce or separation that could lead to role confusion.

Nonresidential African American fathers like all fathers have issues that influence their parenting abilities. However, research suggests that these fathers may perceive or actually experience barriers to parenting that are unique to their racial group. Understanding their perceptions and experiences is valuable in the process of creating resources that would best suit this group (Coles, 2001, 2003; Hamer, 1997; Hamer & Marchioro, 2002; Leite & McKenzie 2006; Mandara et al. 2005).

Empirical literature shows evidence that father involvement factors may be impacted by ethnicity. King et al. (2004) found that racial differences exist for many aspects of nonresidential father involvement. Hamer (1998) studied the factors that African American fathers report as barriers and promoters to involvement. The author also found in a study with Marchioro that many Black fathers who choose full-time parenting, after having spent a period of time being the non-custodial parent do so because of external pressures and not their own initial desires to take on the responsibility (Hamer & Marchioro, 2002). Coles (2003) found that Black fathers feel a need to secure employment and housing before being full-time parents.
Amato and Rivera (1999) and Leite and McKenry (2006) report study limitations of their studies due to use of secondary data. Leite and McKenry (2006) also report limited literature on role transition as a result of divorce or separation, especially using African American samples. Although the topic of father involvement is receiving more attention, more research is needed on the topic which might include further methodological studies.

Many of the studies reviewed in this analysis found similar results. Hamer (1998) reports finding barriers to father involvement among Black fathers of antagonistic relationships with mothers of the child, lack of time, employment issues, and geographic distance from child. Liete and McKenry (2006) found conflict with children’s mother and father role confusion to be barriers. Summers et al.’s (2004) found that time, work, money and childcare were barriers to fathering. Finally Hamer and Marchioro (2002) found that Black fathers experienced role issues in adjusting from non-custodial to custodial or full-time parenting. Due to the consistency of these results, these barriers identified may be linked to the experience of many Black non-custodial fathers.

There is also concern that ethnic challenges such as racism, discrimination, and cultural identity may have a direct or indirect influence on African American fathers. Due to historical and ongoing societal inequalities, African American males may perceive themselves as having more barriers to responsible fathering or experiences unlike other racial groups. Structural and systematic obstacles and the psychological side effects of these issues could also play into the cultural definition and experience of the African American father (Cross, 1998, Doherty, 1998; Gordon et al, 1994; Thompson & Park, 2007).
Subsequent to the literature review’s findings, the theoretical framework for this study will now be assessed.

**Theoretical Framework**

Two theories were used to guide the research on the topic of transference of parental behaviors and beliefs across generations among African American fathers. Family Systems Theory and the Responsible Fathering Conceptual Model are the theories that frame the direction of study in this area. Analyses of these constructs provided greater understanding to the variables being observed and their relationships with one another.

**Family Systems Theory**

Family Systems Theory (FST) is based on the belief that individuals are a part of a family unit and to understand individual behavior, assessment of the family unit is essential. There are eight main concepts that structure FST. One of the concepts, called multigenerational transmission process (MTP), suggests that dysfunction and function is a multigenerational process. Dysfunction in an individual is likely to be connected to family dysfunction within the nuclear family, extended family, and sometimes even over several generations (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

Neither Kerr and Bowen (1998) or Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2000) discuss the limitations of Family Systems Theory. They do, however, provide recommendations for using this theory in therapy. They suggest the use of genograms, the therapist remain de-triangulated from the family, and focus on the most differentiated family member as
an attempt to positively impact the less functional members of the family, in effect
causing a reciprocating effect.

Family systems theory explains the family’s interactions and relationship
struggles as individual and systematic inability to cope with stress. This theory is a
clinically and empirically supported theory in family therapy (Goldenberg &
fathers would be useful in understanding involvement levels being linked to the family’s
ability to manage stress and level of differentiation.

In this study, multigenerational transmission process is described, discussed, and
used to comprehend the transmission of parental behaviors and beliefs within African
American families from one father to the next. How this phenomenon occurs and what
activities facilitate this process were explored, more specifically the role of the father’s
thematic belief systems. Even more specifically, fathering behavior and belief themes
were identified. From the perspective MTP, the researcher sought to gain a better
understanding of fathering within the family in relation to nonresidential African
American fathers.

**Responsible Fathering Conceptual Model**

The Responsible Fathering Conceptual Model expresses the multifaceted
variables that directly and indirectly affect the father-child bond. The five main concepts
of the model include father, mother, child, coparental, and contextual factors. The model
theorizes that a father’s relationship with his child is determined by his ability to manage
various pressures, issues, and dynamics (Doherty et al., 1998).
Doherty et al. (1998) discuss limitations to their fathering construct as variables having differential affects on the father-child bond and the model being mistaken for a causal versus interrelated processes. They recommend that theory development be aimed at exploring the many pathways to enhancing the father-child bond.

Doherty et al.’s (1998) conceptual model has empirical support. It has been used as a theoretical framework in studies on father involvement as well as been identified as the foundation of governmental initiatives (Bush, 2001; Summers et al., 2004). It is a useful model to identify the various factors that impact fathers’ relationship with their children. All of the empirical literature reviewed on this topic included at least one of the constructs identified in the model provided by Doherty et al. These constructs were found in the following studies: Hamer’s (1998) explores the construct of mother factors, Amato and Rivera’s (1999) examines child factors, and Leite and McKenry’s (2006) investigates father factors.

The dynamics from the responsible fathering model that were highlighted in this study are fathers’ residential status, father’s relationship with his father, role identification, and ethnicity resources and challenges. These issues, like any of the factors outlined in this model, have the ability to impact father involvement behaviors. The topic sought to gain more information on the influence of these factors, specifically in the lives of African American men.

Based on the previous literature review, synopsis, and theoretic framework, a research question was generated that was the focus and guiding inquiry of this study.
Research Question

Theoretical literature that suggests that behaviors and beliefs can be transmitted within a family across generations, as well as fathering factors, such as a father’s relationship with his father, father’s perception of his role, and ethnic challenges, can potentially influence the father-child bond. Empirical research is limited in demonstrating that experiences of fathers maybe influenced by their family of origin. It is suggested that African American nonresidential fathers have experiences that they feel are unique to their cultural group. It is also suggested that the father’s role is constantly changing and is difficult to clearly define. Based on this research, the following research question was developed to guide the study and its methodology: How are parenting behaviors and beliefs transmitted from generation to generation among nonresidential African American fathers? This study investigated this question from the perspective of Bowen’s Multigenerational Transmission Process.

Research Concepts

According to Family Systems Theory, Multigenerational Transmission Process (MTP) influences families across generations. Based on the literature, multigenerational transmission was expected to influence parenting behaviors and beliefs among nonresidential African American fathers. Fathers’ experiences and perceptions related to the definition of fathering and ethnic challenges that affect fathering were anticipated to reflect those of their father, grandfather, or other familial father figures. An initial conceptual model was generated previous to the study to demonstrate the probable outcome of the study. Although multigenerational transmission was expected to have an
affect on fathers' parenting experiences, the investigator utilized qualitative research methods and therefore attempted to remain open and unbiased to any particular result. A revised conceptual model was generated upon completion of the study to demonstrate the actual outcome of the study (See Appendix A).
Figure 2-1. Conceptual model of relationships between father’s familial father figures’ parental behaviors and beliefs, multigenerational transmission, and father’s parental behaviors and beliefs.
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODS

The research question that directed this study was as follows: How are parenting behaviors and beliefs transmitted from generation to generation among nonresidential African American fathers? To answer this question, a qualitative approach using grounded theory methods was taken. Using a small sample size and in-depth interviewing, the research sought to gain a greater understanding of the experiences of nonresidential African American fathers and how they have been influenced by multigenerational transmission.

Research Design

The study design was a qualitative, grounded theory approach. Using a qualitative design, the study aimed to gain a better understanding of the experiences of African American fathers. Through in-depth interviews with preselected questions, participants were able to share their perceptions, insights and beliefs providing useful information that will help in building future empirical studies on the topic.

The study took place in a public facility in the Metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia area. Flexibility in time schedules were allowed to offer subjects with varying work schedules to participate. The location of interviews occurred in a local, common meeting place that is easily accessible to the target population. Interviews were held in a private room to ensure confidentiality of subjects’ responses.
This study attempted to maintain consistency by using structured interview questions and following a set interviewing protocol. The interview guide contained 12 questions (See Appendix B). The content of interviewing questions reflected the topic and the types of possible responses relevant to the topic. Questions were reviewed by professionals in the field of qualitative/interview methodology to ensure reliability and consistency of responses and confidentiality.

For the purposes of defining the characteristics of the participants in this study, a demographic profile questionnaire was developed (See Appendix C). In attempts to protect confidentiality, only data relevant to the study was included in the demographic profile questionnaire. Subjects were asked to sign the demographic questionnaire to verify that responses were true. However, other identifying information such as addresses and phone numbers were omitted. Profile questions included ethnicity, age, residential status, custody status, marital status, state of residency, number of children and age of children, income status, educational status, and arrest and incarceration history. Subjects were allowed to refrain from answering any or all demographic questions.

**Population, Sample, and Setting**

*Target Population*

The target population was nonresidential, African American fathers. The study sought to understand the experiences of African American fathers who do not live in the same homes as their minor children. This population was identified and selected due to the disproportionate number of African American children living in single mother-led
homes in comparison to other racial groups (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.).

**Accessible Population**

The research was conducted in Atlanta, Georgia. According to Black Enterprise’s May 2007 issue, the Metropolitan Atlanta area has the largest Black population in the U.S. (Brown & Padgett, 2007). Based on this fact, the target population was accessible to the researcher. Possible locations where the target population could be found are in religious organizations and local community facilities in Atlanta. The researcher obtained the sample population for this study at a local church with a 7,000-plus member, with a predominately Black percentage of the population and through five local barbershops.

**Sampling Plan (Purposeful, Maximum Variation Sampling)**

Purposeful Sampling is the sampling method that was used for this study. Qualitative research aimed to gather information about a specific phenomenon and the participants’ experiences rather than the purpose of quantitative research, to find causal relationships (Hoepfl, n.d.). Instead of using randomized sampling which is commonly used in quantitative research, this study utilized a sampling method that better matched its design. Purposeful sampling allows for selection of subjects that will provide rich information. The specific type of purposeful sampling that was used is maximum variation sampling. Maximum variation sampling allows demographic variety within a specific population. In this study the researcher obtained a sample population of nonresidential African American fathers. Using maximum variation sampling, the
participants were selected purposely to include a distribution of various income and educational status. Another sampling method, theoretical sampling, could have been utilized during the process of collecting data, but was found unnecessary. Theoretical sampling is the decision to gather additional information in which the direction of this process is guided by the interpretation of existing data and emerging conceptual categories (Suddaby, 2006). In relation to theoretical sampling, Goulding (1999) states, “as concepts are identified and the theory starts to develop, further individuals, situations, and places may need to be incorporated in order to strengthen the findings” (p. 9). Theoretical sampling is often used in studies if upon collecting the data, additional samples are required to verify emerging themes. The decision to not include additional participants was decided during the data collection and analysis process by the principal investigator due to a saturation of the data, with participants reported common experiences as it relates to the research question.

Sample Size

In qualitative research, a large sample size is not as necessary as compared to quantitative research. The researcher determines sample size based on sampling method, usefulness, and credibility (Hoepfl, n.d.). The sample for this study included 20 participants. The use of qualitative methods allows a smaller number of participants to provide more time to gather quality, and information-rich data from the subjects. A sample size of 20 is reflective of other qualitative studies related to this topic (Coles, 2001, 2003; Hamer; 1997; Hamer & Marchioro, 2002; Shears, Summers, Boller, & Barclay-McLaughlin, 2006) and consistent with grounded theory methods. Similar
studies (Coles, 2001, 2003; Hamer; 1997; Hamer & Marchioro, 2002; Shears, Summers, Boller, & Barclay-McLaughlin, 2006) have used between 10-30 subjects and have been able to generate valuable data and repeated common themes.

**Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

**Inclusion criteria.** In the attempt to select a sample that offered the most rich and credible data (Hoepfl, n.d.), volunteers were screened to assure eligibility. It was essential that subjects met the basic requirements to participate in this study. Eligibility requirements included the following: subjects must have been African American, male, and have at least one biological child under the age of 18. Subjects must have also lived outside of the residence of at least one of their biological children who is under 18 years of age. To ensure that all participants are legal adults according to the standards set by American society, participants has to be age 21 or older.

**Exclusion criteria.** Subjects who did not have children under the age of 18, live in the same home with their children under the age 18, did not consider themselves African American, or were under the age of 21 were excluded. Also, subjects who were not capable of understanding the consent form and/or answering interview questions were excluded, however, no subjects were excluded for this reason. For the purpose of using maximum variation sampling, potential subjects that met eligibility requirements could have been excluded if their income or education level was already appropriately represented in the selected sample group. Also, no subjects were excluded for this reason.

Strengths of using this sampling method included the capacity to obtain a sample that is most appropriate for the study, the capability to spend a significant amount of time
with each subject to gather data, a high probability of accessing the target population, and the ability to select subjects varying in income and educational levels (Hoepfl, n.d; Sandelowski, 1995). Weaknesses of using this sample method were the inability to generalize findings out to the target or general population, and possible biases from the types of people that volunteered being church attendees.

**Setting**

The researcher received permission to obtain sample from volunteers of a local church and five local barbershops. An announcement was made at religious organization meetings by organization staff asking for volunteers who met the study’s criteria. Advertisements in the form of a flyer were posted on bulletin boards at the barbershops. The study took place at a local church in the Metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia area. Flexibility in time schedules were allowed to offer subjects with varying work schedules to participate. The location of interviews occurred in a local, common meeting place that was easily accessible to the target population. Interviews were held in a private room to ensure confidentiality of subjects’ responses.

**Instrumentation**

The study was conducted in a meeting room within the facility of the local church in which sampling occurred. To ensure safety of the interviewer, the members of church’s staff were notified when interviews were taking place and present at the facility to offer assistance to the interviewer if needed. The door to the room used for
interviewing remained open throughout the entirety of the interview. Upon completion of
the interview and departure of the subject, staff members were notified.

In this study, data was collected using a demographic questionnaire, an interview
guide, hand written notes, and a post-interview written memo. The demographic
questionnaire was paper based and included general questions to ensure that subjects
were appropriate and could be classified. The demographic questionnaire was given at
the start of the session, prior to the audio-taping section of the interview. Next, questions
from the interview guide were presented to the subjects verbally by the investigator. All
responses given by participants were recorded using audio-tapes and the interviewer
recorded written notes as deemed necessary. All subjects were asked the same major
questions however subsequent probing questions varied depending on subject’s responses
and experiences. Immediately following the participant’s departure, the investigator
wrote a memo or initial impressions and common themes related to the interview.

**Part I: Demographic Profile**

The demographic questionnaire assessed for categorized information. Information
obtained from the demographic questionnaire was used to define and classify participants
for subject selection and research reporting purposes. The demographic questionnaire
included items such as gender, age, marital status, race and ethnicity, educational level,
income level, number of biological children, number of non-biological children, ages of
children, the involvement level of the father’s father and grandfather, arrest and
incarceration history, and residential status of father in relation to his children. The
questionnaire was scaled so that participants’ responses could be compared and
organized. The investigator used this data when selecting subjects to get the most appropriate sample as well as in the write up of the study, to accurately report the characteristics of the sample.

**Part 2: Interview Guide**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted. Semi-structured interviews are commonly used in qualitative research to allow subjects the freedom to provide information-rich responses (Hoepfl, n.d; Interviewing on Qualitative Research, n.d.). Twelve major open-ended questions were selected that were organized in the interview guide and presented to each subject. As appropriate, each question was followed by a series of probes to gain a greater understanding of the participant’s answer as well as experiences related to his answer. Questions selected were related to the research question and were structured to seek out responses related to the subject’s relationship with his child, father figures, and society. Interview questions were written in a language that was easy to understand and related to the target population.

Interview questions were created by the researcher and not measured using quantitative or statistical methods. Instead, data collected from interviews was analyzed using grounded theory methods which included constant comparison, theme identification, coding, and the development of core concepts. As in qualitative research, terms often used in quantitative research including reliability and validity are replaced with trustworthiness and quality (Golafshani, 2003). Increasing the study’s trustworthiness is imperative and was achieved through the process of conducting interviews and data analysis in a consistent manner and using quality interview questions.
Interview questions were reviewed by the investigator’s dissertation committee to ensure appropriateness in wording and content. A few questions were also informally pre-tested on several African American fathers that were not included in the sample to be sure that the responses to the question provided sufficient information for the interviewer to examine subject experiences.

In addition to audio-taping the interviews, the researcher also took hand written notes during each interview which consisted of key words, phrases, statements, ideas, and nonverbal responses. Immediately after each interview, the investigator wrote a “memo” or notes discussing initial impressions of the interview. The audio-taped interviews were transcribed and used as data along with the hand written notes and memos. Responses of interviews were analyzed using grounded theory, a method of constant comparison of data and identifying themes for the purposes of developing concepts (Goulding, 1999). Using this process, the data obtained during the study was coded and themes were generated, supporting the creation of a new theory.

**Procedures: Ethical Considerations and Data Collection Methods**

Ethical considerations for this study included confidentiality and content issues. It was essential for the investigator to make every effort to protect the confidentiality of information received from subjects. Provisions including storing data in a password protected computer and a locked file cabinet, using fictitious names during the interviews and in the write-ups, limiting the sharing of identifying data to the researcher and the faculty sponsor, and destroying audio-tapes and data within two weeks after the project’s completion were taken to protect subjects’ confidentiality.
Content related issues also were considered. This study included the discussion of the father's experiences with his familial father figures, children, and with society. Due to the nature of some of the questions, emotional responses may have been provoked as the subject recalled his experiences. Several procedures were implemented to reduce subject's risk of harm or emotional upset. One, the subject was notified about the content of questions and possible risks prior to the interview. Two, the subject was permitted to refuse to answer any question that he was uncomfortable with as well as discontinue the interview at any point. All subjects were informed of their rights before the interview commenced. Investigator could have also chosen to stop the interview briefly or end the interview prematurely if it appeared the subject was unable to complete the interview safely. Third, all major interviewing questions were reviewed by the researcher's dissertation committee, the institution's review board, and some questions were pre-tested on target population members that were not included in the sample to verify that questions were not offensive and content was appropriate for the study. Finally, at the completion of each interview, the researcher assessed the subject to ensure he was emotionally stable and ready to return back to work or to his daily activities. This was achieved by asking the participant how he feels, on a scale of one-to-ten, with one meaning, "I feel horrible" and ten meaning, "I feel terrific." This question was asked at the start of the interview and then again at the completion of the interview. The two numbers were compared and if there had been a significant decrease in mood from the start to the completion of the interview, the participant would have been asked to remain with the investigator for a few more minutes until his mood returned to a more stable level. The interviewer wanted the individual to return to at least a 5 on the scale before
leaving the room. None of the participants reported a decrease in mood, however many reported an increase in mood following the interview. None of the respondents refused to answer any of the questions and the investigator did not have to stop any of the interviews due to a significant decrease in the respondent’s mood or believing that it was unsafe to complete the interview.

The procedure for data collection was as follows:

1. The study was approved by the researcher’s school’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) (See Appendix D).

2. The researcher posted advertisements for the study at a local church and at five local barbershops requesting volunteers to contact the researcher to participate in the study.

3. Volunteers either contacted the researcher by phone or were contacted by the researcher from a list generated by church administration of potentially eligible volunteers, and were informed about the study’s process and prescreened for eligibility.

4. Volunteers who were eligible will be placed into a pool of subjects and selected based on variations in income and educational levels.

5. Selected volunteers were contacted by phone and invited to participate in the study, informed of the study details and procedures, as well as scheduled for an interview.

6. On the day of the interview, subjects were first verbally informed of their rights and the purpose and procedure of the study.
7. Subjects were given and asked to read, understand, and sign a volunteer consent form (See Appendix E).

8. Subjects were then asked to complete and sign the demographic questionnaire.

9. Subjects were given an opportunity to ask any questions or address any concerns before the interview began.

10. Subjects were asked to rate their mood on a scale of 1-10.

11. Audio-taping began and subjects were asked questions from the interviewing guide as well as probing questions to gain more information from their responses.

12. Subjects were allowed to refuse to answer any questions or end the interview at any time and for any reason.

13. Researcher hand wrote notes to capture any verbal or nonverbal responses as deemed necessary.

14. Subjects were given the option to take a brief 10 minute break at the end of the first hour. Interviews typically lasted between 1-2 hours.

15. Interviewing continued until all major questions were asked and subjects felt they had nothing more to add.

16. Each subject was assessed to ensure he was emotionally ready to return to his daily schedule by asking him to once again rate his mood on a scale of 1-10. If there is a significant decrease in mood and subject’s rating is less than 5, subject would have been asked to remain a little longer until an emotionally stable rating of 5 has been achieved.
17. Immediately after the interview, the researcher wrote a memo concerning initial impressions of the interview.

18. Audio-tapes were transcribed and it, along with the memo and hand written notes were used for data analysis. Transcription of interviews occurred within one month of taping.

19. All data was stored on a password protected computer and in a locked file cabinet.

Methods of Data Analysis

Grounded Theory is a process for gathering and interpreting qualitative data developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967. Instead of promoting hypothesis testing, the theorist suggested a process that allows theories to emerge through research and interpretation. The purpose of using grounded theory is to generate new theories using themes and concepts derived from data analysis (Suddaby, 2006).

Grounded theory was selected to guide this study because of its emphasis in attempting to understand the subject’s experience through both verbal and nonverbal communication, in efforts to develop new and profound explanations about a topic. It is rooted in the symbolic interactionism movement, believing that there is purpose to people’s actions and reactions to stimulus depending on the meaning the stimuli hold for them. The researcher then must enter into the world of the subject in order to appropriately, observe, understand, and interpret the subject’s experience. Using ideas such as this, Glaser and Strauss developed grounded theory for the purpose of generating a more systematic method of collecting and analyzing data. They chose to oppose the
current tendency to assume all of the important theories had already been founded and that research should focus on testing these theories quantitatively. Instead, they sought to allow new theories to emerge during the data collection an analysis process (Goulding, 1999).

Goulding (1999) describes four principles that comprise the process of conducting research using the grounded theory method. First, the researcher identifies a research area of interest and begins collecting data related to the topic. The objective of the researcher is to build their own theory using one or more sources of information such as interviews, observations, or focus groups. Simultaneously, as data is being collected it is also being analyzed which is the second principle. The researcher begins interpreting the data using coding procedures to identify common themes or concepts. Key words, phrases and “chunks” of data that are meaningful are sorted and grouped. Memos, which are impressions of the researcher written directly after an interview, and transcribed interviews are used to discover concepts. Thirdly, theoretical sampling is used to solicit additional sample if necessary. As the data is being constantly compared, additional sample may be needed to strengthen the findings. Finally, concepts and categories are further developed, aiming to generate or “emerge” a new theory.

In grounded theory, constant comparison of data is crucial for the appropriate development of emerging concepts. A researcher will read through each transcript critically, underlining important, highly stressed, and common ideas. These will be compared to other transcripts as well as interview memos and notes. The investigator will ask themselves questions about the data such as, “What is going on in this data, what patterns are emerging, and what are the underlying themes”? Coding of data will occur as
meaning is extracted. Core concepts leading to theory development are created as categories are confirmed and no longer offer new insight (saturation). A core category has to represent a large portion of behavior, be reoccurring throughout the data, relate in a way that is valuable to other categories, and be adaptable (Goulding, 1999).

In this study on nonresidential fatherhood, grounded theory principles were used in attempts to interpret interview data and develop a theory exploring the relationship between multigenerational transmission process and the target population. During in-depth interviews, data was collected both through audio-tapes and hand written notes. Immediately after each interview, the researcher created a memo discussing impressions from the interview. These memos were used in conjunction with the transcription of the interview to better interpret the data.

As the interviewing process continued, the researcher simultaneously analyzed, interpreted, and compared the data, searching for common themes and concepts. Coding the information helped organize and produce core categories. Through the use of theoretical sampling, more subjects could have been invited to participate in the study if necessary to support the emerging theory, but this sampling procedure was not deemed necessary. Constant comparison was used to create core categories that ultimately led to the generation of a new theory.

Analysis of the data occurred using the following procedures: 1) Each interview was transcribed using the audio-tape, 2) key themes were highlighted and labeled from the transcription, written notes, and memo, 3) all three data forms were compared to each other to ensure accuracy, 4) themes from each interview were compared and contrasted with each other and the frequency for each theme was recorded, 5) common themes or
themes with a high frequency (a response rate of greater than 50%) from collective interviews were grouped to create categories, 6) once a category became saturated, it was termed a core category, 7) categories that did not have enough data support to evolve to core status became “hypothesized” categories requiring additional research, and 8) a new theory was generated based on data outcomes.

**Trustworthiness of Data**

Reliability and validity in qualitative research is viewed somewhat differently than in quantitative research. Reliability and validity in research seeks to confirm that the study is consistent and accurate. While quantitative researchers use mechanism such as randomization and reliability tests, qualitative researchers use methods such as member checks, multiple researchers, triangulation, and verification. Instead of using terms such as “reliability” and “validity,” many qualitative researchers focuses more on terms such as “dependability” and “trustworthiness.” (Golafshani, 2003)

In this study, several qualitative verification methods were used to ensure consistency and trustworthiness. All subjects were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire and sign it. By signing their questionnaire, subjects verified that they were eligible to participate in the study. Morse et al. (2002) also suggest using a process of verification throughout the research process. This includes the incorporation of methodological coherence (verifying congruence throughout study: research question matches method which matches data and analytical procedures), appropriate sample (using the best sample to get rich data), simultaneous data collecting and analysis, theoretical thinking, theory development (result of process versus start). These
approaches were also used during the study to assist in the establishment of dependable results.

Investigator Responsiveness

Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers (2002) discuss the importance of “investigator responsiveness.” Using this approach, the researcher attempts to remain open and unbiased through the study, allowing concepts to emerge on their own and being willing to let go of preconceived and poorly supported ideas. As Morse et al. (2002) explain:

The lack of responsiveness of the investigator at all stages of the research process is the greatest hidden threat to validity and one that is poorly detected using post hoc criteria of “trustworthiness.” Lack of responsiveness of the investigator may be due to lack of knowledge, overly adhering to instructions rather than listening to data, the inability to abstract, synthesize or move beyond the technicalities of data coding, working deductively (implicitly or explicitly) from previously held assumptions or a theoretical framework, or following instructions in a rote fashion rather than using them strategically in decision making. (p. 11)

In efforts to provide the most valid and trustworthy results, the investigator of this research attempted to remain cognizant to the factors that might lead to a lack of responsiveness in efforts to adequately monitor the process. This study implemented investigator responsiveness through constant comparison of data, researcher self-checks, and reflective dialogues with the project’s faculty sponsor.
Limitations

Although many efforts were implemented to verify the quality of this study, limitations did exist. First, this study used qualitative methodology and was therefore not generalizable out to the entire population. Qualitative studies do not test hypotheses and cannot provide statistical evidence of the causal relationship between variables. Secondly, the study was limited to sample in one city and cannot be generalized out to the target population. Future studies should aim to sample at the national level for greater validity. Thirdly, due to student research limitations, some conceptual results were “hypothesized” but not verified. The researcher aimed for data saturation, but time, budget, and sample limitations, resulted in “thin data sets” (Morse et al., 2002). Finally, Golafshani (2003) recommends the usage of triangulation, or using multiple sources of data to gain better validity. In this study data collection methods were limited to the literature review, audiotaped interviews, transcriptions, memos, and notes; however other data collection sources such as multiple researchers, focus groups, and field studies were not used due to limited time, finances, and human resources. Data collection methods used was selected based on feasibility. Future studies should incorporate more data resources.

Finally, member checking is a commonly used tool used by qualitative researchers in which the researcher shares study results with subjects in efforts to “check” for accuracy. Morse at al. (2002) report that the use of member checking could actually invalidate the study due to results being an analyzed and synthesized collection of the responses of all subjects and individual members may not be able to distinguish themselves in the final results. For this reason, member checking was not used in this study as a method of validation.
CHAPTER IV

Chapter IV presents the results of the qualitative research study about the influence of Multigenerational Transmission Process among nonresidential African American fathers. Data collected from in-depth, semi-structured interviews has been analyzed using Glaser and Strauss' (1967) grounded theory. Core categories were produced from the assessment of common concepts to answer the research question.

For this research, the data gathered included completed demographic questionnaires filled out by the respondents, verbatim transcriptions of each interview, and memos and notes completed by the researcher during and after each interview. At the start of each interview, respondents were asked to complete both a demographic questionnaire and a voluntary consent form. Both forms were checked to ensure eligibility before the interview began. Respondents were made aware of the nature of the study, the study’s procedures, their rights, and the benefits and risks to them. The principle investigator was open to questions regarding study concerns as well as asked the participants to rate their pre and post interview mood to evaluate whether or not the interview had a negative affect on the participants’ emotions. At the conclusion of the interviews, all participants reported their mood being either the same or better than when the interview began, confirming that the study did not have a negative impact on respondents’ emotional stability.

During the interview, the researcher took notes on key ideas, words, or phrases made by participants. Following each interview, the researcher maintained in a log any initial impressions, themes, and ideas related to the proceeding interview. The transcribing of interviews began immediately following the first interview and continued
throughout the sampling and data collection process. Following each transcription, the researcher identified themes from the data by analyzing chunks of the interview for meaning and content (Goulding, 1999). As more interviews were conducted and transcribed, the researcher began to compare and contrast the transcripts, looking for common themes. Themes found were labeled and noted for their frequency within the 20 transcripts. After all interviews had been transcribed and analyzed the first time, the researcher then re-analyzed the data again, this time looking for new themes and reaffirming previously found categories (Patton, 2002). Once this process was completed, the researcher went back again through each transcription, this time using line-by-line analysis technique to confirm categories, assess for deeper meaning of categories, and ensure all relevant themes had been identified (Gibbs, 2007).

Validity in the study was centered on the trustworthiness of the data. Various measures were taken to ensure that the study’s results were as trustworthy as possible. The procedure for collecting data as described in the methodology section was followed closely to avoid researcher bias. Results and findings of the study were discussed with the researcher’s chair during the analysis and write-up stage to also avoid researcher bias. The researcher conducted self-checks and attempted to conduct each part of the interview and analysis process similarly to protect the study’s results (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson & Spiers, 2002). Finally, the use of triangulation through using the various data formats including audio-tapes, transcriptions, memos, and notes also assisted the researcher in remaining unbiased, consistent, and accurate (Golafshani, 2003).

In addition to taking steps to increase the trustworthiness of the data, efforts were also made to check for consistency among participants as it relates to their eligibility and
responses. All respondents were prescreened using questions from the demographic profile questionnaire then asked to complete the questionnaire and sign it at the interview appointment. Both the prescreen form and the demographic questionnaire form were compared for discrepancies among answers. No major discrepancies were found and all subjects acknowledged that their responses were factual.

RESULTS

In an effort to recruit nonresidential, African American fathers, advertisements in the form of flyers and announcements were distributed at five Metropolitan Atlanta barbershops and one church. Thirty-one men responded to the advertisements and were prescreened for eligibility. Prescreening procedures included answering 22 out of the 26 demographic profile questions related to gender, age, race, martial status, education, income, and biological and non-biological children. To be eligible for the study, volunteers were required to be over 20 years of age, consider themselves of the African American race, and have at least one child under the age of 18 whom was not currently living in his home. Six out of the 31 respondents were ineligible to participate because they did not meet all study requirements. Volunteers could also be considered ineligible if their income or educational level was overrepresented in the sample; however no subjects were dismissed for this reason. Out of the remaining 25 respondents, 20 were invited and participated in the study. The remaining five volunteers did not participate due to a lack of compliance with scheduled appointments.

Demographic characteristics of the participants varied in all categories except race. All men identified themselves as being of the African American race and ranged in
age from 27-57 years old. Nineteen of the twenty respondents reported being non-Hispanic with only one claiming Hispanic ethnicity. Three of the men reported being single or never married, seven were currently married, and ten were currently divorced or separated. Maximum variation was the selected sampling method used in this study. Maximum variation sampling attempts to create diversity among subjects through intentional recruitment of participants on varying levels of specified categories (Hoepfl, n.d.). For this topic, maximum variation in sampling required subjects to differ in educational and income status for the purposes of obtaining a sample that varied as it relates to socioeconomic status. Tables 4-1 and 4-2 demonstrate participants' reported education and income levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4-1</th>
<th>Table 4-2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Status of Participants</strong></td>
<td><strong>Income Status of Participants</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Level</strong></td>
<td><strong>Income Level</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional (Master, Doctorate, JD)</td>
<td>$19,999 and under</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-year college graduate</td>
<td>$20,000-$39,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One to three years of college</td>
<td>$40,000-$59,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>$60,000-$79,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten to eleven years of school</td>
<td>$80,000-$99,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven to nine years of school</td>
<td>$100,000 and over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than seven years of school</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

76
Subjects were recruited from all income categories however two of the educational levels were not represented. The lack of respondents on these two educational levels does not impact the results due to the minimum state dropout age in U.S. states being 16-years old and the two categories falling below that age (Lohman, 2000). Due to children in the U.S. not being legally allowed to drop out of school before age 16, it is unlikely that subjects would achieve lower than a 10th grade education.

Participants reported having between one to five biological children living outside their homes. Thirteen of the subjects report having lived in the same home as these children at some point in time, and eight subjects report being previously married to the mother of biological children that live outside of their home. Regarding the level of involvement from participant’s biological father (physically, emotionally or financially), three subjects indicated their father was not involved, eight indicated their father was somewhat involved, and nine indicated their father was very involved in their life. Finally, in relation to arrest and incarceration rates only one subject reported being both arrested and incarcerated, twelve reported being arrested only, and seven reported never being arrested or incarcerated (See Appendix F for a more detailed listing of demographic characteristics of participants).

**Research Question**

*How are parenting behaviors and beliefs transmitted from generation to generation among nonresidential African American fathers?*
The purpose of this research was to explore the experiences of nonresidential African American fathers and better understand their familial acceptance and transmission of parental beliefs and behaviors. Based on the theoretical concepts of Multigenerational Transmission Process (MTP) and the Responsible Fathering Conceptual Model (RFCM), it was assumed that parental beliefs and behaviors are passed intergenerationally from grandfather to father to son, and that various internal and external factors influenced a father’s involvement with his child. Data analysis of participant interviews described parental behaviors and beliefs being transmitted through a process of nonverbal communication, observation, and mimicking, commonly described as learning “by example.”

**By Example**

The top five concepts identified in the results of this study are: 1) Father role as the provider, 2) Father role as disciplinarian, 3) Fathers teach responsibility to sons by example, 4) Nonresidential fathers unable to influence and monitor daily activities of children and, 5) Fathers teach and enforce respect (See Appendix G for a list of commonly reported concepts). All five of these concepts have been reported by 75% or more of the study’s participants. In the analysis of these main concepts, it became clear that they are not separate entities, but many of the results are interconnected. For example, a nonresidential father who feels his status prohibits him from being able to influence his child on a daily basis may also feel that his role as a disciplinarian and ability to teach/enforce respect are also being impacted. To fully understand the meaning of the participants’ responses, the data was further assessed for a core concept(s) that
would best communicate the experiences of the participants. During this analysis, the
core category of “By Example” was identified; tying together many of the most
frequently reported concepts. “By Example,” in which its definition will be discussed
throughout this chapter, was a repeated term and idea expressed during interviews by
many of respondents to explain the transmission of parenting behaviors and beliefs. In
general, participants reported learning their role and the responsibility of being a father
and a man from the examples set by their father figures. They also reported passing their
current parenting beliefs and behaviors to their children by serving as an example. To
understand the core category of “By Example,” an exploration of the participants’
multigenerational experiences with their father figures and children was conducted.

Although participating fathers had different thoughts and feelings about the level
of influence that their biological fathers had in their own fatherhood development, they
all reported having someone in their childhood who served as a male role model. As
respondents discussed their childhood memories and male influences during adolescence
and adulthood, male role models both family-related and community-based were
recognized as father figures. Familial father figures identified by participants include
biological fathers, grandfathers, uncles, and stepfathers. Non-familial fathers reported by
participants include sports coaches and community or religious leaders. Table 4-3
presents familial father figures reported in relation to the number of participants.
Table 4-3

Familial Father Figures Reported by Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Member as Father Figure</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biological Father</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandfather</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncle</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepfather</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4-3 presents non-familial father figures reported in relation to the number of participants.

Table 4-4

Non-Familial Father Figures Reported by Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Family Member as Father Figure</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sports Coach</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community/Religious Leader</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of fathers who participated in the study described both positive and negative memories of the behaviors and beliefs their father figures demonstrated to them. All participants were asked the following question: What various experience and/or people in your life have taught you the role and responsibilities of being a father? The most common response by fathers was that their father figures modeled fathering behaviors, often using the term “by example.” The concept of learning “by example” was
described by participants as a nonverbal method of observing the behavior of male role models then mimicking the observed behavior. Sixteen out of the twenty participants verbalized that they learned how to be a father by watching the behaviors of their father figures. Whether it was witnessing their role models go to work, provide for the family, respect female family members, attend church, or manage household activities, respondents frequently emphasized the affect that seeing these behaviors had on their own parental behaviors. Observation and mimicking of fatherhood/manhood behaviors was so much their selected form of transmitting behaviors and beliefs intergenerationally that many fathers reported their nonresidential status interfered with being able to physically provide that same example to their children on a daily basis. Sixteen out of the twenty respondents indicated that the best way to teach their sons responsibility was to model it themselves and provide an example of being responsible. In general, fathers not only learned parental behaviors and beliefs "by example," but they also felt it was important to teach their children appropriate behaviors and beliefs in the same manner, "by example." One father explains how he learned the role of being a father from watching his father:

I guess just looking at your own father, seeing how your own father raised his kids. And of course, watching your own father you kind of pick up some of their bad habits or something they probably didn't do, or psychologically you might think you're doing right, but that's what you saw growing up.

In this example, the respondent acknowledges that he has observed his own father's parenting behaviors and has acquired similar behaviors including bad habits from his
father. His statement suggests that both positive and negative behaviors observed from
the father figure can be transmitted to the child.

Another participant described how he feels his behavior is similar to that of his
grandfather and father, and how he has had an affect on his son demonstrating the same
behavior:

I have a lot from what I'm told of my grandfathers in me, on both sides of my
family. But I see a lot of my father's mannerisms in my behavior. And certainly
my firstborn biological son I cloned of me and my father, the build, the
mannerisms, he's just a fairer skinned person, in retrospect.

This respondent is aware that he not only has received his parental beliefs and behaviors
from his father and possibly grandfather, but that his behaviors have also had a major
impact on the behavior of his son.

Based on the stories and recollections of this study's participants, learning "by
example" can be best understood by dissecting the concept into three steps. First,
intentionally or unintentionally, a belief, role, or responsibility was demonstrated
physically by the father figure through actions and reactions. Second, the respondent
witnessed or observed the action or reaction of the father figure as it relates to his beliefs,
roles, and responsibilities. Finally, respondents then either consciously or unconsciously
repeated similar behaviors when rearing their children.

Nonverbal Communication by Father Figures

The majority of respondents reported learning fathering behaviors from their
father or father figures in a nonverbal manner. Nonverbal communication in this study is
related to both demonstrative behaviors and bodily or facial signals used by father figures to convey expectations and values. As father figures displayed their parental beliefs, responsibilities, and expectations and values through various behaviors, respondents were present to view these actions and internalize them as an example of fatherhood and manhood.

During discussions about their experiences with male role models, several respondents mentioned a nonverbal gesture given by father figures which let them know what the rules or boundaries were for them. Other participants spoke frequently about father figures performing actions to communicate expectations. One participant described a disciplinary nonverbal gesture made by his father figure as “the look.”

He was an intimidating guy. So it would just be the, you do what you are supposed to do, “the look.” Discussion of “the look” by this participant suggests that his father figure did not have to speak in order to discipline, redirect, or get a point across to the participant. Instead his father figure was able to make a facial gesture which informed the participant that the father figure disapproved of his behaviors and that a change of action was expected. “The look” was described as a subtle form of correction used by father figures who directed a stern or angry facial expression at the respondent. This gesture was given as an attempt to quickly modify behavior without having to speak or demonstrate a dramatic physical reaction. It was understood by participants that if behavior did not change after “the look” was presented to them, serious consequences were likely to follow.

Another respondent discussed how household rules and expectations were communicated nonverbally through his father figures:
They were communicated by action. Cleaning the yard, fixing things around the house, taking care of not only your house, but even people in the neighborhood, taking care of your community was illustrated to me via my father and my grandfather.

This quote reveals the significance of the participant watching his father and grandfather conduct everyday task and fill fatherhood and manhood related responsibilities, and how demonstrating these behaviors communicated to this participant what was expected of him when he became a father.

**Observation of Nonverbal Communication**

Actions displayed by father figures were interpreted by many respondents as the role and responsibilities of fatherhood. During the interviews, participants spoke candidly about their interactions with their father and how observing the actions of their biological father affected their current fathering behaviors. Overall, a total of 11 of the 20 participants or 55% experienced the absence of their father from their childhood home at some point. Despite their biological fathers' residential status 85% of respondents felt their father had some level of activity in their lives. Whether residential or nonresidential, their biological father still provided a visual example of fatherhood and manhood. One father describes how his father, who was nonresidential, modeled for him the role and responsibilities of being a father:

> Through example. I saw how my father took care of, even though my father wasn't in my life on a day-to-day basis, I visited him every other weekend, or
every weekend sometimes. But through example, through my half-brothers, I saw how he handled his affairs, how he was as a man. This example suggests that even with the participant’s father living outside of the home, he was still able to witness his father performing fathering behaviors. It also suggests that fathering behaviors may be observed while a father is parenting other children and does not necessarily have to be directed towards the participant to have an impact.

Another respondent discussed his experience watching his biological father demonstrate fatherhood to him:

He never said you had to be the breadwinner, he never said you have to provide for your family, it was understood because he did it, he set the example.

In the above quote, the respondent reported that verbal communication between his father and him was not necessary because his father’s actions set the standard in his home and nonverbal cues were clearly understood by him.

From participants’ responses, it was made known that they felt receiving an example of fatherhood from the father figures was a valuable aspect of their development, and now as fathers they felt the need to provide a similar example to their children. Having the nonresidential father status is believed by participants to interfere with their ability to demonstrate fathering behaviors and beliefs on a daily basis. Participants were asked to describe the responsibilities of a father that they felt were harder to accomplish because they did not live in the same home as their children. Seventy percent of respondents voiced that they not being physically in the home everyday prevented them from providing a visual example of fatherhood/manhood to
their children. One respondent expressed that being outside the home made it difficult to teach his son about fatherhood.

Now I think the hardest part is trying to teach him the stuff that I really know about being a father.

Based on his response, this subject believes that it is his responsibility as a father to teach his son how to be a father. The subject also has stated that living outside the home has interfered with his ability to provide his son with lessons on fatherhood.

Another father reported that no longer living inside the home hindered his ability to provide a physical example of manhood, and now forced him to communicate these beliefs and values verbally.

Just being the example. Being the example and being able to show my son who he is, what he has to look forward to as a man. That’s very difficult not being inside the house and it has to become more verbal during that time when we do, when you are together instead of showing him you have to sit down and tell him. “Hey son, this is why this is this way.” And he may not understand it then, but at some point he will be able to reflect on that and say, “Hey dad did say that.” So I believe you can still make an impact but I believe the greatest impact is made inside the house. Hands down.

This respondent suggests that the fathering role can be taught through verbal communication, but may not be as effective as teaching fathering through demonstration and modeling. This quote also suggests that being nonresidential may force some fathers to find alternative methods of transmitting behaviors and beliefs to their children due to the loss of physical contact time.
For some, their ability to provide a physical presence for their children was exacerbated by distance with eight of the twenty fathers reporting having children that lived in a different state. Being in a geographically different location than their children negatively impacted father’s ability to see children as often as they would have liked, as well as impacted their response time to dealing with the needs or crises of their children. One father talked openly about living in a different state than his children and how he responded to the news that one of his children had died:

Consumed with guilt for not being there with my child when he died. Consumed with guilt that I'm not here with these two getting ready to go through this. So I stayed out there for about three months. I lost my job here, I lost my car, almost lost my home. Stayed with my friend for a minute because I needed to be there. And I went into a depression for about two years. I can't remember two years of my life, I really can't. I remember some things, but I was depressed. Just being there for them I had to come to understand because I do want to talk to them every day, because I do need to hear their voices and if I don't go calling the day after that. I need to know what's going on with them and we have to have that. Because my father, he didn't necessarily talk to us everyday, we saw him everyday. So we just, knew he was there and there wasn't really a lot to talk about with him.

This respondent reported struggling with guilt related to not physically being there during a family crisis. His response suggests that not only does he feel that his role is to stay informed about the well being of his children, but also to protect and comfort them. Feeling like he could not fulfill his role when a crisis emerged due to not living in the
same home or geographical area as his children had a negative emotional impact on this respondent. Similar regrets were voiced by another father who spoke about how he wishes he would have done more to protect his out-of-state daughter who was killed:

And I'm so sad it came to that. And it was something that she did months before that, and it was uncharacteristic of her. And of course, every parent thinks their child is a good kid. She was a good kid, real mild mannered. And I went down there and I'm like, "This is not you. What's going on?" She's like, "Well I just got upset and blah, blah, blah." And I asked her. I said, "Is he doing anything to you?" And she said, "No, it's not that. If he was I would kill him." So I felt good after I left. And maybe it happened after that, but at that particular time I thought I did my due diligence, but I don't think I did enough. But I went down there and then, hindsight 20/20 now.

In addition to desiring to physically protect their children, out-of-state fathers also report barriers related to emotionally and mentally protecting their children. For example, this father is concerned with his ability to positively impact his daughter's dating behaviors because the child lives out-of-state with her mother:

Spending quality time. That's my biggest fear. Her being a girl I pray every day that her mom moves back before she gets to a point where she's dating and into relationships. But it still because of that that I feel that I'm missing said in the ground work and the blueprint for the type of woman that she will be. Her mom, the guys she is engaged to lives here and she stays with her uncle, and nothing against my ex-brother-in-law but he's not a big gentleman. He has a daughter of his own that he really doesn't spend a whole lot of time with so I know he won't
spend a lot of time with mine. So there is no real true male figure in her life with her mom right now. Which means she may not have anyone opening the doors for her, she may not have anyone waking her up and saying wow, hey gorgeous, you're beautiful.

This respondent suggests that his physical absence may prevent his daughter from experiencing positive male-female interaction. This father believes that it is his job to make sure that his daughter has a healthy concept of relationships and expectations in dating. It appears that he believes that his geographical distance hinders him from demonstrating daily nurturing behaviors towards his daughter.

*Mimicking Father Figures*

Based on their experiences with father figures, respondents formed perceptions about the male role models in their lives and utilized these perceptions in the development of their own fathering behaviors and beliefs. Ninety percent or 18 fathers reported that they had an overall positive outlook on at least one of the father figures in their life. When participants viewed their father figures in an affirmative manner, they often reported purposely mimicking their father figures’ parental behaviors. One respondent discussed how his positive experience with his biological father made him want to parent in the same manner:

> My father, of course. Just watching him. All my life he, the example of how to treat woman, how to treat your kids. I model myself after him, you know. I feel like I ended up alright. So I try to do the same things he did with me with my kids, so I think they will end up the same way. So he’s the prime example to me.
This participant, like others, explained that observing parenting behaviors from his father that had a positive impact on him has lead to him utilizing these same parenting methods with his children. Another example of purposely mimicking father figures is provided by this participant:

Because of the way they handled their kids. I just kind of watched that and I said, “Okay,” you remember certain things, and when it’s time to implement, you implement.

These examples indicate an intentional mimicking of parenting beliefs or behaviors. Fathers reported feeling as if certain parenting approaches worked for their fathers; the same tactics would also work for them as parents.

Eighty percent of the participants stated that the best way to teach their sons how to be responsible was to “lead by example,” which was similar to the way many of them reported learning responsibility from their father figures. This introduces the theory of intergenerational transmission, with 65% voicing that they try to parent in a similar fashion to their father figures. In addition, 45% of fathers said behaviors had been passed down generationally to them. Several of these men identified passed down behaviors as “generational curses” which were described as a religious term for negative patterns that cycle from generation to generation. Based on participants’ responses, the idea of generational curses is rooted in a spiritual belief that Satan or an evil force attempts to damage family systems by cycling dysfunctional behaviors across generations. Once a family or family member realizes that an undesired behavior is being passed down from one family unit to the next, it then becomes that family or individual’s responsibility to
break the curse by adjusting their behavior. One participant spoke of the realization that negative behaviors of his father had been passed down to him:

Well it forced me to be less like him. So I guess it did. That was one thing I didn't want to be. Oddly enough, in some ways that's who I became. Well not so much in parenting, well he had children outside, different mothers. Dang, I ended up, I became him in some ways... And then I started thinking of generational curses, I have to break this curse. I think it was more of a conscious awareness than anything else.

This participant has a revelation during his interview that the traits that he did not like about his father have been unconsciously repeated by him. He reports knowing that it is his responsibly to not transmit these undesired characteristics down to future generations.

In agreement with the previous father, another father describes why he believes black men display certain behaviors:

Well you have to realize that one aspect, you have some black men, all of their uncles, granddad and every body were pimps and drug addicts. So they feel like they have to follow in that same lineage. And so, some of them, in and out of jail. And they feel like they have to have their stripes. You have some of them, they are very influential and doing positive things and they follow that same pattern. I just believe it's generational, passed down. I believe it's passed down.

Both of these fathers, as well as others who participated in the study, believe that both negative and positive actions of father figures can have a direct impact on future generations. Their responses suggest that transmission of behaviors and beliefs is a very common and culturally accepted concept.
Fathers also went into detail about providing gender role identity to their children. Fathers with daughters explained their behaviors that demonstrated gentlemen like qualities and the importance of teaching their daughters what to expect and tolerate from males when they begin dating. Fathers with sons talked about having conversations with their boys about how to treat a woman and how to respond to the opposite sex. Fathers also discussed the idea of “a woman not being able to raise a man,” the notion that certain manly characteristics cannot be adequately modeled by a mother, therefore requiring a male presence during childhood for boys. One dad talks about his relationship with his son and how he is teaching him how to treat females:

He doesn't have a problem if he sees a girl going down the street. And there's one thing I tell him, there's a three second rule. If you see a girl there is one, two, three, that's it. That's it... That's your window. It's no watching her go by and googling eyes at her and everything. That makes the woman feel uncomfortable. And you're whistling; that's disrespectful. And I find him doing it to me. So if I see somebody go by, “That's two seconds dad.” But I want him to respect women.

This example reiterates the idea of fathers teaching manhood and fatherhood lessons through physical time spent with their children. It also demonstrates the importance for this father to pass on his values or beliefs to his son.

The emerging concept in this research was the value in observing father figures and repeating their parenting behaviors. Although participants did not actually state that learning and mimicking parental behaviors was a three step process, their stories, recollections, and disclosures indicate a common theme of watching their father figures and being more concerned about parental behavior versus parental verbalization. The
frequent term of “by example” was used and has become this study’s language to
describe the process of witnessing and repeating fatherhood beliefs and behaviors. Based
on the emerging concept of by example, intergenerational transmission or
multigenerational transmission process in fathering appeared to occur amongst
respondents when fatherhood behaviors and beliefs were observed by participants,
internalized, and then repeated in their fathering behaviors.

Findings Requiring Future Research

In conducting in-depth interviews with twenty nonresidential African American
fathers, a few other concepts or themes were identified that were not the focus of this
research. In most cases, not enough information was generated to create a core category
for these themes, however because of their prevalence or potential uniqueness to the
population sampled, it is recommended that these areas be noted and further explored in
future research. These themes include intergenerational transmission as it relates to
residuals of slavery, legal issues and the deadbeat dad stereotype, and the impact of
having an African American president in the United States.

Residuals of Slavery

Several questions asked by the researcher to participants were related to how race
and race relations impact fathering behaviors and beliefs. These questions included:

*Describe your experience as an African American father and if and how racial barriers
affect your ability to parent.*
Do you think that race related issues such as racism and discrimination have an impact on African American Fathers?

Do you think that your experience as a father is different than the experience of a father of another race?

Do you ever struggle with thoughts that things that are happening to you as a father are due to you being African American?

Although 70% of fathers report that they did not feel that racism prevented them from being a father or demonstrating fatherhood responsibilities, 65% have experience some form of racism or discrimination directly or indirectly related to their role as a father.

One dad described witnessing racism in front of his child while in the waiting room of an Atlanta hospital:

So they had like a TV in there. The two kids, my little girl was playing with the little white girl. Me and my wife sitting over here, the white lady she was reading a book or something, but we had spoke and stuff. Well they had the news on. Well anyways, they showed a black man on the news. Well the little girl looked up there and saw the black man on the TV and said, “Look mom there goes a nigger.”

Concepts that were discussed in the literature review including the Willie Lynch Letters and Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome may provide insight on the impact of historical racism on African American families. These two concepts have not been researched enough to validate their claims, however if legitimate could be extremely helpful in understanding African Americans as a group and creating effective support systems for this group. One respondent brought up the residuals of slavery as it relates to
the Willie Lynch Letters, the concept discussed by Morrow (2003) suggesting the reversal of gender roles within the African American community connected to psychological control tactics used by slave masters:

Well I don't know that I do, but it kind of brings back to the whole generational thing, there are some of my friends like, yo, and they're saying the same things that I was saying, I am doing the same thing that my dad did. And this is going on in the way they separated us from slavery it does, broke up our structure of our family-hood, and we have this wedge driven between man and woman. And a lot of (people) think that because it happened, don't get me wrong, I think that has a big part in why sometimes were not sticking together as a married couple. The whole Willie Lynch thing and all that stuff.

Concepts such as the Willie Lynch Letters are thought by some to be an explanation to black race issues and the residuals of slavery should be further investigated.

A previously researched family structure issue that may or may not be connected to slavery residuals is African American fathers’ antagonistic relationships with black women. Regardless of fathers intentions towards their children, their behaviors and beliefs concerning their role are impacted by the relationship and status of the mothers of their children. When mothers are unsupportive or antagonistic towards fathers, it may negatively impact the fathers’ involvement level. Fifty-five percent of participants verbalized having to overcome hostile attitudes from the mothers of their children. Respondents repeatedly expressed feeling like black women were a barrier to them playing their proper role as fathers. To add to the affect of this potential issue, nine out of the 20 subjects admit to having children with more than one woman meaning they must
balance multiple families and differing attitudes from mothers. One father with children by more than one woman expressed his feelings about struggling with antagonistic attitudes from the mothers of his children.

But in this sense the mother is not letting me be involved in the kid's life because they just want it to be the way they want it to be. Or because of their feelings or because of their ill will against me, which has nothing to do with my kids.

Discussions about respondents' relationships with the mothers of their children led to verbalizations about the concern over the black family structure. Many fathers thought that in comparison to other races, blacks are more likely to maintain single-mother households and that this was a community-based problem. Some fathers believed that if a problem existed within marriage, their white counterparts were more likely to remain married until the children became adults. One father describes his opinion about the difference between blacks and whites when it comes to staying married for the sake of the children:

It's like this midlife crisis for a Caucasian man, right? Basically a midlife crisis for him is he got married, he had kids, and from day one he knew good and well, "Man this aint where I want to be." But what he did was he stuck in there and no matter what, they put on that particular front for the kids. They are going to have dinner, like you see on the TV, they have dinner together. The wife says, "Hey honey I’m home." And the kids don’t know any difference; they think that their parents are fine. And as soon as they get out the house, the mom is sleeping with the pool boy and the father’s banging the secretary. And he goes and gets a Corvette, a convertible Corvette and just leaves the house and runs around with
the top down with his bald head showing. But he knew that 20 years ago. Us, we just say forget about it, kick our feet up, walk out the door, and don't think about it. Just say, “I ain't going to deal with it,” and go across town and take care of somebody else's kids.

Although several respondents expressed concern about the structure of the black family, when questioned about its cause, fathers were not able to identify the underlying reason why African American families are structured differently than other groups. Nonetheless, many participants attributed this phenomenon to generational curses or behavior being passed down within the community. The structure of the black family and residuals of slavery should be further investigated to better understand if these variables are indeed related.

### Legal Issues and the Deadbeat Dad Stereotype

Legal issues including child support and arrest rates as well as the deadbeat father label was another frequent theme that interviewees disclosed. Legal issues were not the focus of this study, however, constant feedback from interviewees regarding child support issues that may be race-related or prejudice-based and 65% of respondents reporting having been arrested; warrants the need for future research in this area. In addition over 50% of participants expressed feelings that legal and social judgments were made about them or other African American fathers based on the stereotype that black men don’t take care of their children, otherwise called a “deadbeat dad.”

Many of the fathers complained about black men being given the stereotype of being deadbeat fathers. They reported feeling like they have to overcome this stereotype
that black men do not take care of their kids. Although all of the participants indicate that they are involved in the lives of their children, 35% of respondents stated that in general they believed that black men had earned the stereotype of being called deadbeat fathers. One father expressed his feelings that other cultures automatically stereotype black men as deadbeat fathers:

Just those challenges that you receive from levels of white society, and not just white society, Hispanics, Asian Americans. From the jump they treat you like you’re a deadbeat dad by nature, you’re irresponsible, you know, all you do is lay around, you don’t work, you freeload off of woman, you sleep around, you got kids all over the place, no. Those are the discriminative things that I’ve seen.

In relation to black men being prejudged as deadbeat fathers, another respondent stated his thoughts on how he believes African American fathers would compare to fathers of other races if a previous study was done on fatherhood:

Every body is not looking to that, but just due to the statistics and the previous situations that have happened, we have failed more than, at least it’s noted more than any other race. I don’t do a lot of research and I don’t know statistics and certain things about fathers and which race does not take care of their kids the most or anything like that. I am sure that we will probably be on the top if there is such a study. It’s just that with the previous facts or the previous statistics then that’s kind of the category that we fall into. We are not going to be there. We are not going to take care of the kids. We are going to let the mother have to raise them and certain things.
Many participants discussed their experiences with the court system and child support. The majority of men expressed feelings of prejudgment when dealing with court issues, especially child support because of their race. Many fathers reflected on memories of being treated unkindly, asked hostile questions, and given unfair rulings when attending court, and attributing this treatment to being an African American father. One father described his perception about going to court for child support:

As far as the racial barriers, not speaking negatively towards the court system in DeKalb County, but I do honestly believe that the Caucasian judges and female judges, when a black man is up there and it happens to be that the mother of the child is accusing him or saying bad things about him, that they immediately believe the parent, the woman. And even if she's not accusing or saying bad things, the black man, they don't expect him to hold up to his responsibilities of being a father. So the courts I think are more severe.

Thirteen out of twenty respondent report having been arrested at some point in their lives. One respondent reported not only being arrested, but also being incarcerated, serving time in prison. Only seven participants report never being arrested or incarcerated. Numerically this equals 65% of participants having been arrested regardless of the length of time spent in jail or long term outcomes. Legal issues including arrest rates, child support issues, and perceptions of African American fathers within the legal system are areas requiring additional research.
Despite past experiences with racism and discrimination, several fathers reported feelings of hope related to the election of United States’ first African American President Barack Obama. Data collection for this study occurred during and immediately following the presidential election. Thirty percent of respondents brought up the election, the election results, or Barack Obama’s name during the interview. Due to this historical moment in both American and African American history, participants’ perceptions may have been affected. As one father stated, “But we just got a black president so I think we are definitely improving.” Future research should examine the impact of the election of Barack Obama on African American fathers.

Chapter IV presented a description of the demographic characteristics of the data producing sample and the results of data analysis as it pertains to answering the research question. Chapter V presents study interpretations, practical implications, conclusions, limitations, and recommendations for future study.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

Exploration of the transmission of parental beliefs and behaviors among nonresidential African American fathers has uncovered a potentially significant concept related to fatherhood in the black community. In addition, other important themes associated with this population have also been identified for further investigation. Chapter V presents a discussion of the study’s results.

Results of this sample of participants suggest that respondents may form their parental beliefs and behaviors from a variety of father figures during their adolescence and adulthood then utilize these lessons in the rearing of their own children. The development of their parenting approach has been described by respondents as learning “by example” through the observation of parental values demonstrated by their father figures. It is suggested that it then becomes the father’s responsibility to act out these values in a manner in which their children can also observe them and continue the cycle of parental belief and behavior transmission.

Summary and Interpretations

Fathers who participated in the study communicated that they have obtained their parenting beliefs and behaviors by repeating the beliefs and behaviors witnessed and learned from father figures. These behaviors and beliefs that were gathered from the example displayed by respondents’ father figures are reported by respondents to be the same beliefs and behaviors that they demonstrate to their children. Results show patterns of intergenerational transmission occurring among the sample and suggest that father
figures are influential to the future fathering behaviors of their sons. Participants’ responses concur with Bowen’s theoretical concept of MTP (Kerr & Bowen, 1988) as well as Doherty, Kouneski & Erickson’s (2000) Responsible Father Conceptual Model.

In exploring the research question, I was interested in understanding how men experience fatherhood and how beliefs and behaviors are being passed intergenerationally. Subjects’ responses that were related to the development of their parenting beliefs and behaviors most frequently pointed to the actions of the father figures in their lives. Participants candidly shared their perceptions of the role and responsibilities of being a father, and that their understanding of fatherhood was modeled by father figures in their lives. Although some of the men reported not having their biological father in the home during childhood, they acknowledged either that their father continued to play a major role in their lives from outside of the home or another adult male played a father figure role for them. A few participants stated feeling that biological or substitute father figures didn’t provide as much of the emotional and mental support as they would have liked, but all of the fathers agreed that there was some male influence in their family whether it was their father, uncle, grandfather, or stepfather.

In relation to the process of communicating the father role, participants stated that their father figures modeled for them fatherhood and masculine behaviors. Most fathers agreed that it was not so much what was verbalized by their father figures that influenced them, but what was demonstrated behaviorally through their actions. Fathers also expressed that a major role for them as fathers has been to provide this same example of fatherhood and manhood to their children. They reported that the nonresidential status can create a barrier, making it more difficult for them to model fatherly behavior on a
daily basis. Based on the feedback from participants, MTP typically occurs within the sample when actions were observed by participants then mimicked by them when they became parents.

Data analysis of participants’ responses unveils a pattern of modeling, observation, and mimicking. Respondents frequently discussed the actions of their father figures and reported that they perceived these actions as a form of modeling fatherhood or presenting them with an example of the responsibilities of fatherhood. As their father figures demonstrated these behaviors, participants verbalized the importance of them observing or witnessing their father figures play out the fathering role. Participants then discussed remembering the example modeled by their father and both intentionally and unintentionally mimicking or repeating the same actions with their own children. Respondents often labeled this process as learning fatherhood “by example.” The term “by example” was frequently used during interviews to describe their perception of how they obtained their understanding of the role and responsibilities of being a father.

Participants reported watching their father or father figures completing daily tasks inside and outside of the home, and interpreting father figures’ behaviors as what men and fathers should do. Behaviors observed by subjects ranged from going to work and providing financially to attending important events or activities to treating women with respect. As respondents have entered into fatherhood they indicate that they attempt to replicate a similar experience for their children as their father figures gave them. Those respondents who did not have as positive experiences with their father or father figures report making more of an effort to give their children what they did not have, a more satisfactory example of manhood and fatherhood.
Participants’ experiences growing up and the observation of father figures helped them generate perceptions about their father figures’ parenting abilities, causing them to either model their parenting behavior after father figures or attempt to reject father figures behaviors and create their own. Despite a dislike for certain father figure behaviors, fathers admit to finding themselves repeating some of these behavioral patterns. Kerr and Bowen’s (1988) description of MTP includes the transference of both positive and negative behaviors generationally. Several participants acknowledged negative generational behaviors as generational curses. Fathers verbalized that beliefs and behaviors are often passed across generations within a family and that it is their responsibility to change any negative patterns that are being cycled through the family.

In their definition of the father role, participants identified themselves in a provisionary position. The men felt that it was their duty to meet the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs of their children and families. Beyond providing housing, clothing, and food, fathers stated that they aimed to offer their children guidance and structure. Respect and gender identity roles were common concepts that participants discussed being communicated to them by their father figures that they now communicate to their children. According to subjects, it is a father’s task to give his children both tangible and intangible tools that will help them become successful adults.

In agreement with Hamer (1998), participants reported antagonistic relationships with the mothers of their children and physical distance as being an obstacle interfering with parenting. Many men discussed romantic relationships in which children were conceived that ended sourly, now resulting in mothers making emotional decisions that many times prevented role fulfillment by fathers. Participants talked about interactions
with mothers and their children being based on the mother's mood that day. Days where mothers felt good or received money from fathers, it was reported that visitation and role implementation was easier. However, if mothers were in a bad mood or when fathers began new romantic relationships with other women, fathers described having more difficulty with being able to effectively parent their children. Due to mothers being the custodial parents of the children discussed by fathers in this study, fathers expressed having to resolve coparental conflicts either through communication with the mother or legal procedures.

Regardless of mothers' attitudes towards fathers, differences in parenting methods and proximity continued to affect the fathering role. Many fathers felt that a father's place was in the home with their children, but for these men, this was not a reality. If the father or mother moved to a different state, which was the case for eight of the participants, geographic location became another roadblock. Fathers, whose children remained local, still may feel that they are unable to see their children and have their presence felt on a daily basis. Rules and guidelines that fathers believe are important to instill in their children may not be implemented by mothers. In addition, punishments and disciplinary action imparted by fathers onto children also may not be enforced or carried out by mothers. These findings concur with Hamer (1997) who found that nonresidential African American fathers viewed providing discipline, spending time, and providing emotional support as the three most important functions of a father. Study results also parallel with the findings of Leite and McKenry (2006) whose empirical evidence demonstrated the divorced and separated African American fathers' involvement with children is negatively affected by antagonistic relationships with mothers and geographic
distance. Alternatively, fathers who do have a positive and cooperative relationship with mothers communicate having fewer barriers and a more enjoyable experience with visitation and the task of parenting outside of the home.

Fathers voiced concerns about maintaining employment and being able to financially provide for their children. This concern was sometimes fueled by experiences with racism or discrimination. The majority of subjects reported being exposed to racism or discrimination in their lives, and many fathers talked about these experiences occurring in employment-related situations. Most felt confident about their ability to overcome ethnic challenges, but they also understood that race-related barriers were potentially threatening to the fatherhood role. Men described the realities of servicing non-black customers through their profession that instantly disliked them or had a distrust for them. Similarly, institutional racism such as poorer treatment in the court system was also recognized as an ethnic challenge that influenced parental behavior and beliefs.

Fathers’ perceptions of ethnic challenges were a distinctive characteristic of this study. Participants overall agreed that they refused to allow race-related problems to keep them from being effective parents. Most described feeling that other black men use racism as an excuse or “copout” to avoid taking care of their responsibilities. However, these men did not negate that fact that racial barriers do exist. Fathers talk about having to educate their children on African American history and the realities of race relations in this country. They report discrimination being most prevalent in their experiences with the court systems. Most expressed the opinion that they are prejudged the moment they walk into the courtroom and immediately assumed to be irresponsible and inadequate as fathers because they are an African American man. They struggle with having to “beat”
the stereotype of black men as deadbeat dads and defend themselves against white and female judges. Fathers who spoke about the deadbeat dad stereotype voiced that it was an unfair reputation placed on black men that wasn’t completely grounded in truth. Contrastingly, many of them also stated that they felt black men have somehow earned the stereotype and that they were exceptions to the rule by being involved fathers. Their reports seemed a bit contradictory; they felt the stereotype was unfair and untrue, but they also felt a lot of black men fit the stereotype. All twenty participants identified themselves as active and involved fathers that did not deserve a deadbeat dad reputation, however several believed they were unique and stated that their stories and opinions were different than the norm. When this researcher began this study, it was mentioned that 45.4% of black homes are headed by single mothers, however no statistics show how many of these household have some level of father involvement, even if it is from outside of the home. Looking at the statistics, it is possible to automatically assume that single parent household means no or little father involvement. This assumption is similar to the stereotype expressed and believed by participants even though their daily behaviors negate the stereotype.

Leary (2005) offers a new theory to better comprehend the roots of generational curses or intergenerational transmission within black families. Leary suggests that the black community in the U.S. suffers from Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome (PTSS). PTSS is the notion that slavery was extremely traumatic for those who experienced it, and due the lack of psychological intervention and behaviors being passed down across generations; descendants of slaves still repeat the survival behaviors and the traumatic responses of their slave ancestors. This idea is also presented by Morrow (2003) in his
description of the Willie Lynch letters, a systematic approach to keeping blacks mentally enslaved over generations. One participant actually brought up the Willie Lynch letters and described the residuals of slavery. Other researchers of African American studies have explored the residuals of slavery such as Rollock (1995) and Lerner and Hardy (2006). Findings of this study indicate that behaviors and beliefs are likely to be passed down at both family and community levels. Unfortunately, no empirical data has been found to provide evidence for PTSS. Research should be generated to explore the validity of this theory.

Media and political influencers were also reflected in participants' responses. Fathers attributed the 1980's hit TV show, The Cosby Show, to providing them with a model of the ideal African American family. Participants felt that Bill Cosby demonstrated to the public that black fathers could be successful in fulfilling the fathering role and have a positive influence on their families. Fathers were also very optimistic about the presidential election of Barack Obama. This study took place before and after the election and its' affects were felt on the study. Some fathers came to the interview right after voting or working at the polls, and for those who were interviewed the day after the election, discussion about the election was unavoidable. For these men, the election of a black president represents an improvement in race-relations in the U.S. and the hope that minorities will have access to more opportunities. Future research should examine if black family dynamics and perceptions have changed since the implementation of an African American president.
Practical Implications

Based on participants’ responses, two suggestions for practical implications are offered. Data analysis present a high frequency of respondents obtaining fathering beliefs and behaviors from observing their father figures and mimicking what was observed. Results also indicate respondents having a strong desire to model fathering behaviors to their children. With this study examining the experiences of nonresidential fathers, most participants agreed that their ability to provide a daily example of manhood and fatherhood has been impacted by their living arrangements. With this in mind the first suggestion for practical implication is for family courts to consider the importance of physical contact when deciding on custody rights and child support related cases. Weekend, summer, or holiday visitation may not be a sufficient amount of time if it is imperative that fathers be available to provide a consistent example of manhood and fatherhood to their children. Other custodial arrangements such as split or joint custody may be more beneficial to the development of the child and his or her understand of the role and responsibility of a father.

A second suggestion for practical implication based on the study’s results is fathers seeking out individual counseling to address any negative beliefs and behaviors that have been modeled to them by their father or father figures. Several respondents admitted to disliking some of their fathers’ parenting behaviors and actively trying to not replicate those same behaviors, however still finding traces of modeled behavior in their actions. If indeed beliefs and behaviors are being passed across generations, negative or unproductive beliefs and behaviors are also being transmitted. Fathers who are aware of harmful beliefs and behaviors that have been observed and possibly transmitted may
benefit from therapeutic work that aims to replace undesired beliefs and behaviors with more acceptable ones. Utilizing this intervention may help these fathers break negative cycles within their families, producing healthier fathers and offspring.

Conclusions

1. Participants acknowledged patterns of intergenerational transmission occurring within their families as it relates to their parental beliefs and behaviors being passed across generations.

2. Beliefs and behaviors are reported being communicated from generation to generation through a process of modeling, observation, and mimicking called learning “by example” among the sample.

3. Subjects are aware that they are mimicking the beliefs and behaviors of their father figures and are modeling fathering to their children, many with the hopes that their children will repeat these same beliefs and behaviors with their offspring.

4. Due to race-related issues, the target population may experience additional obstacles in parenting that other groups may not experience. Potential barriers or issues impacting the target population as indicated by the sample are institutional racism, black family structure, and residuals of historical racism.
Limitations

This was an exploratory study on the influence of Multigenerational Transmission Process on nonresidential African American Fathers. The limitations of this study are as follows:

1. A small sample size of only 20 participants was used. A larger sample size would increase study's validity.

2. The study was limited to Metropolitan Atlanta and advertisements were only posted in two counties. An inclusion of the target population in other U.S. cities would increase trustworthiness.

3. This study was qualitative and did not test theory, but allowed theory to emerge from the data. No empirical evidence was found that could confirm theories explored or generated in this study.

4. Although the study was also advertised at local barbershops, the majority of participants were obtained from church advertisements. It is possible that men who volunteered may have views different than others in the target population due to their church affiliation.

5. The study was conducted before and after an historic presidential election that resulted in the election of the country’s first African American president. Participants’ views, especially about ethnic challenges, may have been affected due to the excitement surrounding the event.

6. Family Systems Theory emphasizes the concept of self-differentiation and the family emotional process. Results of this study did not offer insight into subjects’ ability or inability to gain autonomy or the emotions connected to
the process of attempting to differentiate from his family of origin. The
questions used in the interview guide reflected open-ended questions that
explored the subjects' experiences and provided latitude for a variety of
descriptive responses. Subjects described their experiences in behavioral
terms and family emotional processes were inferred but not specifically
articulated. Additional probes might have yielded more data that reflected
subjects' experiences related to self-differentiation.

Recommendations for Future Study
The following recommendations are suggested based on the results of this study about
nonresidential African American fathers and Multigenerational Transmission Process:

1. This study should be repeated at a national level with a larger sample size to
increase trustworthiness of findings.

2. The structure of the black family and residuals of slavery should be further
investigated to better understand if these variables are related to each other.

3. Empirical studies on Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome should be generated to
provide evidence to validate or refute the theory.

4. Legal issues including arrest rates, child support issues, and perceptions of
African American fathers within the legal system are areas requiring
additional research.

5. Social perceptions about African American fathers such as the deadbeat
father stereotype should be examined to understand its prevalence and
impact on fatherhood.
6. Future research should examine if black family dynamics and perceptions have changed since the implementation of an African American president.

7. Future research should consider additional questions or a rewording of current questions to explore samples’ family emotional process experiences.

This study sought to understand the influence of multigenerational transmission process among nonresidential African American fathers. The results suggest that subjects obtain parental beliefs and behaviors through a process of witnessing and reenacting male role models’ behaviors. In addition, respondents report striving to model parenting lessons that they have learned from their father figures to their children with the hopes that these lessons will be pass down to future generations. Data analysis also suggests other concepts related to the sample such as slavery residuals, legal issues, and the impact of an African American president may be influential and will require additional investigation. Chapter V provided a summary and interpretation of results, practical implications, conclusions, study limitations, and recommendations for future research.
REFERENCES


Rigdon, E. (n.d.). *What is structural equation modeling?* Retrieved on May 8, 2008, from Georgia State University, Marketing Department, Ed Rigdon’s Website: http://www2.gsu.edu/~mkteer/sem.html


BIBLIOGRAPHY


Conceptual Model (Revised)

Father's Father
Figure(s) Parental
Behaviors & Beliefs

MTP

Nonverbal Communication
By Father Figure

Observing Nonverbal Communication

Mimicking Father Figures

Father's Parental
Behaviors & Beliefs

Role/Definition of Father

Perception of Ethnic Challenges
Appendix B

Interview Guide
Interview Guide

1. What are the duties and responsibilities of a father?

2. What various experiences and/or people in your life have taught you the role and responsibilities of being a father?

3. Please tell me about the rules in your home when you were growing up and which of these did your father/grandfather enforce?

4. Tell me about the memories you have of the things that your father/grandfather did for you. What were the things that they did not do, but you would have liked them to have done?

5. As you were growing up, who were the men in your family and what were their attitudes about parenting?

6. Tell me about the relationship you have with your child(ren) that do not live with you and how your living arrangement impacts fulfilling the father role.

7. Describe the responsibilities of a father that you feel are harder to accomplish because you don’t live in the same home as your child(ren).

8. Describe your experience as an African American father and if and how racial barriers affect your ability to parent?

9. Do you think that race related issues like racism and discrimination have an impact on African American fathers? Why or why not? If so, in what ways?

10. Do you feel that your experience as a father is different than the experience of a father of another race? Why or why not?
11. Do you ever struggle with thoughts that things that are happening to you as a father are due to you being an African American? Do other African American fathers you know struggle with these thoughts? Tell me more about this.

12. How can African American fathers teach their sons responsibility?
Appendix C

Demographic Questionnaire
Demographic Questionnaire

Project Title: Exploring the Influence of Multigenerational Transmission Process among African American Nonresidential Fathers

Gender:
   1. Male
   2. Female

Age in Years: ________

Marital Status:
   1. Single, Never Married
   2. Married
   3. Divorced or Separated
   4. Widow or Widower

Race: Select the primary race you consider yourself to be.
   1. White
   2. Black or African American
   3. American Indian or Alaska Native
   4. Asian
   5. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

If you selected Black or African American as your primary race, do you consider yourself to be (Check one):
   1. African American
   2. Other Black

Ethnicity:
   1. Hispanic or Latino
   2. Not Hispanic or Latino

Your Highest Education Level (Check one):
   1. Professional (MS, MA, ME, MD, PhD, LLB, and the like)
   2. Four-year college graduate (BS, BA, BM, and the like)
   3. One to three years of college
   4. High school graduate
   5. Ten to eleven years of high school (part high school)
   6. Seven to nine years of school
   7. Less than seven years of school

Your Current Annual Income Level (Check one):
   1. $19,999 and Under
   2. Between $20,000-$39,999
   3. Between $40,000-$59,999
   4. Between $60,000-$79,999
   5. Between $80,000-$99,999
   6. $100,000 and Over
   7. I do not wish to disclose this information
Do you have biological children?
   1. Yes
   2. No

Do you have non-biological children (stepchildren, foster children, or adopted children)?
   1. Yes
   2. No

Number of Biological Children: 
Number of Non-Biological Children: 

Do any of your biological children live outside of your home?
   1. Yes
   2. No

   If Yes, how many? 
   If Yes, what are their ages? 
   If Yes, have you ever lived with this (these) child(ren)?
      1. Yes
      2. No

   If Yes, how long? 
   If Yes, where you ever married to the mother of this (these) child(ren)?
      1. Yes
      2. No

Do any of your non-biological children live outside your home?
   1. Yes
   2. No

   If Yes, how many? 
   If Yes, what are their ages? 

Are you currently married to the mother of any biological or non-biological children?
   1. Yes
   2. No

Overall, which of the following statements most accurately describes the level of involvement your biological father demonstrated with you?
   1. My father was not involved (emotionally, physically, or financially)
   2. My father was somewhat involved (emotionally, physically, or financially)
   3. My father was very involved (emotionally, physically, or financially)

Overall, which of the following statements most accurately describes the level of involvement your biological grandfather demonstrated with you?
   1. My grandfather was not involved (emotionally, physically, or financially)
   2. My grandfather was somewhat involved (emotionally, physically, or financially)
   3. My grandfather was very involved (emotionally, physically, or financially)

Were there any other male family members who were a father figure to you?
   1. Yes
2. No

If yes, who? __________________________________________________________________

Which of the following statements best described your arrest and incarceration history?

____ I’ve been arrested, but never incarcerated
____ I’ve been both arrested and incarcerated
____ I’ve never been arrested or incarcerated

If you’ve been arrested, how many times? ______________

If you’ve been incarcerated, how many times and for how long? ______________

________________________________________________________________________________

Is there any reason(s) (mentally or physically) that you are unable to participate in an in-depth interview with a duration of approximately 2 hours?

____ 1. Yes
____ 2. No

I verify that I have answered the above questions accurately and to the best of my knowledge.

________________________________________________________________________________

Participant’s Printed Name

________________________________________________________________________________

Participant’s Signature Date
Appendix D

IRB Approval Form
Principal Investigator: A'ndrea J. Wilson

Project Title: Exploring the Influences of Multigenerational Transmission Process among African American Fathers

IRB Project Number-2008-027

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF ADVERTISEMENTS TO RECRUIT SUBJECTS

Initial Review: Full _X_ Expedited ___ Exempt ___ Date of most recent continuation approval: ___

IRB ACTION by the CONVENED FULL BOARD

Date of IRB Review of Advertisements to Recruit Subjects: ___09/09/08___
IRB ACTION: Approved ___X___ Approved w/provision(s) ___ Not Approved ___ Other ___

COMMENTS

Consent Required: No ___ Yes _X_ Not Applicable ___ Written _X_ Signed __X__
Consent Form Revised: No ___ Yes __. If yes, the Consent forms must bear the research protocol expiration date of ___
Date for Application to Continue/Renew is as noted on initial application or most recent renewal

Name of IRB Chair Farideh Farazmand

Signature of IRB Chair _______________ Date: __09/09/08__

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Lynn University
3601 N. Military Trail Boca Raton, Florida 33431
Appendix E

Voluntary Consent Form
PROJECT TITLE: Exploring the Influence of Multigenerational Transmission Process on African American Nonresidential Fathers

I A’ndrea J. Wilson, am a doctoral student at Lynn University. I am studying Global Leadership, with a specialization in Educational Leadership. One of my degree requirements is to conduct a research study.

DIRECTIONS FOR THE PARTICIPANT:

You are being asked to participate in my research study. Please read this carefully. This form provides you with information about the study. The Principal Investigator A’ndrea J. Wilson will answer all of your questions. Ask questions about anything you don’t understand before deciding whether or not to participate. You are free to ask questions at any time before, during, or after your participation in this study. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You acknowledge that you are at least 18 years of age, and that you do not have medical problems or language or educational barriers that precludes understanding of explanations contained in this authorization for voluntary consent.

PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY: The study is about parenting behaviors and beliefs and how they are passed down within African American families. Approximately 20 people are invited to participate in this study. Participants are selected from eligible volunteers who responded to advertisements at Rick’s Styles and Cuts Salon, The Kut Zone, DT’s Barber and Style Shop, A-1 Barbershop, Slammin’ Cuts Barbershop, and Berean Christian Church in Metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia. Participants are also African American fathers ages of 21 and up that have at least one (1) child under the age 18 and do not live in the same residence as that child.

PROCEDURES:

You will first complete a demographic questionnaire and this is followed by an interview. In the interview, you will be asked to elaborate on questions that are relevant to this study and to provide insights about your parenting beliefs and behaviors and those of your father and grandfather. There are eight (8) major questions that will be followed by sub-questions to gain
more insight about your answers. The survey and interview should take about two (2) hours to complete.

The interview will be recorded on audio-tape to allow a more accurate transcription. This interview will be done in person in response to questions provided by the researcher. You have the right to review all or any portion of the tape, and request that it be destroyed.

POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORT: This study involves minimal risk. You may find that some of the questions are sensitive in nature. In addition, participation in this study requires a minimal amount of your time and effort.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS: There may be no direct benefit to you in participating in this research. But knowledge may be gained which may help researchers understand how parenting behaviors and beliefs are transmitted within African American families and generate future studies that aim to further develop this field of research.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS: There is no financial compensation for your participation in this research. There are no costs to you as a result of your participation in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality. Your identity in this study will be treated as confidential. Only the researcher A’ndrea J. Wilson will know who you are. During the interview you will be given a fictitious name. Data will be coded with that fictitious name.

Interview data including audio recording will be coded so that there is no personally identifying information. They will be kept in a secure place (e.g., a locked file cabinet in the investigator’s office). They will be heard (or viewed) only for research purposes by the investigator, A’ndrea J. Wilson and her faculty advisor, Dr. Judith Adelson. They will be transcribed and coded. One year after interviews have been recorded, all audio-tapes will be destroyed in a responsible manner.

The results of this study may be published in a dissertation, scientific journals or presented at professional meetings. In addition, your individual privacy will be maintained in all publications or presentations resulting from this study.

All the data gathered during this study, which were previously described, will be kept strictly confidential by the researcher. Data will be stored in locked files and in a password protected computer and destroyed one year after interviews have taken place. All information will be held in strict confidence and will not be disclosed unless required by law or regulation. Any information disclosed concerning intent to harm to self, harm another, child abuse or elder abuse, must be reported by the researcher to the proper authorities.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW: You are free to choose whether or not to participate in this study. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you choose not to participate.

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS/ACCESS TO CONSENT FORM: Any further questions you have about this study or your participation in it, either now or any time in the future, will be

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Lynn University
3601 N. Military Trail Boca Raton, Florida 33431
answered by A'ndrea J. Wilson, Principal Investigator who may be reached at: [redacted] and Dr. Judith Adelson, faculty advisor who may be reached at: [redacted]. For any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may call Dr. Farideh Farzmand, Chair of the Lynn University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at [redacted]. If any problems arise as a result of your participation in this study, please call the Principal Investigator A’ndrea Wilson and the faculty advisor Dr. Judith Adelson immediately.

A copy of this consent form will be given to you.

AUTHORIZATION FOR VOLUNTARY CONSENT:
I have read and understand this consent form. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been assured that any future questions that may arise will be answered. I understand that all aspects of this project will be carried out in the strictest of confidence, and in a manner in which my rights as a human subject are protected. I have been informed of the risks and benefits. I have been informed in advance as to what my task(s) will be and what procedures will be followed.

I voluntarily choose to participate. I know that I can withdraw this consent to participate at any time without penalty or prejudice. I understand that by signing this form I have not waived any of my legal rights. I further understand that nothing in this consent form is intended to replace any applicable Federal, state, or local laws. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form.

Participant's printed name

_________________________

Participant's signature

Date

I consent to be audio taped

 _________________________

Participant's signature

Date

INVESTIGATOR'S AFFIDAVIT: I hereby certify that a written explanation of the nature of the above project has been provided to the person participating in this project. A copy of the written documentation provided is attached hereto. By the person's consent to voluntary participate in this study, the person has represented that he/she is at least 18 years of age, and that he/she does not have a medical problem or language or educational barrier that precludes his/her understanding of my explanation. Therefore, I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the person participating in this project understands clearly the nature, demands, benefits, and risks involved in his/her participation.

Date of IRB Approval: 09/09/08

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Appendix F

Demographic Data for Participants
### Demographic Data for Participants

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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Male Family Members Who Were Father Figures to You?</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Arrest and/or Incarceration?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrested but never incarcerated</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both arrested and incarcerated</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never arrested or incarcerated</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G

Most Common Concepts Reported
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Concepts</th>
<th># of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role of Provider (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching responsibility to boys by example</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father figure modeling manhood/fatherhood (by example)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to monitor daily activities of children/Influence</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial barriers not affecting parenting</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism, Discrimination, or Institutional Racism</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting like father figure</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandfather as father figure</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Differences in Parenting related to opportunity</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father involvement in sports or desiring involvement in sports</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black women being difficult/Problems with mother of child</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadbeat dad stereotype for black men</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child support/court as issue for black men</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father absent from home during childhood</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males in family being family-oriented</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for father to be more involved physically/emotionally</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion significant part of childhood</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>